

NON-DOMESTIC . NEW WORKS BY MAREE AZZOPARDI, MYRIAM LAPLANTE AND LUANA PERILLI

curated by **Jonathan Turner**

October, 4th – 24th 2008

opening Saturday October 4th | h 18:00



Evento organizzato in occasione della

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Maree Azzopardi, Myriam Laplante and **Luana Perilli** take a sideways glance at ordinary aspects of daily life, reinterpreting the "innocence" of suburban normality in striking works which incorporate the techniques of photography, film, collage, sculpture and installation. Domestic bliss is not their aim. Their works exist beyond the usual comfort zones. They are not necessarily conceptual attacks on the safe ethics of the *bourgeoise*, but they are visual refusals to adapt to the norms demanded by society. All three artists consistently look at the themes of desire, memory and childhood.

Although they have distinct histories and come from very different heritages - Azzopardi was born in Australia from Maltese parents; Laplante was born in Bangladesh, raised in Canada and has lived in Italy for several decades; Perilli was born in Rome in 1981 where she still works - there are several clear links to their works, including their fascination with immortality. This is best represented by works exploring topics as diverse as religion, ghosts, folkloric costume and how the family can represent a sense of timelessness. There is a recurring fascination with domestic life - the young girls dressed as fairies and angels in Azzopardi's work, the toys and domestic melodramas in Laplante's imagery, and the appearance of such house-hold objects as sewing machines and furniture in Perilli's drawings, collages and installations. Each artist has a strong affiliation to Rome. All three have exhibited regularly in various galleries and public spaces in the Italian capital, plus there is the link of an ongoing friendship together.

Maree Azzopardi's new series of photographs, *Chaos & Revelry* (2008) explore her own childhood memories. Drawing upon religious iconography from the church in her family's village in Malta and photographs of her own niece, *Angel Blood, Wings* and *The Family* represent memories of growing up as a girl in a Catholic, Maltese family. These works imply the significant influence that Azzopardi's cultural and religious upbringing have had on her sense of identity and artistic practice.

For more than a decade, the mixed-media photographs of this Sydney-based artist have presented the human body as a contemporary metaphor for beauty, decay, glory and shame. In her works, classical sculptures and religious icons appear to be as real as breathing humans, her living subjects as still as marble statuary. Sometimes Azzopardi crumples her photographs so that they become criss-crossed with a network of jagged lines, like flashes of lightning. She then lacquers these images and applies tarnished gold leaf, as though her technique is based on damage and repair.

Maree Azzopardi explores the themes of religion, death and sexuality, an explosive combination in any language. The six photographs that comprise *Chaos & Revelry* can be read as fractured fairytales of redemption from Azzopardi's Maltese Catholic childhood on a farm near Sydney. Using a combination of dirty pinks, dusty blues and gold, she depicts young girls at an age of inquisitiveness, caution and uncertainty. In diptyches and triptyches, Azzopardi plays strange visual games in which the ribs of a sacrificial lamb take on grace of the wings of an angel. Azzopardi's is a world of cultural contrasts, with carved cherubs and little girls dressed-up in fairy costumes, lost innocence and the temptation of the flesh, pastel pink and blood red. In a work contrasting a shy girl to a bunch of overblown blossoms, *Flower Girl* captures the extremes of budding sensuality and imminent death.

Myriam Laplante creates photographs, sculptures and installations, and stages performances, all of which function as surprise intrusions on daily life. She purposely hijacks our sense reality, such as with her recent creation of a fake hotel in the San Lorenzo district of Rome, a large-scale installation complete with signage, a lobby and guest rooms painted sickly yellow. Confused passersby inquired about renting rooms. Meanwhile, Laplante's smaller sculptures are an uncomfortable mix of the grotesque and the playful. Furry children's toys are given human anatomical details and violent natures. Laplante's contribution to this exhibition – *Nano* (2008) - is potent and forceful, despite its humble size, with the

Interno Ventidue Arte Contemporanea | Palazzo Taverna

via di Monte Giordano 36 | 00186 Roma

[t/f] 0039 06 81909377 [e] info@internoventidue.com [w] www.internoventidue.com

c.f. 07458260581 p.i. 09472681006

wilful presence of an unwanted guest. Standing in a corner, an ordinary suburban garden gnome has been wrapped in white lace, like a partly mummified monster. As always, Laplante alters our perceptions of what is good and evil, normal and subversive.

Luana Perilli was the youngest participant at the recent 15TH QUADRIENNALE OF ROME, where she exhibited her surreal reinterpretation of domesticity with an installation imitating a modest living room filled with cheap furniture, souvenirs, potted plants and videos of chattering mouths projected on marble statues. Perilli's work is about revelation through layers, with overlapping images and metaphors. For this exhibition at **InternoVentidue**, she is recreating her installation *Welcome (Alone in Public)*, based around a simple park bench, accompanied by a sound-track of actors reading out personals ads. «They are real ads taken from newspapers and the internet, written in different languages - says Perilli - they are intimate but public requests for attention, creating a dialogue between the space and the viewer. It's about communication in public spaces and the search for a partner». The bench becomes an informal place for contemplation and a possible site for romantic encounters. A welcome mat has been draped over the bench. This is an inviting yet disorientating gesture, since a welcome mat is usually found on the floor in front of a house, a statement on the threshold of domesticity. Perilli's sketches, drawings and collages provide a "backstage" view of the *Welcome* project, installed in the gallery in a new domestic context.

This exhibition of three artists at **Interno Ventidue Arte Contemporanea** is aligned to the exhibition of *Disoriented Imagery* by Tracey Moffatt, Marina Paris and Beatrice Pediconi - also curated by **Jonathan Turner** - at **Z2O** gallery, through October 25 | 6 via del Querceti | Rome
(tel +39 06 704 52261 info@z2ogalleria.it - www.z2ogalleria.it)

The work of Maree Azzopardi is courtesy **Il Ponte Contemporanea**, Roma.
The works of Myriam Laplante and Luana Perilli are courtesy **The Gallery Apart**, Roma.
Welcome (Alone in Public) site specific is courtesy **Semintesta Ass. Cult.**, Frascati.

InternoVentidue Arte Contemporanea

00186 Roma - 36 via di Monte Giordano - Palazzo Taverna

[t/f] +39 06 81909377

info@internoventidue.com - www.internoventidue.com

Monday - Wednesday | 16:00 - 20:00



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