

Galerie Mezzanin is delighted to announce *Subjects*, the first solo exhibition of Italian artist Isabella Ducrot in Geneva.

In the five work groups, which are all very different from each other, ranging from landscapes and vases to teapots, one theme persists: presenting the same things, repeated many times. The old kitchen towels *Fazzoletti* are all decorated with circles, a kind of invocation as in mantras or prayers, the erotic images *Erotici* are black-and-white and the pots *Vasi* are reduced to simple geometric forms.

Nora Iosia elaborates on these still lifes: «These vases, teapots, and a handful of natural elements, in the rhythm of exercise, of repetition, take on a character that grows further and further away from the meaning of presence : the initial intention to stay within the confines of their formal essence founders nonetheless in a meditation that draws reality back to the essential in a single gesture, almost an ideogram of the present (...)»

During her extensive travels, primarily to the East, Isabella Ducrot has developed a special interest in textiles from these countries: the fabric tradition, so distinctly different in China, India, Japan and Central Asia, has become her subject of study. Fascinated by how fabrics also symbolize structures of the mind and of society, she embarked on a path of artistic research that involved using textiles in her works as a starting point.

In her work, fabric and paper share an ambiguous relationship: They are at the same time medium and content, the link between her artistic approach and the sublime collection of rare and antique materials she has assembled over the years.

Inspired by the recurring elements, the “rhyme” in these materials, she has made it to her mission to transform them into objects which represent the rhythm of life. Repetition is the subject and primary theme, the protagonist, in many of Ducrot’s artworks.

Here play in her observations from being an avid traveller: Whereas in the East the repetitive element is an end in itself, a sort of mental concentration and the centre of emotion; it is often declared to be «decoration» in the West, with a somewhat negative connotation to it.

Ducrot’s choice of colours can be understood as a dialogue with the character of the fabric/paper by actively incorporating it into her paintings, thereby liberating the fabric from its historic content and origins and underlining the most hidden elements like the structure and the relationship between

colour and light. She prefers fabrics that at first sight seem to be apparently simple, but in reality were the result of very sophisticated craftsmanship. Simplicity of fabrics that are absolutely raw and bare, without any kind of ornamentation. It is also the flexible and adaptable character of these materials that she appreciates, this way they are constantly ready to be transformed into something else.

Ducrot's complex and sensitive work represents her open-mindedness towards foreign cultures and genres. In her work, painting, music and literature merge into a synthesis of the arts.

Isabella Ducrot (born 1931 in Naples, lives and works in Rome) has exhibited last year at Galerie Gisela Capitain in Cologne and at Capitain Petzel in Berlin, and in 2018 at the Spazio Parlato in Palermo. In 2014 she had a major exhibition at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome, Italy. In 1993 she showed her work at the Venice Biennale.

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