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THEATRE OF DIS-OPERATION. (ACT I. A DISARMAMENT)

A project by Sa.turn platform in collaboration with ArtNoble Gallery

Curated by Arnold Braho and Stefano De Gregori

Art Direction and graphic design by Giordano Cruciani

With the participation of: **Agnese Barbarani, Arijit Bhattacharyya, Paolo Ciregia, Critical Art Ensemble, Gaia De Megni, Thiago Dezan, Shadi Harouni, Infinite, Délio Jasse, Zazzaro Otto, Stefano Serretta and Francesco Vullo**

27 June - 27 September, 2023

Exhibition catalogue



THEATRE OF DIS-OPERATION. (ACT I. A DISARMAMENT)

Text by Arnold Braho, Giordano Cruciani, Stefano De Gregori

ArtNoble Gallery is pleased to present *Theater of Dis-Operations (Act I. Disarmament)*, a project by Sa.turn. The exhibition identifies the activation of disarmament processes as the primary urgency of contemporary society, in a historical period where the normalization of violence, the increase in armed conflicts, and the rapid expansion of the global arms market and war industries are at the center of public debate. According to SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), between 2014-18 and 2019-23, European states nearly doubled their arms imports (+94%).

The exhibition *Theater of Dis-Operations (Act I. A Disarmament)*, from the title to the exhibition display, intends to take a critical look at the internalisation of the definition of the theatre of war (theatre of operations), i.e. the geographical area where military strategy operations are conducted. The aim is to propose literally edgy artistic processes and operations that have the capacity to offer new strategies for sabotaging violence through a repertoire of potential devices and acts. A sabotage, therefore, capable of evading, dysfunctioning and disarming, but also of promoting strategies of escape, desertion and 'drop out' to weaken the war paradigm from below.

Although there is a wide range of knowledge collected in dictionaries, glossaries, manuals, and cataloging structures that encompasses a vast series of violence devices, the concept of "weapon" here assumes a significantly broader meaning than commonly believed, reappearing in the form of devices, but also symbolic instruments and

structures such as "state," "flag," and "nation."

Starting from these considerations, *Theater of Dis-Operations (Act I. Disarmament)* attempts to offer techniques and tactics of disarmament, extending their practical limits. Disarming then means merely exempting the subject from using the weapon device, or is it necessary to challenge those economic macrosystems that contribute to fueling a death market for profit? Can desertion be a strategy of sabotage? Finally, disarmament by whom and in favor of what?

Political theater, or agit-prop, has always had the characteristic of actively manifesting itself in times of crisis with a particular awareness of the context, society and the questions to be asked of that society. This device, which has been regarded as a tool for social transformation, in behavioural, cognitive and emotional terms, operates both through its content and performance, but also through scenic means that play a structurally decisive role in this well-codified structure. The scenic machine of *Theater of Dis-Operations (Act I. A Disarmament)* is composed of theatrical wings emptied of any scenography, which present themselves as such, at the zero degree of any possibility, accompanied by a graphic layout that recalls banned 1970s publications and Dadaist posters, born in response to the wars of the 1920s. If theatre is the place of contradiction, then one must ask at this point what contradictions this exhibition wants to reveal

or question. Dis-Operations is in this case the place to locate the gaze: towards the anomaly, the defect, the ethical and perennial dysfunction of the theatre of war, and in particular of all that precedes it.

Tactics and techniques are presented simultaneously in the exhibition, envisaging first of all a semiotics of sabotage and one of escape: the power to escape at any cost - always in power. One possible route starts from the tactical media operations of **Critical Art Ensemble** on the use of chemical weapons by the USA, to the unveiling of the propaganda inherent in the commercials of the biggest warmongering industries by **Infinite**, to the instruments used to boycott ships transporting weapons to the Middle East documented by **Agnese Barbarani**, as well as in the postage stamps used in the Angolan revolution that **Délio Jasse** has reappropriated. Another example passes instead through the re-appropriation of cultural symbols as in the case of **Arijit Bhattacharyya**, with the protest costumes used by the repressed Bangla communities in India, along with the emptying of all symbolism of belonging and spectacular reference in **Gaia De Megni's** uniforms and rifle silhouettes, to the multitude of bodies spent in imperialist wars represented by **Paolo Ciregia**, to **Francesco Vullo's** sharp flag made from scraps of circular saws utilised by workers in Italy.

