

Maree Azzopardi

HUMANA – SHADOW

Banca Giuratale, Victoria

5 – 20 July 2008

For more than a decade, the award-winning, mixed-media photographs of Sydney-based artist Maree Azzopardi have presented the human body as a contemporary metaphor for beauty, decay, glory and shame. Sometimes her photos are crumpled, lacquered and layered with tarnished gold, as though it is her technique that is damaged, rather than the figures she portrays. She explores the themes of religion, death and sexuality, an explosive combination in any language. Her work has been seen in important solo and group exhibition in Australia, Italy, Malta and the U.S. For her latest Humana series, Azzopardi again focuses on the inherent spirituality of the human body, each time presented in a new context.

Humana – Shadow are overhead images of figures casting long, ominous shadows in the ancient centre of Rome. Such elements as a raised hand, a red flag or an open shutter stand out when seen from above, while the living, breathing people themselves virtually disappear. Their bodies are reduced to flat, black projections. It is left up to their shadows to suggest their personalities, their emotions and their symbolic gestures. Azzopardi's mixed Australian-Maltese heritage gives her an unusual viewpoint from where she reinterprets the emotional impact of classical religious imagery. In Azzopardi's hands, the human body is further removed from reality.

Biography

Born in Sydney in 1966, Maree Azzopardi's work has been seen in important solo and group exhibitions in Australia, Italy, Malta and the USA, alongside such prominent artists as Cindy Sherman, Annie Leibovitz and Tracey Moffatt. With several shows at Galleria Il Ponte Contemporanea in Rome, her Italian survey exhibition *The Poet Assassinated* was held at Galleria Zerotre, Orvieto in 2005 and her last show in Malta was the *Spiritland* at St James Cavalier in Valletta. Her *Celeste* exhibition was part of the Australian Centenary of Federation celebrations in 2001. . This is Maree's fifth solo exhibition on the Maltese islands.. In 2007, Jonathan Turner curated simultaneous exhibitions of Azzopardi's work from the *Humana serious, - Shadow, Relic and Flesh* at Libby Edwards Galleries in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. An image from Azzopardi's Momento Mori series from *Missing From the Garden* appeared on

the front cover of the prestigious American art journal, Artnews (1998), an image from Fishworks appeared on the front cover of Sydney magazine Photofile (2000) and images from the Humana series have been recently reproduced in New York's Art & Auction and in Tableau Fine Arts Magazine, The Netherlands. Jonathan Turner curated Maree's most recent show, *Chaos and Revelry*, which opened in Malmo Sweden last month, will open at the Sentella in The Citadel, Gozo in early August 2008. Maree is represented by Il Ponte Contemporanea in Rome.

The show is being kindly supported by the Ministry for Gozo with the patronage of the Australian High Commission in Malta.

Sponsors include Attrans and Academies Australiasia.

Azzopardi's exhibition in Gozo, *The Humana series –Shadow* will open on Saturday 5th July at the Banca Giuratale, Independence Square, Victoria being officially inaugurated by the Hon. Minister for Gozo Mrs Giovanna Debono in the presence of His Excellency the Australian High Commissioner, Mr Jurek Juszczuk.

The exhibition runs until Sunday 20th July 2008. Entrance is free and the general public is cordially invited to visit this unique show from Australia. More information on Azzopardi's works can be viewed at www.mareeazzopardi.com, tel. 7981 6627 or the Culture office helpdesk, 2155 6125