

SERGIO PREGO
TUTTOTAMBURO
18 May - 30 July 2023

CarrerasMugica is pleased to present, from 18 May to 30 July, *TUTTOTAMBURO*, the second solo show by Sergio Prego at the gallery.

Stefano Tamburini (1955-1986) created the comic book character RanXerox in June 1978, with the collaboration in drawing of Andrea Paziienza, a comics artist hugely popular in Italy yet virtually unknown elsewhere in the world. At first, it seemed as if Tamburini himself was not particularly skilled in drawing yet he created various graphic works using collages of photos and masses of flat colour with faultless finesse. RanXerox is an ultraviolent nihilist android built using recycled photocopier parts and hooked on Vinavil, a popular brand of white glue in Italy which he shoots up. RanXerox is programmed to be in love with his thirteen-year old owner Lubna and to serve her as a sex toy and a means to ensure her survival. The series on the robot was cut short in the third graphic novel when the story writer Stefano Tamburini died of a heroin overdose on 24 April 1986. In Tamburini's last story on Ranx, the now decadent robot is searching for his object of desire, who has abandoned him for a "real" person, and in the final scenes, he tears out his heart, a tangle of mechanical valves that pump fluids around his body, and throws it at Lubna, as his circuits catch fire and he is consumed in a mass of flesh, plastic and metal.

Over recent years, the collected graphic and written work of the author Stefano Tamburini has been published under the title Tutto Tamburo in seven volumes edited by Michele Mordente. From the late-seventies until his untimely death, Tamburini was actively involved in various editorial projects, like Cannibale, Il Male and, perhaps the most outstanding of all, the magazine Frigidaire, of which he was a co-founder along with a few other authors who shared a similar aesthetic sensibility indebted to the radical political movements that had emerged in Italy some years earlier. With this exhibition I wanted to pay tribute to Tamburini, whose work has been a continuous and enduring source of inspiration ever since I discovered it in the mid-eighties.

Between 1980 and 1984, Tamburini also created the comics series Snake Agent using deliberately distorted photocopies of Mel Graff's Secret Agent X-9 comic strips from the 1940s and 50s. In this appropriationist détournement, he rewrote the dialogues, introducing a futurist sci-fi vision in stories featuring worldwide struggles and plots between fascist and authoritarian superpowers. At the same time, he imbued the characters with identities, forms of behaviour and language in step with early-eighties society, pushing to the very limit the suspect morals that underpinned the punk movement in which his work could be included. Among the pages of comic strips, he inserted some collages with colour images of, for instance, food or details of accidents with a distinctly abject character. This repulsiveness underscores the corporeality of collage and its ability to physically affect the reader. Tamburini also made a number of collages for different media and publications using paper cut-outs in flat colours from fashion images in which he introduced outlandish elements that interrupted the continuity of the conventional press and advertising images that surround us. And he did so precisely by drawing attention to the corporeal dimension of collage itself, however much it is made up of predominantly abstract parts or components. As an artist with apparent limitations for drawing,

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he is incredibly skilful in the use of collage as a technique to question us physically through the corporeal quality of the images. Perhaps it is this contradiction between the distancing of abstraction and the power for corporeal allusion that nurtures the tension that has sustained my interest in his work throughout all this time.

Sergio Prego (Hondarribia, 1969) graduated from the School of Fine Arts, EHU-UPV (University of the Basque Country) before continuing his training at Arteleku in San Sebastian. His international profile increased greatly after his move to New York in 1995. His works have been seen in museums and art centres worldwide, including Baffler Museum Houston, Graham Foundation Chicago, Palazzo delle Papesse Centro Arte Contemporanea di Siena, The Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver, PS1 in New York, the Art Unlimited programme at Art 41 in Basel, or Museo Guggenheim in Bilbao. His work is in collections such as Fundació La Caixa, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona-MACBA, Musac-Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, CAC Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Málaga, DA2-Domus Artium Salamanca, ARTIUM Vitoria and Museo Guggenheim Bilbao. In 2019, jointly with Itziar Okariz, he occupied the Spanish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale with the project *Perforado por...*, curated by Peio Aguirre.