Escape, desertion, the 'drop out', as a way of weakening the war paradigm from below, but also

as the only way of salvation, is presented through the documentation of the lives of self-exiled intellectuals in the border mountains and the last day spent in Iranian Kurdistan by **Shadi Harouni**. It moves from the imagery of the subaltern par excellence, the child, empowered by all means by **Zazzaro Otto** for an escape at any cost to other and as yet undefined worlds, to the indigenous women of the Chiapas Zapatista communities in Mexico represented by **Thiago Dezan**, actively participating in new forms of self-management that can best express the political will of the communities in which they are rooted, to the international solidarity networks for desertion, from below, that do not appear in any official geography by **Stefano Serretta**.

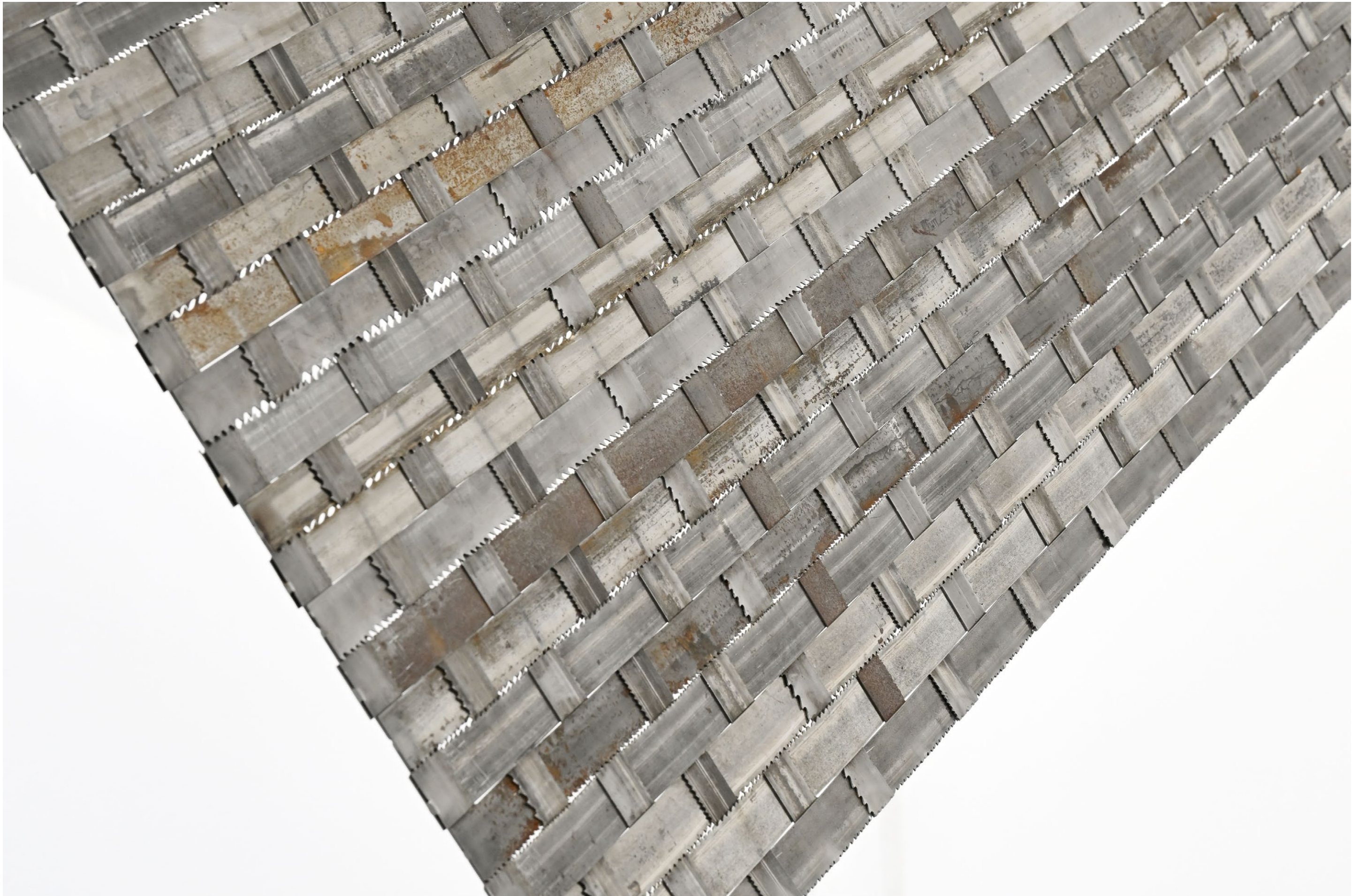
The refrain is always the same: 'it is necessary to establish a practice of intolerance, towards all passive and inhuman situations'. Here and now.

