

Alessandra Spranzi

He runs after facts like a beginner learning to skate, who, furthermore, practices somewhere where it is forbidden.

Franz Kafka, *The Blue Octavo Notebooks*

[Er läuft den Tatsachen nach wie ein Anfänger im Schlittschuhlaufen,
der überdies irgendwo übt, wo es verboten ist]

P420 is pleased to announce the third solo exhibition at the gallery by Alessandra Spranzi (Milan, 1962), after the previous *Maraviglia* (2014) and *Mani che imbrogliano* (2018).

The show features recent works, made over the last two years: *Esercizi*, the new series of color photographs, and four videos made specifically for the occasion. The context in which the works interact is a place suspended in time, which the artist formulates with white and green curtains, typical of the summer months.

Alessandra Spranzi works with the photographic image in different ways and forms: photographing, re-photographing, gathering, cutting, indicating, erasing. She intervenes when images and things shift away from their uses and become, so to speak, unaware of themselves, their possibilities and their beauty.

The images created by Alessandra Spranzi leave us suspended; they are open images, we might say, but not in the sense of a question open to the viewer, not to be interrogative, but to safeguard the enigma, or in any case the depth, of a certain intrinsic inexpressibility.

As Lisa Andreani writes in the critical essay that accompanies the exhibition: "In the first and second rooms, as we shall see, certain subjects stand out more than others. The chairs are in a precarious position, resting on a table, waiting to lay claim to a shared function, or perhaps a state of deployment, more than anything else. Extraordinary objects, bearers of history and stories. Implication of a hierarchy, tending towards the patriarchal, but also things with the force of knowing how to play. The chair is also democratic, malleable and comfortable.

The other subject, a warm presence, is a circular form: balls, oranges, arrays of fruit, a walnut, a table leg."

Egli. A cavallo, Metronomo (non farlo), Palleggi, Tovaglia al vento are the video works that create an intriguing and unexpected visual and aural rhythm. Lisa Andreani continues: "The visual and musical composition initiated by these objects and gestures immersed in a quiet life expands into the surrounding space, with a polyphonic but still minimal score. The crisscrossing sounds of a boy's and a girl's juggling a ball, respectively in an area facing the sea and in a courtyard, takes active part through the tracing of the beat, so each of us can find ourselves in the image before our eyes. But these are not the only images in motion: a man rides forward with his horse during a local celebration, a tablecloth is blown by the wind."

In coordination with the exhibition the artist's book *Esercizi* has been published, in an edition of 100 copies.

“In this exhibition I am presenting works from the last two years, a group of color photographs (a chair placed on a table, a balanced walnut, boules on a pétanque court, soil that has fallen on floor, a large citron held tightly...).

A metronome marks and measures the movements of a knife on the table, while someone practices guitar and gets nervous...

A girl throws a ball hard against the wall in a courtyard, measuring what?...

A man on horseback rides down a crowded street in a town, where is he going? Where does he come from?...

The wind moves the cloth on a table in the street, pulling and tugging at it. The tablecloth seems to like it...

There is something in these gathered facts that suggests a turnaround, one turns quickly and stays there watching, before resuming.

At the large windows of the gallery, the white and green curtains of summer, which speak of shade and afternoon naps.”

An exercise book accompanies the works in the show.

Alessandra Spranzi

It's almost summer, in here. Perhaps it is still summer. Time seems dull, the curtains have white and green stripes. It seems like a space where you can size things up. When Alessandra shared with me a short description of what surrounds us, the term she used most often in those few lines was the adverb *almost*. So I perceived a certain involuntary insistence: "as if it were, nearly, not completely." Without necessarily having a need to specify further.

In the first and second rooms, as we shall see, certain subjects stand out more than others. The chairs are in a precarious position, resting on a table, waiting to lay claim to a shared function, or perhaps a state of deployment, more than anything else. Extraordinary objects, bearers of History and stories. Implication of a hierarchy, tending towards the patriarchal, but also things with the force of knowing how to play. The chair is also democratic, malleable and comfortable.

The other subject, a warm presence, is a circular form: balls, oranges, arrays of fruit, a walnut, a table leg.

"The circle is an essentially unstable, dynamic figure: from it arise all rotating things, and all futile efforts to achieve perpetual motion." (Bruno Munari, *Il cerchio*, Corraini, Milan, 2010)

The visual and musical composition initiated by these objects and gestures immersed in a quiet life expands into the surrounding space, with a polyphonic but still minimal score.

The crisscrossing sounds of a boy and a girl's juggling a ball, respectively in an area facing the sea and in a courtyard, takes active part through the tracing of the beat, so each of us can find ourselves in the image before our eyes. But these are not the only images in motion: a man rides forward with his horse during a local celebration, a tablecloth is blown by the wind.

A certain musicality stays with us, as we enter the other room in the gallery.

