



Curated by Andrea B. Del Guercio

Italian Contemporary Art

Generations collide



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The core of this exhibition is structured around the expressive activity of two distant generations of Italian art, in which interesting links and specific relations can be found.

The project proposes itself to verify the extension of those values, that marked the work of two extraordinary masters of European art inside the contemporaneity of the new generations. Through a careful selection of artworks by **Giannetto Fieschi** (1921-2010) and **Sergio Vacchi** (1925-2016), we will observe the complex cultural and existential dimension of the expressionist heritage as part of the extended picture of anthropological experience, inside which independent linguistic solutions floats, such as informal matter, the physical substance of POP, the cultured heritage of history of art projected to a literary and philosophical dimension.

The idea we pose as a basis for this event is to try to recognize the influences between seasons of art, surely far from each other but with a process of common self-reflection that persists and substantiate itself. The nine young artists - Gabriele Artusio/Mario Cerrone/Arianna De Stefani/Rachele Frison/Giacomo Giori/ Alfredo Romio/Nicolas Steiner/ /Lucrezia Zaffarano/ /Luming Zhang – in these years of creative activity, confirmed by a qualified exhibiting activity have deepened the different and more significant thematic and iconographic excerpts of that patrimony that “narrated” the second half of the last century.

Andrea B. Del Guercio Curator



Giannetto Fieschi

(1921-2010)

Danger, 1978
Lithograph
cm 70x50



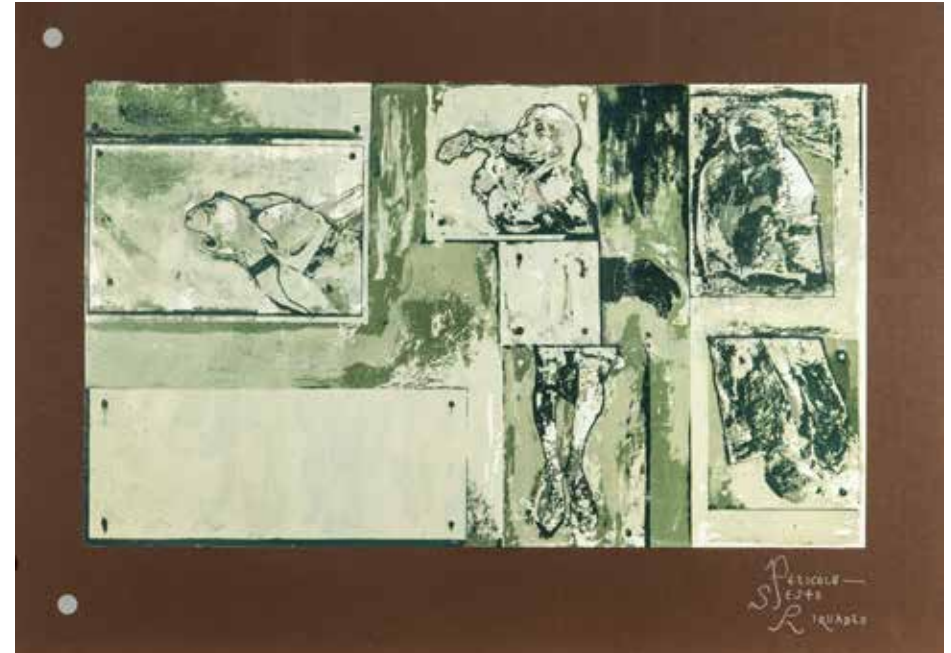
Danger, 1978
Lithograph
cm 70x50



Danger, 1978
Lithograph
cm 70x50



Danger, 1978
Lithograph
cm 70x50



Danger, 1978
Lithograph
cm 70x50

ANDREA B. DEL GUERCIO Art critic

Giannetto Fieschi “ The experience of painting” [1]

