

La Panacée
Contemporary art
Montpellier

05.20.2017 — 08.27.2017

*Wim Delvoye,
Cloaca: The studies
(2000 - 2010)*

*Pre-capital
Popular and rural forms
in contemporary art*

*John Bock
Slipping on the armpit's
beaded sweat*

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*Pre-capital
Popular and rural forms
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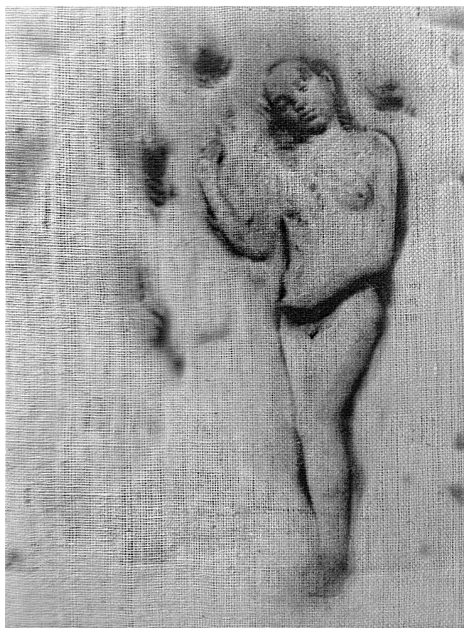
La Panacée — Art contemporain Montpellier
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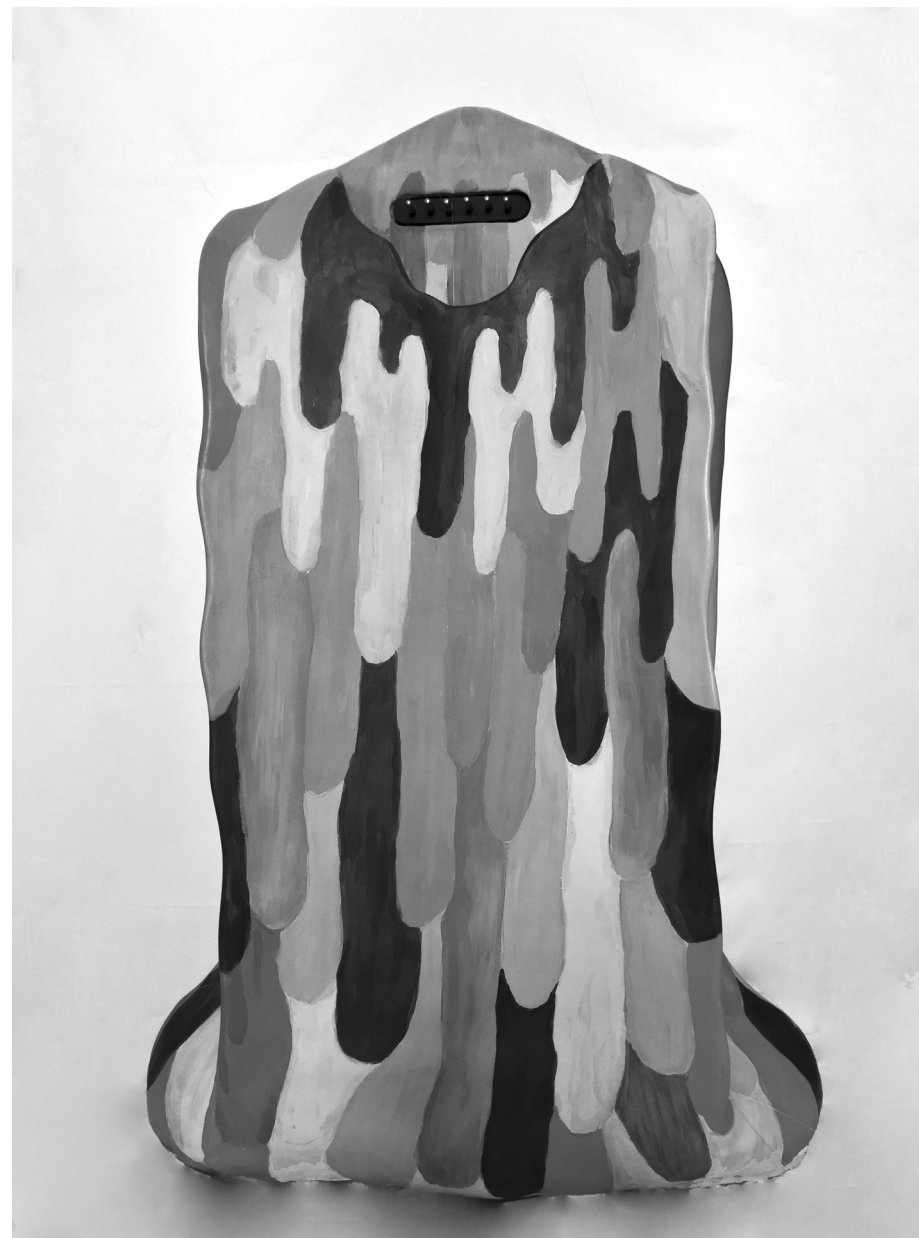
The *Pre-capital* exhibition shows artists who take into account the pre-industrial era in their production method. Putting in perspective the digital world, they promote the idea of an artistic decline. The collection of objects, the interest for craft, folk traditions and rural lifestyles are at the heart of their work, although through contemporary issues.