Here the notes generate a sound quite irritating for the ears. A coffee cup is tormented by a knife, while in the meantime a metronome measures the movements, yielding rests to the extemporaneous practice of a beginner musician playing the guitar.

Cose che accadono is the title of one of the many publications that Alessandra Spranzi has realised in her career. Those familiar with her work might be curiously impressed and excited by the new – almost new – content of this exhibition. At first glance and first clash with the images, their force might seem almost questionable. They teach us nothing, and seem quite impenetrable. Faced with them, we realize we have to suspend our need for interpretation. We recognize, we find again what we have left behind, even the details seem similar but not identical. These images are concrete music, there is no abstraction, and instead the sound is present in all its possible and sweeping completeness.

The image is defined, but not totally, *almost*. The adventurous power of what we observe – and this is what I said to Alessandra in July, in her studio – is granted by its need not to answer not to have to explain. The perhaps more habitual and ordinary reading that associates the artist's visual research with the magical, the surreal, the feminine and symbolic, seems to be lacking. In this sense her photography is radical, it requires no theories or preset structures to be autonomous. Looking at this series (*Esercizi*) and the videos included in this exhibition, I couldn't help but recall the essay *Against Interpretation* by Susan Sontag. For some time I have thought about the contemporary thrust of the thinking that emerges amidst her words, the obligation in which the critic – and, at the same time, the artist – is supposed to reveal the latent content of a work, the egocentric necessity of overwriting what we see with a further level of complexity which most of the time turns out to be a universal statement, the offspring of time.

At this point, and in conclusion, there is no worse deafness than the lack of will to see, and the process of research stirred up by Alessandra is precious because it departs from the universal to arrive at the small and vital, *almost*.

Lisa Andreani

EXHIBITED WORKS

- 1 White and green curtains
- 2 *Due mele rosse sul tavolo (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 3 *Palleggi*, 2023
color digital video and sound, 0'50", ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 4 *La mano sinistra con cedro giallo (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 5 *Tovaglia al vento (parte I)*, 2023
color digital video and sound, 1'04", ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 6 *Petanque (quattro palle) (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 7 *Petanque (nove palle) (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 8 *Egli. A cavallo*, 2023
color digital video and sound, 1'13", ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 9 Piano exercises,
Anna R., eleven years old
- 10 *Agrumi sul tavolo di cemento (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 11 *Matita azzurra e matita grigia #1 (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 12 *Matita azzurra e matita grigia #2 (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 13 *Due sedie appoggiate sul verde (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 14 *Il grosso cedro (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 15 *Equilibrista sul filo (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 16 *Tovaglia al vento (parte II)*, 2023
color digital video and sound, 1'04", ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 17 *Noce in equilibrio nel piatto bianco (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 18 *Palle di mare sulla spiaggia di Oliva #2 (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 19 *Palle di mare sulla spiaggia di Oliva #1 (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 20 *Sedia appoggiata su tovaglia bianca (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 21 *Sostegni (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 22 *Cinque bicchieri sul tavolo (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 23 *Due palloni su una sedia di plastica bianca (Esercizi)*, 2022-2023
color photograph, 18,7 × 25,3 cm, ed.3+2ap (1/3)
- 24 *Metronomo (non farlo)*, 2023
color digital video and sound, 1'34", ed.3+2ap (1/3)



Alessandra Spranzi, was born in Milan in 1962, where she lives and works. She studied at the Scuola Politecnica di Design and the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera. She is a professor of Photography at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan.

From 1992 she has taken part in many solo and group exhibitions, at: IUNO, Rome, IT (2022); Bombas Gens - Fundació Per amor a l'art, Madrid, ES (2022); Monica De Cardenas, Zuoz, CH (2021); Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, IT

(2021); Museo Licini, Ascoli Piceno, IT (2021); P420, Bologna, IT (2020, 2018, 2014, 2013); Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (FFF), Frankfurt, DE (2020); GAMeC, Bergamo, IT (2020); Arcade, London, UK (2019, 2014); Fondazione del Monte, Bologna, IT (2017); Centre National de la Photographie, Ile de France, FR (2015); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, IT (2014); MAMbo, Bologna, IT (2013); Galleria Martano, Turin, IT (2013); Maga, Gallarate, IT (2013); Galleria Nicoletta Rusconi, Milan, IT (2012);

Festival di Fotografia Europea, Reggio Emilia, IT (2010); Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea, Cinisello Balsamo, IT (2009); Galleria Fotografia Italiana, Milan, IT (2008); MAN, Nuoro, IT (2004); Galleria Emi Fontana, Milan, IT (2003); Museo Marino Marini, Florence, IT (2000); Museo Pecci, Prato, IT (2000); Le Magasin, Grenoble, FR (1997); Careof, Cusano Milanino, IT (1997). Since 1997 she has produced numerous publications and artist's books.