The expressive mythology that Giannetto Fieschi has developed since the beginning of his career and along its interconnected phases conforms to an analogical approach, in which not only several involved subjects cross their paths but also the action of “painting” and “doing art” hang in the balance between stability and instability, giving us the idea of a dodecaphonic “composer”, ready to integrate visual-linguistic stimuli conversely coming from the real world and subjecting them to the demanding judgement of the inner experience: “No art faithfully represents reality if it does not multiply, and instead, it irritates the consistency of modern art in every “ism” of it, almost as if it were a subscription to a political party, in a conformism... I could only call it “monodic” in contrast to a unified polyphony, such as cer-

tain formal schematism, whose exclusive but illusory sophistication is instead comradely partisanship and trivial. [2]

The extension of the anthropological dimension reveals and expresses itself in Giannetto Fieschi in a continuity relation with the historical culture of art, facing unpredictable digressions, toward which it is able to give its own additional contribution; the suggestions multiply through choices that seem to escape from a scientific logic in order to follow the path of the casual meeting, to which the mirror-confrontation of contemporary art will follow. It is emblematic of this original expressive course—compared to the first post-war panorama, but connected to the anguished processes of the late Nietzsche’s thought—the series realized in the American years and dedicated to the lecture of “Leviathan or The Matter, Form, and Power



of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil” by Thomas Hobbes (edited in 1651).

The occasional hard experience and the confrontation with a context suddenly “empty” of history push Fieschi to venture into unknown territory, both culturally and artistically, which becomes the base for every following expressive development.

The linguistic base provides the summary filtered by the historical avant-garde, from whose ashes it poses (maybe without realizing it) the principles on which the second avant-garde is based. We must not ignore a relation between the six Fieschi collage charts and the iconographic structure of the “cover” of Thomas Hobbes’s “cursed” volume, whose layout is characterized by a detailed structure between text and image, between use of Latin and reproduction technique, between present symbols and collective values, insistently witnessing a “political” thought’s geography. If the chromatic choices are bravely American, like the use and methodological underlining of photography, the iconographic presentation—from the patrimony of “The Passion” to industrial mechanics—describes a time period that keeps history alive, projecting it into the future.

If we want to deepen our perception through the exhibition of six “closed” and “uncrossable” doors, cinematically articulated by frames, this can only lead us to recognize the “livyatan”, that evil sea monster from the Book of Job. “When it rises up, the mighty are terrified; they retreat before its thrashing... Any hope of subduing it is false. Nothing on earth is equal to a creature without fear. It looks down on all that are haughty; it is king over all that are proud.” ... from the timeless past to the modernity of a similar theme resurfaced from Anish Kapoor in 2011, not in the shape of an “opposite

knowledge transcription” but in the one of “experiential penetration and crossing”. Evil can be seen as an independent reality that does not run up and yet does not repeat itself, resulting in being always engulfed by good.

A relation we can think of as a symbiosis and a repetitive essence of vital time, a process that does not elude Giannetto Fieschi and instead forms the base of his personal culture, especially in his ongoing process. “From the top of the executioner’s block, Antoine-Laurent de Lavoisier demonstrates and proclaims the indestructibility of matter” in 1964 to reach and complete himself with the series of “Pericolo” in the 1970s. “Myths are composed by action that includes their own opposite within: the monster kills the hero.

The hero kidnaps the princess, but in those actions, we can sense that their opposite is also true: the monster kills the hero. The hero kidnaps the princess. Once again, we can sense that its opposite is also true: the hero abandons the princess. How can we be sure?

The variants, the mythical blood’s flow, tell us that.” [3]. The perception of chaos as an echo of violence and unforgiving torment, as time’s permanent mark, repeats itself in the series following a process that closes on itself to come back on the time of Fieschi’s painting; this form of communication tended to exclude the story (both beginning and end) from the “figurative” dimension, represents the necessary and useful break from the Italian “Figurazione Critica” (Critical Figuration) and the French “Narration Figurative” (Figurative Narration) in the 1960’s: “To those who know me a little, it will seem a paradox, but to those who know me better will recognize me in that: I say that nothing annoys and repulse me like figurative painting, that means the manipulations in which concrete reality has fallen” [4]

Sergio Vacchi (1925 – 2016). *Ich bin hier* [5]

The theme of self-portrait can represent in an extraordinary manner the axis on which the "narration" of Sergio Vacchi's expressive dimension is based. His physical-theatrical nature that we could call performative as it is the vehicle of that communication of art that entered the depth of time, intended not as a chronological development, but as an inseparable binomial between past-present and in history, that in the act of its fruition shows us the future.