Arnold, Giordano, Stefano



Francesco Vullo
Flag (2024)
Reclaimed steel blades, iron shaft
236 x 145 cm







Paolo Ciregia

(CTS) "capture the shield" (2024)

Original shield from Russian police, Ukrainian revolutionary stickers

100 x 58 x 10 cm





Paolo Ciregia

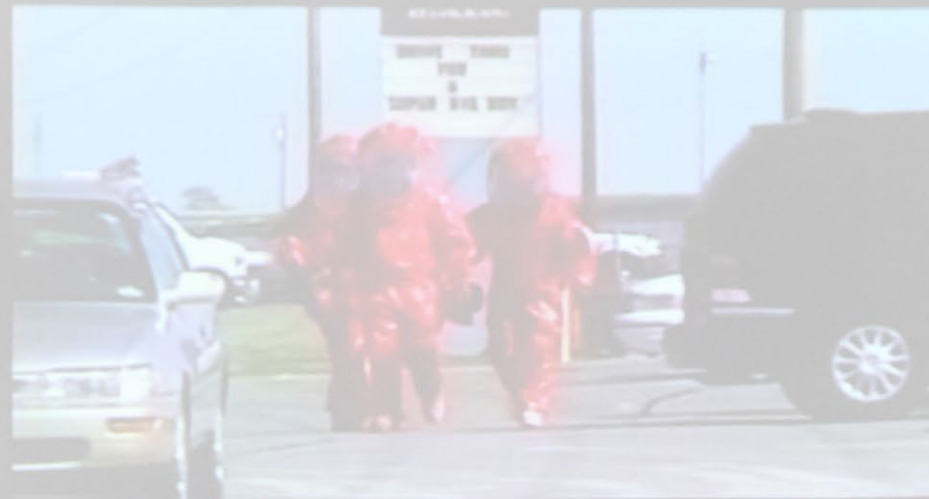
Pugni (2019)

Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Matt Baryta paper

150 x 100 x 5cm

Edition 2/5 + 2 APs





In October 2001, anthrax spores are mailed to a select number of politicians and journalists.



Critical Art Ensemble
Marching Plague (2005-2007)
Video
16'



Arijit Bhattacharyya

The Blue Tiger (2024)

Mask, traditional costume, manniquine

230 x 130 x 50 cm





Agnese Barbarani

Oggetti di lotta (2024)

Inkjet print on Baryta Matte paper

41.3 x 31.5 cm

Edizione 3 + 1 AP



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41.3 x 31.5 cm

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Infinite

PARAPHRASES (2021 - ongoing)

Audiovisual Piracy Videos, different ratios

7'33"





Thiago Dezan

Untitled (2024)