Curators: Charlotte Cosson
& Emmanuelle Luciani
with Nicolas Bourriaud

Caroline Achaintre
Élise Carron
Eric Croes
Mimosa Echard
Aurélie Ferruel
& Florentine Guédon
Yann Gerstberger
Bella Hunt & DDC
Matteo Nasini
Samara Scott
Markus Selg
Santo Tolone
Natsuko Uchino
We Are The Painters



Markus Selg, *Eva*, 2013
 UV printing on jute, 87 x 61 cm
 Courtesy Guido W. Baudach Gallery, Berlin



Matteo Nasini, *Blue Loss*, 2015
 Ceramics, wood, metal, nylon, 59 x 88 x 37 cm
 Courtesy Operativa Arte Gallery, Roma

Caroline Achaintre
Born in 1969 in Toulouse

Caroline Achaintre produces drawings, ceramics and tapestries. The handmade is paramount in her practice, which makes it political. Beyond feminist considerations that could be associated to the method, handiwork is here put forward. The tufting technique allows her to free herself from the loom and to directly apply the wool on the canvas, as a painter who would have traded oil for thread. She nonetheless uses the tufting gun in a counter-intuitive way, letting long locks hanging. The look of her works thus becomes more “raw”, not very polished. It matches the depicted subjects: real or imaginary animals, lifelike abstractions. Caroline Achaintre’s tapestries appear to derive from animistic beliefs. The artist moreover likes to remind us of her interest for western practices inspired by cultures said to be “primitive”, as well as for German impressionism or post-war English art. Those moments are calling into question the systems, under pressure from tradition and from a more technological future, spirituality and rationalism, inward-looking attitudes and the temptation of an elsewhere. Caroline Achaintre thus reminds us that we’re living through one of those troubled eras preceding great societal upheavals.

BIRDSSS, 2013

Hand tufted wool, 500 x 390 cm
Courtesy ARCADE, London

Charlotte Cosson & Emmanuelle Luciani are art historians & curators. Recently they organised “COOL — As a State of Mind” at the MAMO (Marseille), “From Transhuman to South Perspectives” at Rowing projects (London) and “DOMESTIC” at Truth & Consequences (Geneva). They are chief editors of the art magazine *CODE South Way*. They often give conferences at the Vincent Van Gogh’s Foundation, Arles, and own an international artists residence in Marseille.



L’atelier de la fermière, 2011-2017

Mixed techniques, variable dimensions
Courtesy of the artists

We Are The Painters
French artistic duo - Nicolas Beaumelle
and Aurélien Porte, since 2004

The duo We Are The Painters is currently realizing the film *Paint for Ulma*, which tells the story “of a young goat becoming an artwork and joining a museum’s collection.” In its quest, nine muses guide it “from landscapes to landscapes and from paintings to paintings to its last territory: the museum.” The one who helps whelp Ulma is a blond farmer whose attributes are exhibited at La Panacée: ornaments, tools, apron, chair. Beyond the naivety of that fiction, the duo reveals a way to magnify the peasants tools, handicraft and the community of like minded people. We Are The Painters plays with the aesthetic of amateurism, in rurality as well as in painting. However, an authentic sincerity pushes them towards this reflection on the origins of the creation process, of the artistic inspiration and of the search for a collective communion. Hard not to perceive their social engagement in the way they have of introducing the conventions of the farm—which are also their personal references—in a museum: the outcast here enters History in a way similar to that of Duchamp’s urinal. The consequences however are radically opposed. Indeed, whereas all the wood elements within this installation come from a bistro, it’s not the industry that’s put forward—as it has so often been the case in the XXth century—but an aesthetic of the economy of means.