It is this insistence on time of his that projects us way beyond the self-gratification of the portrait, to tell us of a man that considers the experience of art as a total event for his own existence, from which he knows he cannot run away, inside which he dives in without any will of escape; the direct confrontation with the pages of history forces him to live its different chapters, to interact with every significative presence, ready to

dialogue with his own enemy, transcribing the cruelty of the latter, but also crazily in love and even animated by a moving tenderness. [6]

We perfectly know how Vacchi put his face at the centre of his painting, replicating and altering it almost infinitely, often hiding his gaze behind a leather mask, along with his hair but also his body, seen through the seasons of life, in his nude physical essence but also in presence thanks to the refined spectacularism of costumes. In front of the process and the insistent development of his own painting, we know that the definition of self-portrait appears restrictive and should be replaced with the conceptual intensity that in German can be translated in "Ich bin hier", where the complex experiential substance of "portraying" is fully affirmed and in which it is possible to say "I am here". That means to be in presence, to come

directly into play, to take part and intervene, to see, to be there to touch with a hand and withstand its own identity... beside a "process" that led us back to Michelangelo Merisi, met there between the crowd in the altarpiece dedicated to the "Martyrdom of Saint Matthew" (1599), and finally in the more dramatic "Martyrdom of Saint Ursula" (1610).

Even inside an insisted expressive process dedicated to portraiture of his friends and anybody present in his life through the media of writing, from literature to science, from cinema to theater and painting, we recognize the will of Vacchi to operate through an action of painting able to conceptually be a witness of his own being, to induce to his own physical essence, where the act of painting, as a calligraphic technique of narration through pictures, can be qualified through the dimension of self-portrait, in which the artwork is an inseparable result of the union between self-portrait (artist) and portrait (the meeting with the subject): Vacchi/Testori, Vacchi/Galileo, Vacchi/Beckett, Vacchi/Yourcenar, Vacchi/Fellini, Vacchi/Bacon, Vacchi/Pollock, Vacchi/Garbo: "In the last ten or fifteen years, I ran after Greta Garbo; I called her, I invoked her, I begged her to stop, to be reached, I portrayed her countless times... [7]

Faces along a gallery that is lost in time. Since the informal substance of the 1950's where the color reveals the full anthropological substance of the "flesh", Sergio Vacchi's painting identifies the face as place where the being displays itself and, in the body, all the relations with the existence in the world; a far magmatic season, in which the sulphurous hazes are thick, introduces to a figuration built through the intellectual processes of abstraction, in which the "narration" is organized in great themes and series, inside which Vacchi is constantly present, at first camouflaging through the alchemic bonding to painting, conceptually specified through the use of ancient gold, the silver

and the copper, and then coming directly and strongly in action.

