

*The group exhibition Permanent Mimesis - An Exhibition on Realism and Simulation brings together thirteen representatives of a new generation of International artists from Europe, the United States and Asia. Displaying photography, painting, sculpture, video and installation works, the show revolves around the particular moment in which images reveal themselves as self-evident constructions and manifest illusions.*

*Our visual scenery is now significantly shaped by the deep transformations brought about by the new technologies involved in digital image production. On the one hand, we are witnessing the widespread and always-increasing popularity of software and devices that elaborate, edit and share images; on the other hand we seem to have broadened our criteria in the perception of reality. Thus we can relate to digitally created images – as in the case of 3D animation – and despite being aware of their artificial nature we are still capable of identifying ourselves with the illusion they produce.*

*The exhibition explores the works of a group of contemporary artists who use digital images as their subject, while still recurring to analogical and more “traditional” formats, such as painting, sculpture and drawing. And their practice, rather than a nostalgic approach, actually constitutes an attempt to underline a sort of production paradox, defining a fundamental aspect of art itself: the possibility to clearly show the production process of an illusion and, despite this, to create a sort of unparalleled and effective ambiguity, as seen in the works by Elad Lassry (1977, Israel / USA) and Michael Riedel (1972, Germany).*

Many of the exhibited works alternate between two moments: the moment of simulation and “manifest” fiction, and that of a believable hyper-realism, through a constant shift in the use of expressive means. Artists such as Anna Barriball (1972, UK), Frank Benson (1976, USA), William Daniels (1976, UK) and Giuseppe Gabellone (1973, Italy), for instance, present drawings that take on the feature of sculpture; their surfaces mimicking space and materials, moving in between bi-dimensional and three-dimensional forms, in between their being image and object.

Many artists today work with elements of both realism and abstraction. These two dimensions can no longer be conceived as opposite categories in art, and neither in our everyday reality. For instance, the economic, as well as the political field, have progressively become more complex as they seem to involve specific and abstract languages, just like the ones used in non-figurative art. Thus, the exhibition includes works by artists such as Roman Ondák (1966, Slovakia), Pratchaya Phinthong (1974, Thailand) and Carey Young (1970), who extend their artistic investigations to the area of business and political action. Their works deal with themes such as fluctuation of money value, the nature of a legal contract, future forecast and political rhetoric, which are all considered

as “representations”, conventions, acts of faith and parts of a general role play.

These young artists watch the constant flux of images and information that surrounds us, placing their work on an intermediary terrain, where the oppositions between mass media and private sphere, between pop collective imagination and individual psychology are no longer effective. Artists Simon Denny (1982, New Zealand), Seth Price (1973, USA), Sterling Ruby (1972, Germany / USA) and Kelley Walker (1969, USA) often use images taken from magazines or the Internet, interiorizing and filtering them through a transformation process, and often turning them into something mysterious and obscure. They are artists who reflect upon the actual state of the image, and upon their lives as an endless sequence of adjustments, from one medium to the next, from one screen to the other, as they question a fundamental concept in the history of modernity: that of the specific nature of the media and of the supporting devices and technologies.

In the works on display, images seem to become the sediment of time, which does no longer coincide with the idea of velocity promoted by modernity but, on the contrary, it expresses the manifold time dimensions of the Internet.

The accompanying bi-lingual catalogue (Italian and English) will be published by Electa Mondadori with texts by Alessandro Rabottini, Seth Price e Sterling Ruby.

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