

Lighthouse

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You're Probably Right

Iouri Podladtchikov & Elio Luxardo

09 March – 22 April, 2023

Lighthouse invites Iouri Podladtchikov to comment on the work of Elio Luxardo. The title of the exhibition, *You're Probably Right*, came to the artist while watching a conversation between two characters about their conceptions of love in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's movie *Chinese Roulette* (1976). Brought together in the same space, the works of the two men also present an unexpected dialogue.

Born in Sorocaba, Brazil, Elio Luxardo moved to Rome in 1932 to enroll at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia. Popular among the Cinecittà stars and theater actors who rushed to pose in front of his black backdrop, Luxardo gained renown with his hard cold black and white photographs depicting men and women in the nudes, often just illuminated by the light of a bare bulb.

Close enough to the Futurism movement to portray its founder, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, in a kaleidoscopic composition in 1930, but not enough to completely carry out his fascist ideas; Luxardo's work yet tends to heavily rely on nationalistic overtones. His images of oiled-up naked sculptural male bodies are the result of a dated conception of manhood, prevailing at the time. But taken out of their context, and into a contemporary reading, they hold a homoerotic subtext and an aesthetic popular with gay magazines; rising questions about artistic sensitivity and cultural appropriation.

Using Elio Luxardo's work as an essential tool for comparison has led Iouri Podladtchikov to further explore the societal archetypes of men at different periods, and how the perception of these archetypes evolves.

Born in Moscow in 1988, Iouri Podladtchikov lives and works in Zurich. A peripatetic youth and the ensuing longing for home have imbued his work with melancholy. Through the mediums of photography, abstract drawing, sculpture and performance, he explores the weight and volatility of social interactions and the hierarchies involved.

Surrounded by a red aura, his intimate work breaks a clear cut with Luxardo's "perfect" cold bodies. The small square format of the Polaroids is like a window to a closed space, where one can spy on what seems to be a soft and tender scene between lovers, or between a man and his own body. Scratching the superficial layers to see what beneath these walls and barriers we use to protect ourselves, and showcasing the opposite of strength and dominance, Iouri Podladtchikov explores how contemporary society affects men emotionally, and the perception of oneself.

While being undressed, stripped-down to their essence, Luxardo's models don't seem to connect intimately with the viewer. Podladtchikov gives nudity a deeper meaning by presenting bodies deprived of not only their attire, but of their emotional skin, and conveying a true feeling of rawness.

The central piece of the exhibition is by far the most mysterious, embracing all these contradictory feelings. Looking just barely alive, hanging on to life, a photorealistic sculpture of an American yellow warbler lost its colours. Made of silver, and seeming like the victim of a saturnism plague, the bird is

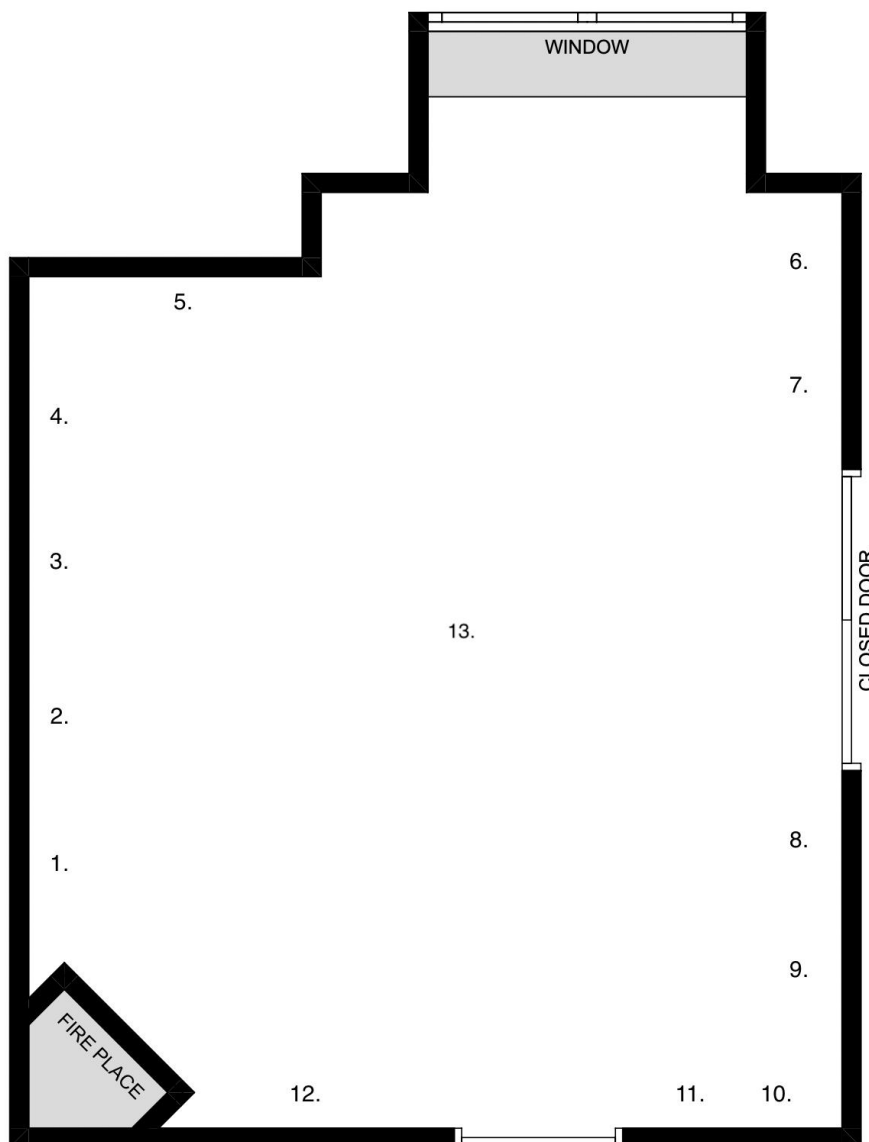
imprisoned in its own shiny skin. The tension in its wings indicates it might be about to release its last breath.