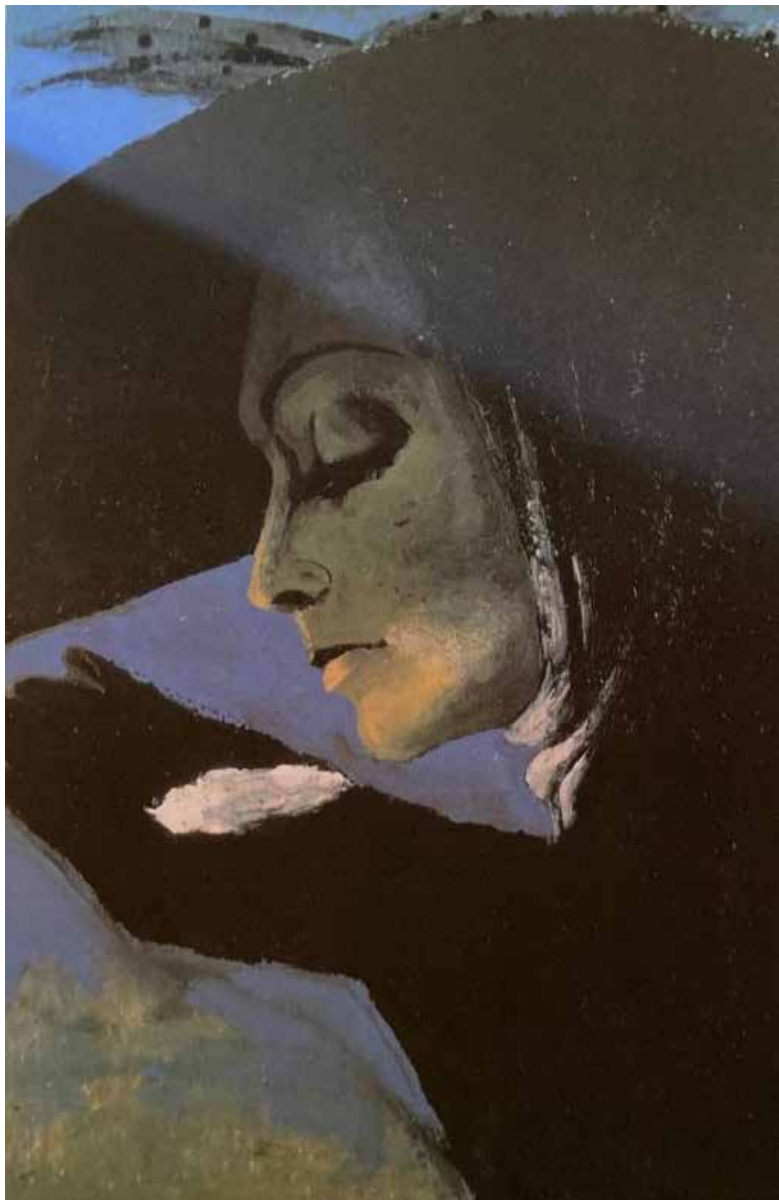
He prefers the large pictorial surfaces, solicited by a gaze that, in the long expressive season 1960–1980, needs to venture into the vast space of landscape, lived as a stage of life, where the rendezvous with history, from popes to council cardinals (of every time), from Galileo to Frederik II; once again, the landscape as an aesthetic dimension in the passion for the beauty of the woman, but also the fear and anxiety in front of the mists of marshes that spoil the air of the planet.

Then Vacchi slowly tries the path, almost unknown to him, of the inner space inside the house, where human relations live moments of intimacy, where the daily routine allows to appreciate the precious repetition of gestures and the flow of time along the culture of dialogue and listening.

It is a long season almost marked by a diary of family life, the result of relations between two people, in which we recognize the pleasure of the game and the beauty of the dance, once again on stage, but this time in a small theatre. A complex expressive process, the result of an incessant and totalizing work that we can find symbolically resumed in the "Melancholia of bodies" that Vacchi writes between 1991 and 1999 (exceptionally for almost a decade); over four meters of painting dedicated to time, to his own memories with no need to tell them, enclosed in the seasons of his own body, impressed in the hidden dimension of his own face.