Elise Carron
Born in 1988 in Cahors

Elise Carron transforms the opening into a primitive grill. Chickens sealed inside a thick mixture of clay are cooked with herbs in the coals. The clay crust keeps the flavour while protecting the meat. She follows an age-old tradition communicated orally in various cultures and forgotten because of its lack of marketability. Elise Carron reminds us that “the soil is there, under our feet, it costs nothing and protects the food”. Far from the ready-to-use and the increase of our needs brought by consumption, the artist proposes an economy of means. How can we apply those tenets in the large cities, between concrete and restrictions about taking soil from the parks? How to bring Men raised “off soil” to leave the dead end they’re in, disconnected from the aesthetic, economic, survivalist and spiritual properties of the earth? Some people, often city folks, decide to eat only raw foods. If we trust a video found on Elise Carron’s website though, cooking is what allowed prehistoric men to become *homo erectus*, the first human being. Digesting raw foods required so much energy from the body that it left very little for brain development. Because of fire, grey matter, intelligence and the emotional panel were able to grow. By reviving the flames and the soil, Elise Carron invites us to think a new society, drawing in its sources without depleting its resources.

Fire in my Body, 2017
Clay cooked on the opening performance
New production La Panacée 2017

No Wifi, 2017
Curtain, 340 x 240 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Eric Croes

Born in 1978 in La Louvière, Belgium

Eric Croes' work is peopled with animals both real and imaginary made in ceramic. They pile up in it —crawl in it, one could say. In his studio, many of those are reminiscent of folk arts and their totems; mostly those of the Native Americans. However, his bestiary seems to have its own tradition. Clay, bronze, wood: those are the three raw materials Eric Croes uses. From the taming of fire to the beginning of the modern era, those materials ruled the utilitarian sphere of production methods. Its references are as much medieval as they are extra-occidental: beasts close to those found on the illuminated margins of a sacred text, helms, quasi-masonic symbols, enamel works worthy of the glazes of a Quattrocento painter... Eric Croes loves to quote Michel Pastoureau, author of the *Bestiaires du Moyen Âge*, and realizes “cadavres exquis” — this surrealistic technique consisting of continuing someone else's drawing without knowing its exact content. Those two references could seem divergent. However, they both invite us to reconnect with non-rational logics and with the ability we all have to escape in the dream. The desire to let our thoughts wander is pressing.

Similar to medieval altarpieces, whose reading tools have sometimes been lost, Eric Croes' work leaves us alone facing contemplative beauty and the associations made by our imagination.

Cadavre exquis, babouin vert, 2016

Glazed ceramic, 52,5 x 28 x 24 cm

Courtesy Sorry We're Closed and Eric Croes

Natsuko Uchino

Born in 1983 in Japan

Natsuko Uchino produces with the humility of an artisan concerned with her work's quality. This brings her closer to the rustic and simple philosophy Yanagi Sōetsu put forward at the beginning of the XXth century when industrialization became rampant in the Northern countries. Reference to this philosopher isn't in any way spurred by the Japanese origins of the artist; this relationship comes from her candour as a person who has suffered an “urban burn out” and who now lives in the countryside. Natsuko Uchino regularly organizes banquets. She has thus produced four hundred ceramic pieces with Matthew Lutz-Kinoy before inviting seventy people to use them. In the duo's opinion, this friendly use of the plates gave them their patina— if not their History. Like the minor arts often asserting a culture as being “higher”, Natsuko Uchino's work is the art of display. It highlights a place, her home, its culture and the human network it brings to mind. Questions about the environment, the economy and the landscape clash together; and Natsuko Uchino adds: “the plate is a cultural surface and the conveyor of those various issues”. Other folk traditions are celebrated by her work, like Saint-Jean's fire or the greasy poles. Hanging from one of those masts, Uchino has exposed honey in the past. She's also made kombucha or yoghurt's factories at some events. The living attracts her more and more, because among other things it allows her to put into question the boundary between “dirty” and “clean” which, she reminds us, is always cultural.