Could it be a threatening memento mori? A fallen angel, as the metaphor of a suffocating world? The closest comment to “no comment”? Or, maybe, a sign of holding accountability for keeping alive an antiquated photographer... The idea of the bird arose without a proper explanation, but as a necessity.

Confronted with Elio Luxardo’s distressed and emotionless subjects, the viewer can find solace in the intimate close spaces and warm neon lights proposed by Iouri Podladtchikov. The exhibition is built as both a space to feel uncomfortable and comforted — raising the eternal question of the purpose of art, and its responsibility.

Text by Louise des Places, written in Paris, February 26th, 2023.

Louise des Places (b. Paris, 1997) is an independent art curator and arts journalist.



1. Iouri Podladtchikov
Untitled (Red Nude), 2021
Polaroid, 8.5x10.8cm
Frame, 25.2x31.3cm
Signed with pencil on the back
2. Iouri Podladtchikov
Untitled (Red Nude), 2021
Polaroid, 8.5x10.8cm
Frame, 25.2x31.3cm
Signed with pencil on the back
3. Iouri Podladtchikov
Untitled (Red Nude), 2021
Polaroid, 8.5x10.8cm
Frame, 25.2x31.3cm
Signed with pencil on the back
4. Iouri Podladtchikov
Untitled (Red Nude), 2021
Polaroid, 8.5x10.8cm
Frame, 25.2x31.3cm
Signed with pencil on the back
5. Iouri Podladtchikov
Untitled (Red Nude), 2021
Polaroid, 8.5x10.8cm
Frame, 25.2x31.3cm
Signed with pencil on the back
6. Elio Luxardo
Unknown title, circa 1930's
Gelatin silver print
Print size: 17.9x23.8cm
Image size: 12.5x17.6cm
Signed on back
7. Elio Luxardo
Unknown title, circa 1930's
Gelatin silver print
Print size: 17.9x23.8cm
Image size: 12.5x17.6cm
Signed on back
8. Elio Luxardo
Unknown title, circa 1930's
Gelatin silver print
Print size: 17.9x23.8cm
Image size: 12.5x17.6cm
Signed on back
9. Elio Luxardo
Unknown title, circa 1930's
Gelatin silver print
Print size: 17.9x23.8cm
Image size: 12.5x17.6cm
Signed on back
10. Elio Luxardo
Unknown title, circa 1930's
Gelatin silver print
Print size: 17.9x23.8cm
Image size: 12.5x17.6cm
Signed on front
11. Elio Luxardo
Unknown title, circa 1930's
Gelatin silver print
Print size: 17.9x23.8cm
Image size: 12.5x17.6cm
Signed on front
12. Elio Luxardo
Unknown title, circa 1930's
Gelatin silver print
Print size: 17.9x23.8cm
Image size: 12.5x17.6cm
Signed on back
13. Iouri Podladtchikov
warbler, 2023, edition 2/5
Silver, 22cm (wingspan)
Acrylic & wood, 24x24x160cm (plinth)