[1] A.B. Del Guercio, *Giannetto Fieschi. L'esperienza della pittura*, Rubbettino 2022 [2] G. Fieschi, *Amore e Dolore*, Edizioni Art'Events 1997 Ge, pag. 13 [3] R. Calasso, *Le nozze di Cadmo e Armonia*, Adelphi, 2004 Mi, pag. 315 [4] G. Fieschi in "Sulla violenza della realtà concreta e sulla carità" *Gall Rotta Milano* [5] "Ich bin Hier. Von Rembrandt zum Selfie". *Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe* 2015 [6] "...Andrea ti sei ricordato di me..." questa è la frase con la quale mi accoglieva ogni volta e ovunque ci incontravamo. [7] S. Vacchi *La chiamata deserta...* Fondazione Vacchi, settembre 2001 pag. 10-11





The Lady of Camellias, 1996
Lithograph
cm 40x60

Sergio Vacchi

(1925-2016)



Without title, 1980
Lithograph
cm 54x40



Without title, 1980
Lithograph, retouched by hand
cm 73x52



Without title, 1980
Lithograph, retouched by hand
cm 52x73



Without title, 1980
Lithograph
cm 54x40

The young artists

Gabriele Artusio

Mario Cerrone

Arianna De Stefani

Rachele Frison

Giacomo Giori

Alfredo Romio

Nicolas Steiner

Lucrezia Zaffarano

Luming Zhang



Gabriele Artusio



Ines (Cartographer), 2022
China ink, watercolor and felt pen on paper
cm 40x30



Ines (Cosmonaut), 2022
China ink on paper
cm 42x29,7



Ines (Garden), 2022
China ink and oil on cardboard
cm 36,5x28



Mario Cerrone



Night Oracles, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
cm 40x30



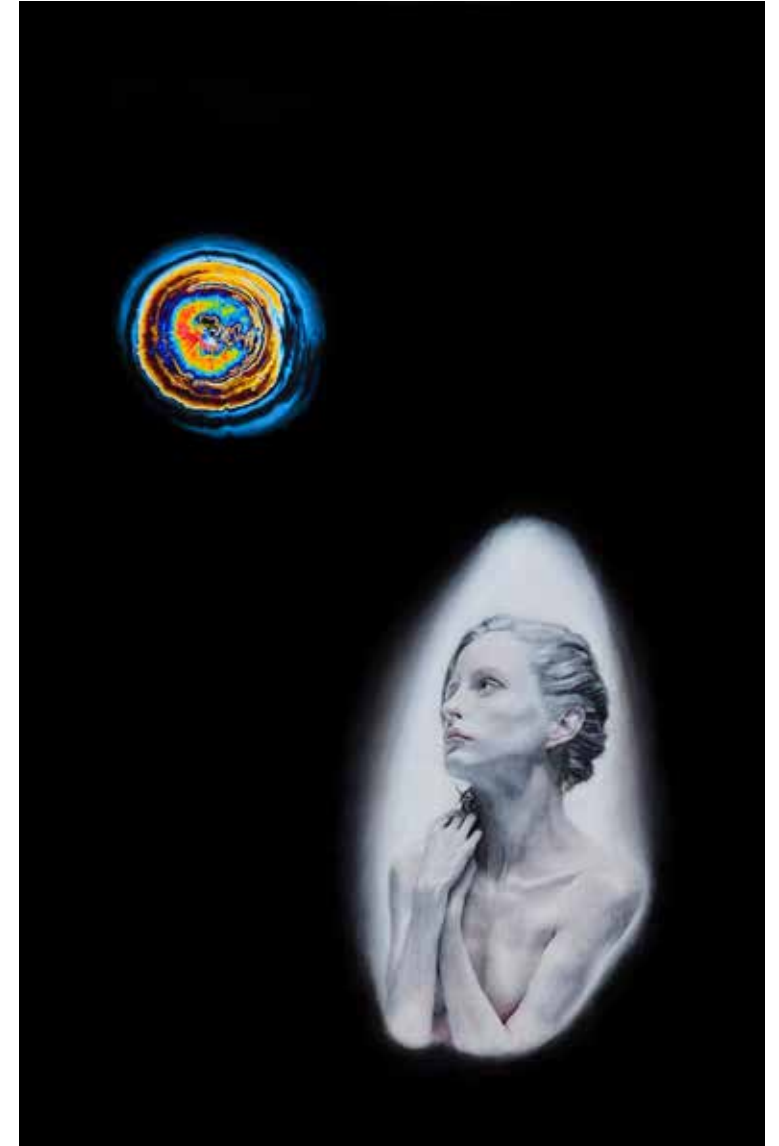
Inner Space, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
cm 40x30



