



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY

**With the patronage of the Australian Embassy in Stockholm**

**Maree Azzopardi, curated by Jonathan Turner** Galleri Tapper-Popermajer ([www.tapper-popermajer.com](http://www.tapper-popermajer.com)) is proud to present an exhibition (31st of May - 13th of July) with Australian artist Maree Azzopardi, showing the complete Humana series from 2007 together with her latest series Chaos and Revelry. The exhibition is curated by Jonathan Turner who has also written catalogue texts for the exhibition.

The exhibition opens on Saturday May 31, 12.00 - 16.00 Artist and curator in attendance!

## **About the exhibition**

### **Maree Azzopardi - Shadows, Chaos and Revelry**

For more than a decade, the mixed-media photographs of Sydney-based artist Maree Azzopardi 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. This heady mix is partly her response to the Christian tradition in art, in which the language of passion and desire is consigned to the world of sin, except paradoxically when applied to the human soul's deep longing for God.

This solo exhibition, her first at Galleri Tapper-Popermajer, focuses on her two most recent series Chaos and Revelry (2008) and Humana (2006-2007). The six photographs that comprise Chaos and Revelry can be read as fractured fairytales of redemption from Azzopardi's Maltese Catholic childhood on a farm near Sydney. Using the Nordic combination of dirty pinks, dusty blues and gold, she depicts young girls at an age of inquisitiveness, caution and uncertainty. Her portraits of pale girls, saintly relics and bloody meat are vaguely reminiscent of Francis Bacon's paintings of popes and butchered carcasses. 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. The Family shows the artist's niece imitating the theatrical pose of a femme fatale, flanked by statues of the Virgin Mary and Joseph, in Azzopardi's family church in Malta.

Azzopardi's Humana series is divided into three distinct parts. In varying degrees of naturalism, each offers a particular perspective on the human presence in the world, in techniques incorporating collage and digital manipulation. Humana - Flesh objectifies the

delights of the sensual in five intimate portraits. A reclining nude appears in soft-focus close-ups, her curving forms dramatically chopped by the frame. The model is depicted as a grainy Odalesque in a Roman hotel room. Meanwhile, Humana - Relic draws on the artist's personal sense of the sacred, re-interpreting four images of religious statues in Saint Philips Church in Zebbug, Malta. The emotional impact comes from Azzopardi's unusual treatment of the inanimate, though life-like, sculptures.

Humana - Shadow is a series of seven overhead photographs taken from the third-floor windows of an ancient palace in the Piazza Navona, in the heart of Rome. Azzopardi's idea is startlingly simple. At dusk, walking figures cast long, ominous shadows down the narrow side streets. From a vertiginous perspective, incidental elements suddenly stand out - a raised hand, a red flag, an open shutter. Looking down from above (as if from the heavens), the living, breathing people themselves almost disappear. It is left up to their shadows to suggest their personalities, emotions and symbolic gestures. The human body is reduced to a two-dimensional black projection, frozen in time. In this way, the grand expressions of the Baroque are superimposed over the casual actions of modern-day tourists. In a city typified by potent mythology, Azzopardi's Roman shadows are more solid than physical reality, the spirit more tangible than flesh.

Jonathan Turner, curator

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, and at Lipanjepuntin Arte Contemporanea in Trieste, her Italian survey exhibition The Poet Assassinated was held at Galleria Zerotre, Orvieto in 2005. In 2007, Jonathan Turner curated simultaneous exhibitions of Azzopardi's work from the Humana Series - Shadow, Relic & 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 - Shadows series have been recently reproduced in New York's Art & Auction and in Tableau Fine Arts Magazine, The Netherlands.

## SWEDISH SUMMARY

Maree Azzopardi från Sydney ställer ut på Galleri Tapper-Popermajer i Teckomatorp (31/5 - 13/7). Konstnärligt ansvarig för utställningen är Jonathan Turner.

*Utställningen invigs lördagen den 31 maj, kl 12.00 - 16.00 Maree Azzopardi och Jonathan Turner närvarar under vernissagen*

**AcademiesAustralasia**  
Group of Colleges  
sponsors Maree Azzopardi's exhibition in Sweden

### Galleri Tapper-Popermajer

Bantorget 2 SE-260 20 Teckomatorp, Sweden

phone: +46 (40) 692 79 45 mobile phone: +46 (70) 251 19 45

e: [info@tapper-popermajer.com](mailto:info@tapper-popermajer.com) w: [www.tapper-popermajer.com](http://www.tapper-popermajer.com)