Tourner autour du pot, 2015
Enamelled sandstone, 30 x 30 x 100 cm, 30 x 30 x 86 cm
Courtesy Natsuko Uchino

Etxe Mouton, 2017
Wool dyed and felted, 220 x 250 cm, Courtesy
of the artist and ETXENAMI, production ETXENAMI

Pot commun, 2015-2017
Ceramics, sandstone, metal, plaster, vegetal
Courtesy Natsuko Uchino

Mimosa Echard
Born in 1986 in Alès

To produce *The People*, Mimosa Echard has filmed for five years the village in which she grew up, in the Cevennes mountains. The village has been rebuilt entirely in the 1970s as a result of community momentum. Nearly thirty years after, the questions of what's left of that dream, and what of the isolation of those inhabiting the village can be asked. Beyond the image of her loved ones Mimosa Echard catches on film a youth shared between idleness and work for the common good. The transfer of vernacular knowledge is exposed; the flood of consumables also is. Plastic containers, pink tongs, tags: here, utopia meets reality. The slow pace of the villagers is portrayed as a colony of snails. However, the camera work and the image overlay give a fast pace to the film. Mimosa Echard adds speed—even stress—to something devoid of it. She refuses to fall into contemplating the contemplative. This production has a very special place in her work, since she usually captures decaying cultural or vegetal leftovers in a resin. In opposition to that time fixation process, Mimosa Echard impels here a new dynamism to conventions that before her seemed eternal.

The People, 2016
Film 120 mn, sound : Raphaël Henard
Looped screening
Courtesy Samy Abraham Gallery, Paris

I still dream of Orgonon, 2016
Minerals, plants, found objects, resin, different sizes

Yann Gerstberger

Born in 1983 in Cagnes-sur-Mer

Before 2010, Yann Gerstberger was essentially producing assembled works looking like totems. Between tinkering with found materials and recycling abandoned day-to-day objects, his works arose like relics from extra-western tribes. Oxymoric associations of consumer folk culture (weight bench, cooler, t-shirts) or huntresses (regalia, raw materials such as stone, wood and straw), his installations were embracing the multiculturalism dear to his era. Yann Gerstberger, keen on postcolonial theories, wasn't naive about the way his European eyes loitered on what could seem exotic. It looks like this attraction, as well as the discovery of weaving, answered his questions regarding the precapitalist methods of production. His works counter shoot a hollow politic; they cloud the division of roles (men/women — dominant/dominated — craftsman/genius).

Yann Gerstberger describes his tapestries as being “post-earthquake — or even post-world”. He believes they match a world of the after where traditions and technologies live together, a world in which a new society would try to reconcile itself with the remainders of the one before it.

