

Martina Simeti

BOOTH CONCEPT

ARCO MADRID

Martina Simeti is pleased to present a duo show featuring Argentinian Artist Alek O. And Italian artist Paolo Chiasera.

The booth features a site-specific installation by Alek O. and three paintings by Paolo Chiasera.

Alek O.'s installation of brown doormats retrieved from Milanese entranceways make up the two-dimensional population of squares, rectangles, semicircles and irregular polygons. They are brought together under the title *Flatland*, paying homage to the satirical novella of the same name published in 1884 by the English author Edwin A. Abbott. The installation is completed by a some sculptures *Ehi Siri, Lumos* (2023): compositions of modified ceiling lights that, from static wall and ceiling illuminations, now land like mini flying saucers ready for their next take-off – with the word 'Lumos' Harry Potter would turn on the light of his magic wand, just as we might turn on the torch on our iPhone. Lastly, sugar paste and food colouring shape the group of wall sculptures "Il giorno della fine non ti servirà l'inglese": pastel-coloured negatives of anonymous objects, kitchen moulds, minor totems of our daily routine and its designers.

The three paintings by Paolo Chiasera are part of a series of works on canvas created in a studio inside an ancient abbey in northern France. The studio and the artist are two coordinates present in these large-formats that refer to a metaphysical stage that harks back to fifteenth-century Italian painting, yet in the three works in this exhibition, there is no trace of them. The presence of the body and space plays on a biographical aspect of the artist himself, having retired some years ago in search of a new artistic vein that would provide a segue from the conceptual elaborations of his work over the past decades. In *Pollai volanti*, a tent suspended in mid-air evokes a transitory space, a passage, a nomadic element. Eggs descend from the tent, offering a clear reference to Piero della Francesca's altarpiece in Montefeltro del Brera and his *Constantine's Dream* in Arezzo. Eggs are also at the heart of the painting that Chiasera produces with such methodological care. *Glory Hole*, a repainted canvas, affords a glimpse of a helmeted figure in a garden; a hole appears at eye level. Along with the diaphanous presence of the previous portrait, the figure – almost completely removed – displays this detail. This generates a three-dimensionality of the work and its relationship to space. Of the silhouette, only his gaze remains, piercing the surface. Like a gaze in reverse, the work looks at us from within the painting itself.

Alek O. (1981, Buenos Aires). The artist's works have been exhibited widely at institutional level, notably at the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rome (2021); The Courtauld Institute of Art, Sommerset House (2020); Nomas Foundation, Rome (2018); Fondazione Zegna, Trivero (2017); 16th Quadriennale d'Arte, Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni (2016); Triennale di Milano, Milan (2015).

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Paolo Chiasera (1978, Bologna). Presentations at international institutions include Museum of Contemporary Art Sion, Switzerland (2019), Prada Foundation, Venice, Italy (2018), Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art, Middelburg, The Netherlands (2014), MAN Museo Arte Nuoro, Nuoro, Italy (2014), SMAK Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent, Belgium (2010), MARTa Herford, Germany (2009), MACRO, GAM, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna.

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