Dreams in Yellow, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
cm 40x30



Arianna De Stefani



Madonna in spe sum, 2021/2023
Iridescent acrylic and spindle tree charcoal on canvas
cm 65x100



Beyond, 2022
Acrylic on paillettes and shot silk
cm 65x75



Coexist, 2023
Acrylic on paillettes
cm 52x40



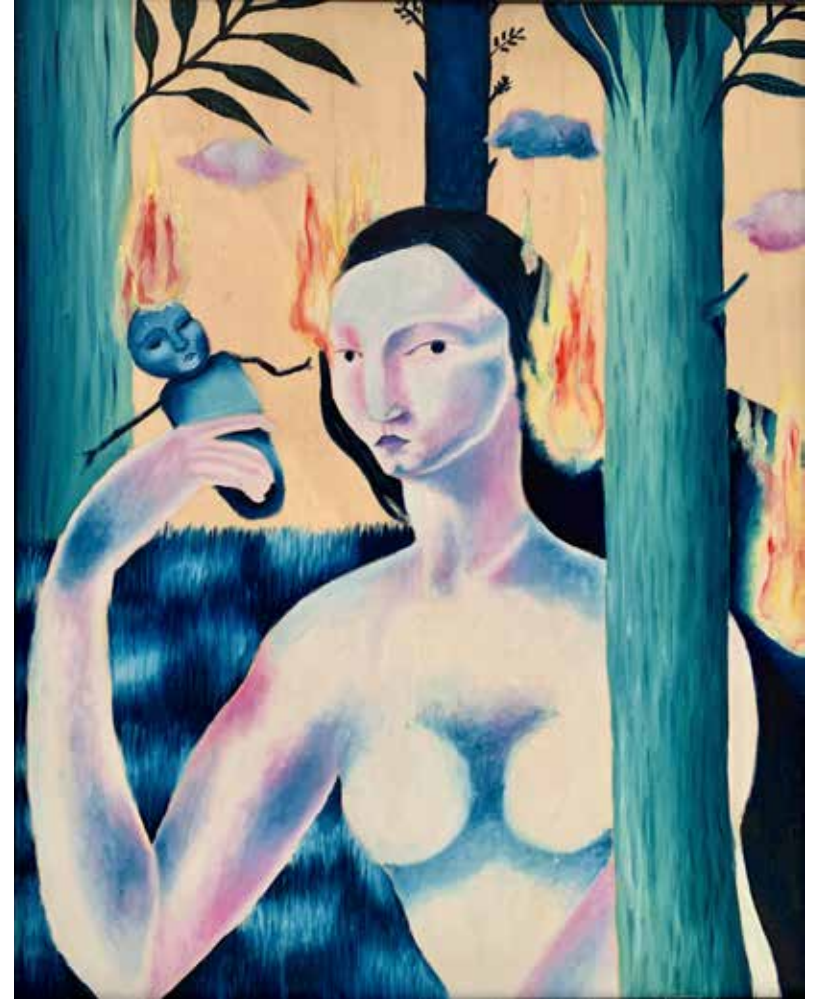
Rachele Frison



Unwanted transformation, 2023
Oil and pastel on board
cm 20x30



Clumsy attempt of protection, 2023
Oil and pastel on board
cm 40x50



What you do returns, 2023
Oil and pastel on board
cm 40x50



Giacomo Giori



XVIII – The Moon, 2023
Collage and acrylic on mdf
cm 30x60



XIII – The Unnamed Arcana, 2023
Collage and acrylic on mdf
cm 30x60



XVIII – The Sun, 2023
Collage and acrylic on mdf
cm 30x60



Alfredo Romio



INRI, 2023
Mixed media on banner print
cm 50x50



Quo vadis Domine (BUCHA)?, 2023
Mixed media on banner print
cm 100x70



"Joannie" of Arc, 2023