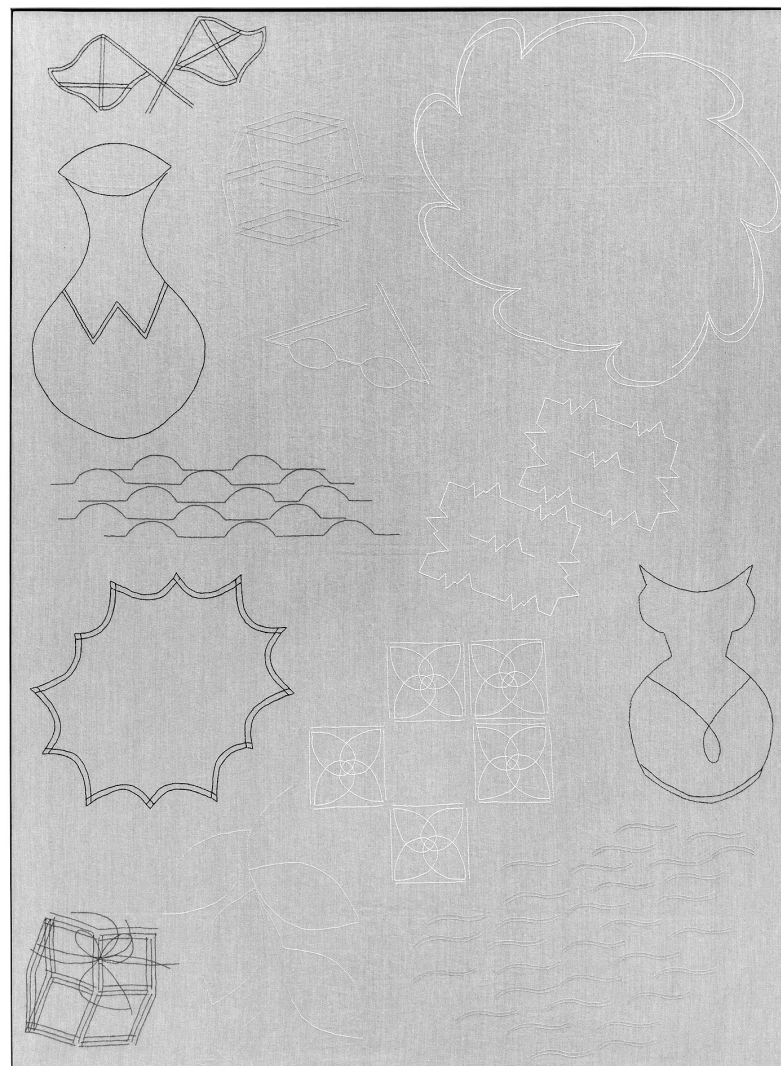
UYWCPN, 2016

Cotton, linoleum, natural pigments (grana cochineal),
290 cm x 240 cm

Courtesy Sorry We're Closed and Yann Gerstberger

Untitled, 2016

Cotton, natural pigments (grana cochineal), 280 x 238 cm
Courtesy Sorry We're Closed and Yann Gerstberger



Con Le Cose / With the things, 2016

Embroidery on textile, 110 x 150 x 4 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Frutta, Rome

Rondò, 2013

Engraving on brass, poplar wood, 140 x 100 x 4 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Frutta, Rome

Rondò, 2014

Engraving on brass, poplar wood, 140 x 100 x 4 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Frutta, Rome

Santo Tolone

Born in 1979 in Como, Italy

Santo Tolone's works are handmade using ancestral techniques. Between copper marquetry on wood and embroidery, the works he exhibits at La Panacée could come from a different era altogether. If they'd been made by women from the United States in the 1970s, they would have been classified with the first feminism, that time when women were allowed to work only some media considered softer and suitable for domestic production. However, they've been made by a XXIst century man; their meaning shouldn't be the same. The artist always explains his compositions: still life made using the embroidered back pockets of pants in a case, decontextualised roundabout sculptures in another. The impact of conceptual art and of the art schools education are felt in his speech. However, a pure poetry of the shapes emerges from Santo Tolone's work: a poetry close to certain Italian artists of the second half of the XXth century like Rodolfo Arico (1930–2002). Beyond the explanations and the lyricism, a strong feeling of love for craftsmanship and of Italian vernacular traditions is present. Indeed, Santo Tolone works in an old studio around lake Como and follows the lines of that region's craftsmanships.

Aurélie Ferruel & Florentine Guédon

Aurélie Ferruel was born in 1988 in Mamers and Florentine Guédon in 1990 in Cholet

Aurélie Ferruel & Florentine Guédon have been producing as a duo for the last seven years. Brought together by their country roots, they've since played with those shared codes —codes seldom used by mainstream artists. Humorously but never ironically, the pair set their eyes on agriculture's customs and attributes. Their installation *Culte* uses paint and sculpture to transpose tractors, blue overalls, forks, chainsaws, ears of wheat, caps or haystacks: everything that surrounded their childhood and their family. They actually learnt the techniques they use to create art from their families. Florentine Guédon's grandmother taught her how to sew; Aurélie Ferruel was immersed in lumberjack competitions because of her pruner father and she uses her chainsaw to sculpt. Love of local traditions, the need to spread a culture whose foundation crumbles and assessment of how those upheld values have evolved over time are the basis of their work. It's their collection we have here. Aurélie Ferruel & Florentine Guédon could talk for hours of each object it holds. However, instead of making a conference about it, they prefer to worship them "by kissing with our butts facing the sky each of those sculptures on the ground".

Culte, 2017

Textile, cotton, flax, paint and wood, 245 x 111 cm

Courtesy of the artists

Bella Hunt & DDC

Italo-American duo born in the 1980s

Behind the falsely naive simple shapes, Bella Hunt & DDC hide the notion of a society different from ours. It would rely on greater coexistence between the beings forming it and on the respect of vernacular traditions for an environmentally friendly future. After creating pots whose natural pigments were integrated *a fresco* in a lime mix, the duo nowadays grows with bronze works and sculptures that are more architectural than before. Their practice though is still —and that's very important— on human scale. Their works speak of a past (or of a future?) common to all of mankind. Bowls, arches and crude shapes pace their creation. A *medievalist* line can be felt in Bella Hunt & DDC. Just like the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, to which they've borrowed their surnames (Bella comes from William Hunt and DDC stands for Dante di Calce or Dante of the Lime, referring to Dante Gabriele Rosseti, the most *trecentist* of the movement), the two artists refer to a world before perspective, a pre-modern world whose race towards progress wasn't the main storyline. However, their dynamics differ from the anti-industrialisation movements of the XIXth century: Bella Hunt & DDC don't refuse progress, but they propose going beyond it. Look at *Ancient Mystic I*, a two-faced arch with a Roman and a pseudo Phoenico-Egyptian side. Just enjoy it, without projecting. Admit it, Bella Hunt & DDC enable you to feel the shiver of emotion coming from the discovery of an item patiently crafted by a civilisation long gone: that shiver lost long ago because of those manufactured objects we daily use.