Inkjet print on 305g paper

43 x 63 x 4 cm

Edition 1/1 + 1 AP



Délio Jasse
Untitled (2024)
Fixed projection slide
Variable dimensions



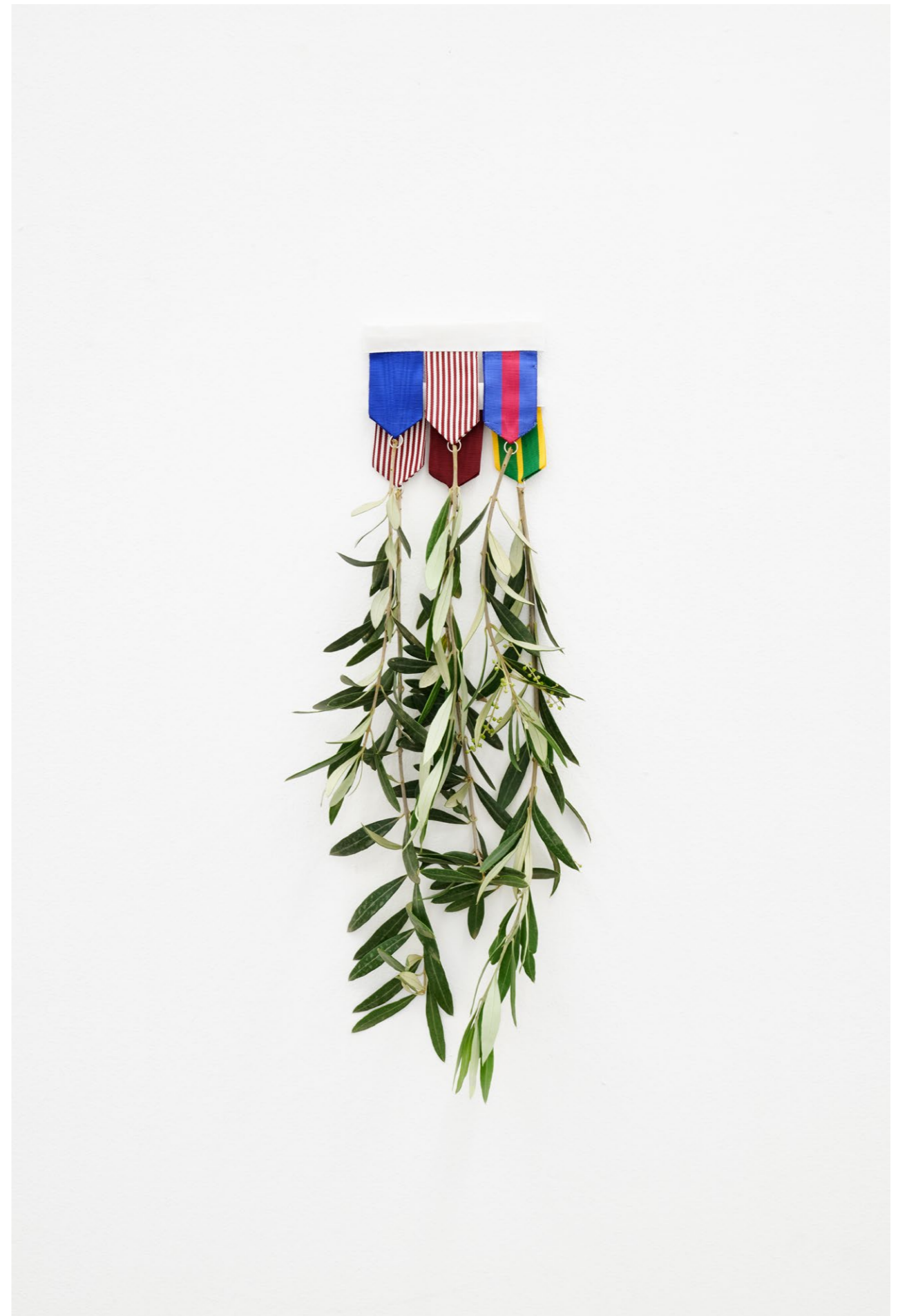




Gaia De Megni

*Always
in the middle
of our bloodiest battles
you lay down your arms
like flowering mines*

to conqueror me home (2024)
Fabric and olive branches
Variable dimensions





Délio Jasse

Francobollo 1975 (2024)

Screenprint on paper

70 x 100 cm

Edition 1/3 + 1 AP





Stefano Serretta

Sutra 69-79 (Scontri tra autonomi e polizia, 14 maggio 1977, via De Amicis, Milano) (2022)