mixed media on banner print
cm 50x70



Nicolas Steiner



Poem of the sunflower, 2021
Oil, wax and pigment on canvas
cm 60x75



Poetry of the flying glass, 2021
Oil, wax and pigment on canvas
cm 60x75



Poem of the burning chair, 2021
Oil, wax and pigment on canvas
cm 60x75



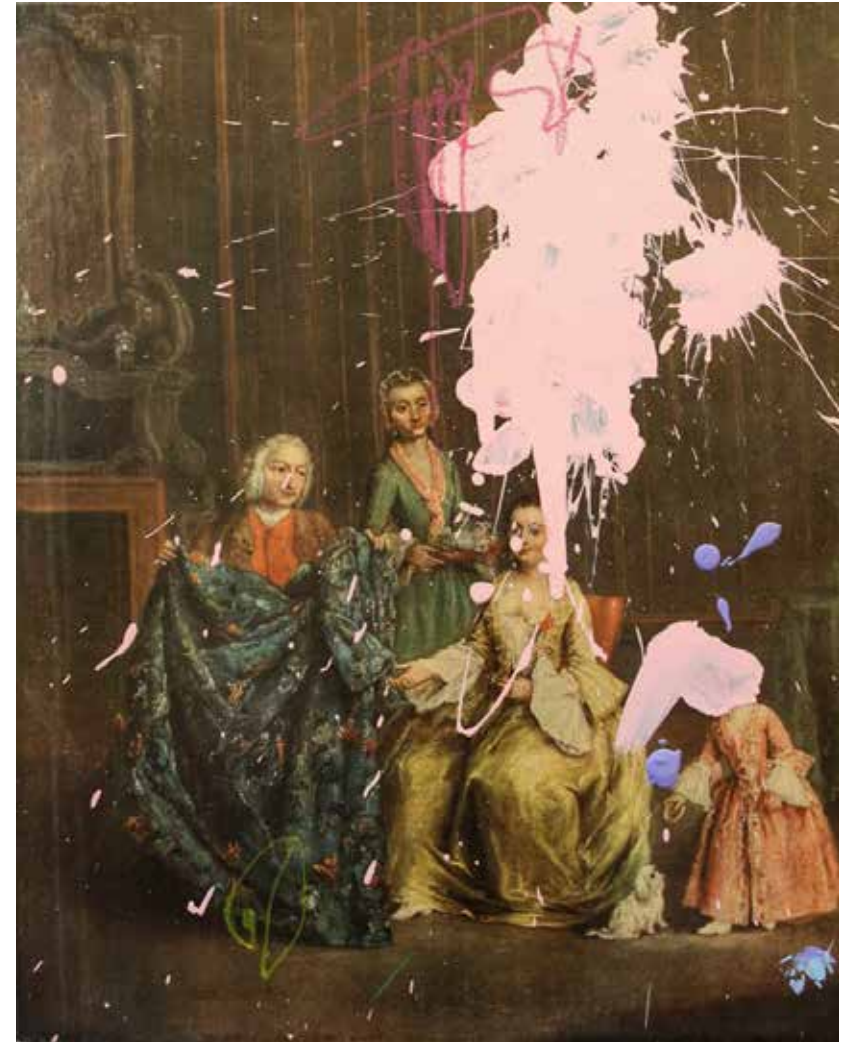
Lucrezia Zaffarano



Home is everywhere (tryptic), 2023
Oil on canvas, mixed media
cm 35x25x3



Erasing the past (gestuality), 2023
Mixed media on framed paper
cm 49x61



The other reason (dyptic), 2023
Mixed media on framed paper
cm 49x61



Luming Zhang



Light in the woods 02, 2022
watercolor on paper and acrylic on canvas
cm 50x40



The eye of the forest, 2022
watercolor on paper and acrylic on canvas
cm 50x40



Light in the woods 01, 2022
watercolor on paper and acrylic on canvas
cm 50x40

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Special thanks to Birgit and Allan Vinge