Markus Selg

Born in 1974 in Singen, Germany

Two elements of his triptych are rustic in aspect: they've been created using hessian and coloured sisal. However, they haven't been handmade, but created using digital printing. Those apparent contradictions don't bother Markus Selg: instead, they allow him to question too well established systems of values. In his opinion, there are more similarities than there are distinctions. Therefore, he can speak about the "primitive data" or about the similarities between his small southern Germany village carnivals and Benin rituals. Tradition and progress are not in opposition; in Benin, speaking on the phone is compared to speaking with the spirits with a shaman's help. Thus could we understand this triptych featuring Eve and the serpent as a reflection on a possible continuation of humankind on networks. Without judging, beyond the notions of good and evil, Markus Selg brings to the forefront of our consciousness something usually cleverly hidden: the notion of sacrifice. He reminds us that nothing is lost and everything is transformed, that every gift is also a capture. He breathes new life into our reality, where it seems possible to take without ever considering the price or the consequences of taking.

Teppich/carpet, 2010

Printed pigment on sisal, 190 x 145 cm

Courtesy Markus Selg

Snake, 2015

HD Video, silent

Courtesy Guido W. Baudach Gallery, Berlin

Eva, 2013

UV print on hessian, 87 x 61 cm

Courtesy Guido W. Baudach Gallery, Berlin

Samara Scott

Born in 1984 in London, England

Samara Scott began her production by a quest. Like a XIXth century ragwoman, she goes towards the city to find the raw material of her works. Barely anything is bought: she uses garbage to create. Anti-capitalist approach? Maybe, judging by how little manufactured products figure in her creation process. Yet without the market driven economy overloading the capital cities, no massive rejections and, therefore, no new works. Unlike the other artists of the exhibition —whose pre-capitalist modes of production suggest a region out of the megacities— Samara Scott needs the capitals to extract their very essence. She feeds on the overflow, on the excess, on what must usually stay hidden. She reveals the poetry of the unsmooth and the unclean. The expelled —the waste as well as the culturally unacceptable cosmetic— becomes the vector of retinal pleasure, even of the pleasure to live. Beyond this enjoyment, Scott offers a sharp view of the future. Using only precapitalist production modes could suggest a return to the previous “perfect” state where the world hadn’t been polluted by Man yet (Rousseau’s dear state of nature). This utopian vision though can’t happen given how much modern society has surpluses: our future needs to take into account the consequences of many centuries of accumulation for the sake of accumulation.

Untitled, 2017

Performance and installation produced by La Panacée for the exhibition

Matteo Nasini

Born in 1976 in Rome, Italy

Sleepy Night is a stitched and embroidered sculpture. It resembles a rock, at the bottom of the sea, that would have been covered by a patchwork of fauna and flora, to a baroque concretion as soft as wool. The XVIIth century reference is not insignificant with Mateo Nasini, former classic double bass player who worked under the direction of great conductors. A History and music lover, the artist now expresses his singular visions through tapestries, collective experiences on sleep and ceramic instruments. Those last —two of which here exhibited— are exclusively powered by the wind. Poetic and humble, Matteo Nasini offers his creations to the world, who then completes it and breathes life into it. The artist is interested by Greek incubation rites, where answers were found in dreams. Just like those antic pilgrims leaving their decisions into the hands of a higher power, Matteo Nasini opens himself to the possibility of a great outside, a whole that would be beyond him. Just as the shapes he creates derive from the feeling of an end of society, the softness of the materials he uses and his fundamentally contemplative approach allows to peacefully grasp the birth of a new era.

Sleepy Night, 2014

Wool, cloth, moss, 110 x 300 x 180 cm

Courtesy Operativa Arte Gallery, Roma

Cocomerophono, 2015

Enamelled ceramic, wood, nylon, iron,

83 x 40 x 40 cm, Courtesy Operativa Arte Gallery, Roma

Blue Loss, 2015

Ceramic, wood, metal, nylon, 59 x 88 x 37 cm Courtesy Operativa Arte Gallery, Roma

