

Danse Macabre

Max Xeno Karnig | Alina Zamanova | Antonio Fabozzi | Morteza Khakshoor
Caroline Jackson | Mie Yim

Samuele Visentin is pleased to present the group show *Danse Macabre*. Borrowing from the artistic genre of the Late Middle Ages, the exhibition aims to explore and break down the visual representations of the allegory in the context of our present times. The artists included are Max Xeno Karnig, Alina Zamanova, Morteza Khakshoor, Mie Yim, Caroline Jackson and Antonio Fabozzi.

In our current day and age, the *danse macabre* - a procession of both living and dead figures - feels like a strong underlying narrative running through a vast network of people all over the world. However, the perception of it depends on the immediate geographical and socio-political point of view enjoyed or suffered by the individual. From the *Blood oranges* of Max Xeno Karnig to Morteza Khakshoor's *Martyrs* and Alina Zamanova's portrait of a Ukrainian woman... each artist opens the door to a personal visual insight into the allegorical frame, allowing for the staging of a poignant contemporary tale that tries to retrace the imagery of a chapter in our collective recent history.

In this context, **Max Xeno Karnig (USA)** sublimates a young Javier Bardem into a metaphysical yet ironical sacred realm in *El Jamon* (2022), while choosing to shun irony in favour of poetic lyricism in his *still lives*. Bathing in crepuscular light and stripped of their banality, Karnig's fruits and vegetables are pulpy and ripe, endowed with the dignity of true representation. In this sense, the crimson wound-like cut in *Blood Orange 1* (2022) makes one want to touch it in order to believe it, like an incredulous Thomas in a Caravaggio painting.

If metaphorical meanings abound in Karnig's works, **Alina Zamanova (Ukraine)**'s portrait *Ти дуже сильна* - *You are a very strong woman* (2022), grounds the audience in rock-solid reality. Zamanova (b. 1993, Ukraine) turns her artistry towards the pain, the attempt at healing and the stoicism shown by Ukrainian people in the face of Russia's invasion. Painting on river rocks, wood gathered from forests and integrating Ukrainian soil into the surface of her paintings, Zamanova registers and tries to make sense of this painful chapter in the history of her country using found objects that belong to and contain, in their inherent nature, the history of Ukraine.

Antonio Fabozzi (Italy) takes us to a world where only traces of humanity are displayed and human presence is missing. In this imaginary world, buildings that once hosted beacons of civilisation are severely mutilated, while the sculptural image of a hand lies broken to the ground in *Residui* (2022). In Fabozzi's paintings, humankind only exists by means of its worldly achievements and failures.

Men's surreal absence on the backdrop of torn-down buildings portends the aftermath of a violent conflict.

Towards the end of 2021 **Morteza Khakshoor (Iran)** started his series *Martyrs* as a personal need to visually elaborate the unprecedented amount of protestors killed in 2019 in what came to be known as *Bloody November* in Iranian recent history. The complex history of martyrdom in the context of a politicised propaganda is here addressed by means of an unassailable simplicity. Although inspired by Iranian history, Khakshoor's *martyrs* allow for universal interpretations: they are the suffering, the defeated, the oppressed - in Iran and in every other regime.

Scratched, frenzied brushstrokes succeed each other in **Caroline Jackson (UK)**'s abstract paintings, where an initial drawing, although invisible at completion, anchors the composition to an underlying balance of lines and fields of colour. *Sucker Punch* (2021) and *Untitled* (2022) convey feelings of sudden shock, as if the apparent calm of a given moment was violently split open and turned inside out, leaving a layered sequence of material abrasions on the canvas, spanning a range of warm colours. Caroline Jackson's works are records of a troubled passage of emotions, turning art into a personal journey of experimentation and discovery dictated by an impulse to erase, re-do, overlap, wash away, mix, mud, dilute, draw and paint.

Mie Yim (Seoul)'s series *Quarantine Drawings* suggests anthropomorphic spaces that oscillate between figure and acid environment. Neither abstract nor figurative, Yim's works on Shinzen paper cite coronavirus as inspiration: spikes, polyps and vegetal shapes take centre stage at each composition, intertwining and climbing onto themselves, like free-form organisms caught in the act of morphing. Mie Yim's nature questions the essence of what it means to be finished beings, in favour of an appetite and desire to endlessly transform.

Danse Macabre will be open from May 5th to May 21st from 1pm to 6pm. Sundays and Mondays closed.