

Irma Blank

Gehen

Opening Saturday 6 May 3-8 pm

6 May - 10 June 2023

P420 is pleased to announce the opening on Saturday 6 May, at 3PM, of *Gehen*, the third solo exhibition by Irma Blank (Celle, 1934 – Milan, 2023) in the gallery. The show, organized in the second room of the gallery, presents the most recent works by the artist who passed away in April, the cycle titled *Gehen, second life*, which she very recently interpreted in the version *Ways*, also included in the show.

After almost 50 years of work, which began in 1968 when she was still living in Sicily, and then continued over the decades in Milan, where the artist moved in the early 1970s, Irma Blank became immobilized on the right side of her body due to a health problem, starting in 2016. After several months in which she was only partially able to recoup her strength and motivation, Blank decided to concentrate not on what she had lost, but on what remained, taking up her pencils, markers and ballpoint pens to return to making her works, though this time with the left hand only.

Gehen, second life is the result of this self-taught process. Every work in the series consists of a single or double page, or multiple pages in a row, with lines that imply – as in all the artist's work – the appearance of a text without narrating, describing, without being readable, because once again – this time in a profound, moving manner – they represent the trace of Blank's very existence, her own story told through something other than words.

"I think we are inside our making through our body, in time – Irma Blank wrote in 2018. – Time accompanies us, but we do the same thing with time, and as we proceed every occurrence, including the errors, finds a balance, until life coincides with the path of the signs, a path that extends from the beginning to the end. This movement is legible in all my works, but recently there has been a personal event that has an impact on me, an illness that prevents me from being able to walk any longer. As always happens, first there is a lack, a painful situation, and the creative gesture stems from there. Now I have a very different relationship with what I do: before this block I always went from inside towards the outside, I always thought of the hand as the tool to go towards others. Now I think about the foot, the ground, the space to cross. For a year and a half, I have called all my new works *Gehen, second life*: and you see, in these works I move once more, I live in the going."

"Something passes through these lines – writes Riccardo Venturi in the essay that accompanies the exhibition – just as electricity passes through a wire. At a more elementary level, what passes is time: the physical – or, as people say with an extraordinary adjective – material time that is employed to trace them, and at this point it matters little where the line begins and in which direction it is headed. Even if we invert the order with which we observe them (the same is true of a handwritten or printed text), the fact remains that they translate, measure and visualize the time of their making. They cannot deny it in the way they can deny the alphanumeric code; at best, they can find an

original way to bear witness to that temporal passage. (...) An inner seismograph – Venturi continues – where the tip of the pen becomes a device that translates a sensation. Or perhaps all that remains is to let the hand flow, to abandon oneself to the pleasure of tracing a line, a logic of scribbling that is inseparable from the practice of drawing. Rather than capturing a mood, these lines portray a breath, as if Blank had found a graphic way to breathe, always equal and always different. Displayed one beside the next, her drawings continue in our mind, making the series a cycle without a beginning and without an end.”

Selected recent exhibitions: *Amour Systémique*, CAPC contemporary art museum of Bordeaux, Bordeaux, FR (2023); *Earth: A Retrospective*, Bombas Gens Centre d’art, Valencia, ES (2022). *Concrete Experience*, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, DE (2023); *A Fine Line: Highlights from the Berkowitz Contemporary Foundation*, The Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami, Miami, US (2022); *On the Lookout*, Fondation CAB, Brussels, BE (2022); *Works 1970 - 2018*, Mai 36 Galerie, Zurich, CH (solo, 2022); *Splendid Isolation*, S.M.A.K., Gent, BE (2022); *Vita Nuova. Nuove sfide per l’arte in Italia 1960-1975*, MAMAC, Nice, FR (2022); *Blank*, ICA, Milano, IT (solo, 2022); *IMAGES FOR SOUNDS: Artist Covers for Music Records*, Villa Lontana, Roma, IT (2022); *The self-taught enigma*, MAMC+ Musée d’Art Moderne et Contemporain de Saint-Étienne Métropole, Saint-Étienne, FR (2021); *Blank*, Bombas Gens Centre d’art, Valencia, ES (solo, 2021); *Ecrire, c’est dessiner*, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, FR (2021); *X*, FRAC des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, FR (2021); *Ink Dreams: Selections from the Fondation INK Collection*, LACMA – Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, US (2021); *Blank*, Museo Villa Dei Cedri, Bellinzona, CH (solo, 2021); *Io dico io (I say I)*, Galleria Nazionale d’arte moderna e contemporanea, Roma, IT (2021); *Blank*, CCA – Center for Contemporary Art Tel Aviv and the Bauhaus Foundation, Tel Aviv, IL; CAPC contemporary art museum of Bordeaux, Bordeaux, FR (solo, 2020); *E subito riprende il viaggio*, P420, Bologna, IT (2020); *Silent Revolutions: Italian Drawings from the Twentieth Century*, Menil Drawing Institute, Houston (TX), US (2020); *Fuori*, XVII Quadriennale d’arte, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Roma, IT (2020); *Drawing Wow 2*, Kunstsaele Berlin, Berlin, DE (2020); *Hyperspaces*, Bombas Gens Centre d’Art, València, ES (2020); *Sounds Lasting and Leaving*, Luxembourg & Dayan, New York, US (2020); *Scrivere Disegnando. Quand la langue cherche son autre*, Centre d’Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva CH (2020).