Acrylic, pantone and ink on carta
35 x 50 cm



Stefano Serretta

Sutra 69 - 79 (Copertina Rosso numero 24, aprile 1976,

“Operai contro la Metropoli” (2022)

Pantone and ink on paper

35 x 50 cm



Stefano Serretta

Sutra 69 - 79 (Copertina A-Traverso, ottobre 1976, "Fuori tutti i Compagni dalle Prigioni", sul processo per i fatti di Argelato) (2022)

Acrylic on paper
35 x 50 cm



Stefano Serretta

*Sutra 69 - 79 (Barricate durante la Rivolta di San Basilio,
Roma, 1974) (2022)*

Pantone and ink on paper

35 x 50 cm



Gaia De Megni

Afèlio (solo) (2024)

Still video, Inkjet print on cotton paper

100 x 57 cm

Edition 1/ 3 + 2 APs

Performer: Marta Tabacco. Coreographer: Gloria Dorliguzzo .Assistant director: Giorgia La Pagna. DOP: Gabriele Spallino .Project Manager: Elena Castiglia







Shadi Harouni

Last Day of the Bombardments (2007 - 2017)

Photograph and text on paper

40 x 30 cm

Edition 2/3 + 2 APs

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Infinite

Untitled (2024)

Water-based paint on canvas

201 x 135 cm



Zazzaro Otto

Per fare un tavolo ci vuole la guerra (2024)

Mixed media

191 x 175 x 80 cm

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Zazzaro Otto

Il problema del colore del bagno rispettando il fengshui

(pagina 13) (2024)

Collage on paper





Zazzaro Otto

KRIEG IN PRENZLAUERBERG (2013)

Mixed media

100 x 335 x 123 cm



Paolo Ciregia

Position #2 (2023)

Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Matt

Baryta paper

43 x 68 x 5 cm

Edition 1/5



Shadi Harouni

I Dream the Mountain is Still Whole (2017)

HD Video

17'06"

Edition 5 + 2 APs

AGNESE BARBARANI (VERONA, 1995)

Agnese Barbarani is an Italian photographer specialising in documentary and portrait photography. In particular, her work embraces visual journalism by exploring environmental and socio-political issues. Central to the narrative is the need to provide a direct statement that can offer an account of global inequalities, social and ecological violence and the power structures that maintain them.

Agnese Barbarani spent several months in Costa Rica documenting the advance of the American capitalist system within the indigenous Ndoge tribe. In 2023, in Armenia, she denounced the exodus from Nagorno Karabakh by the Azerbaijani government. In the same year, she documented the disarmament struggle of the 'CALP' port collective in Genoa.

ARIJIT BHATTACHARYYA (INDIA, 1994)

Arijit Bhattacharyya is an independent artist and curator currently living and working in Weimar, Germany. His practice revolves around controversial narratives of resistance through social engagements, design interventions and lecture-performances. His artistic discourse is deeply rooted in the analysis of the trajectories of socio-political history and its implications in cultural practices. As a curator, he is engaged in artistic negotiations that investigate methods of social agitation. Solo exhibitions include 'Sea of Forests', curated by Nuno de Britto Rocha, ChertLüdde, Berlin, Germany (2023), From Forests We Are and From Forests We Will Be, curated by Nuno de Britto Rocha, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig, Germany.

PAOLO CIREGIA (VIAREGGIO, 1987)

Heavily influenced by a documentation experience in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict between 2014 and 2015, Ciregia explores the dark side of human nature using different media such as photography, sculpture, installation and performance. Relying on an approach that is as diagnostic as it is meticulous, with a particular sensitivity to the intrinsic characteristics of materials, he reworks and transfigures the real into an introspective experience. His works have been shown in solo and group exhibitions in Italy and abroad, including New York, London, Paris, Wales, Rome, Milan and Amsterdam. Exhibitions he has taken part in include EYES ON TOMORROW, Italian Cultural Institute, Mexico City (2021) Second Time, Ncontemporary Gallery, Milan. (2020) Everyday Life. Museo MART, Trento/Rovereto. (2019) Heavenly Creatures, Kunsthalle West Eurocenter, Lana.

CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE (USA, 1987)

Critical Art Ensemble (CAE) is a collective of five tactical media practitioners from various specialisations, including computer graphics and web design, film/video, photography, text art, book art and performance. Formed in 1987, CAE has focused on exploring the intersections of art, critical theory, technology and political activism. The group has exhibited and performed in various venues internationally, from the street to the museum to the Internet. Museum exhibitions include Documenta 13, Kassel; Whitney Museum and New Museum, New York; Corcoran Museum, Washington D.C.; ICA, London; Seoul Museum of Art; National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; London Museum of Natural History; Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Matadero, Madrid; Les Abbatoirs, Toulouse; ZKM, Karlsruhe; The Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow. The collective has written eight books and their writings have been translated into 18 languages.

GAIA DE MEGNI (SANTA MARGHERITA LIGURE, 1993)

Gaia De Megni is a visual artist that lives and works between Milan and Rome. She trained in Visual Arts and Curatorial Studies at NABA in Milan, furthering her studies with the MAP_PA Master in Performing Arts organised by Palaexpo and the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. Since 2014 she has been realising projects with different media including sculpture, video and performance. Her work analyses the possibilities of an image, through the shattering of the Western imaginary and its representations, looking mainly at moving images (the cinematic and digital archive) to find individual and collective matrices. Constant is the interest in the possibility of finding a balance between monument and movement, between solid and liquid. Recent projects include AFELIO (performance 2023), Il mito dell'Eroe (video and performance 2021), Il mito dell'Androgino (sculpture 2020), Dedalo (sculpture 2020), Il peso del Tuono (performance 2021), Amore Giovane (photography 2020). De Megni has participated in solo and group exhibitions including: Malta Biennale (2024), Odeon, Galleria Renata Fabbri (Milan 2023); Woodland, Teatro dei ragazzi (Turin 2023); Ekran i Artit (Shkodër, Albania 2022); group exhibition at Castello delle Mura in Rome on the occasion of Talent Prize INSIDEART (Rome 2021); Hypermaremme (Maremme Toscana 2021).

THIAGO DEZAN (BRAZIL)

Thiago Dezan is a Brazilian multimedia artist, working mainly with documentary photography, film and soundtrack for experimental short films. Dezan is co-founder of Brazil's largest independent media channel, NINJA. As a freelancer, Dezan has produced photos and videos for channels such as The Washington Post, AJ+, The New York Times, The Intercept and Popular Front. In addition, he worked for 5 years as a filmmaker at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, based in Washington DC, and co-directed the documentary 'My Blood Is Red', which won awards at 5 international film festivals in 2020. In 2021, Dezan launched his first photo book 'When I Hear That Trumpet Sound', which was invited to be part of the permanent archive of photo books at the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art (Rome, Italy). Also in 2021, he was named Photographer of the Year by EyeEm magazine. His ongoing art project 'Insomnia' has been exhibited in New York City (2021) and Rome (2023).

SHADI HAROUNI (IRAN, 1985)

Shadi Harouni is a visual artist with a practice that ranges across modalities and media, from site-specific interventions and sculptures to film and photography. Her research focuses on marginalised and disregarded stories of dissent, especially in her ancestral Kurdistan, linking silent acts of personal resistance to global mass movements. Harouni's work is rooted in spaces, objects and sentient subjects imbued with utopian dreams and unfulfilled promises of exodus and revolutions. Her photographs and films made in cemeteries, mountain quarries, time-worn dwellings and abandoned factories throughout Iranian Kurdistan look to the mountain and the monument, home and homeland as sites of remembrance and resistance, of despair and possibility. Harouni's art and writings have been published in Art Forum, The Guardian, The New York Times and other publications. Her projects have been exhibited at the Queens Museum (NY), Kunstmuseum Bonn (DE), City Museum Prague (CZ), Pecci Centre for Contemporary Art and Asian Art Museum (IT). Furthermore, she received the Gattuso Prize, the Harpo Foundation Grant for Artists, residencies at Civitella Ranieri (IT), SOMA (MX), Fondazione Ratti (IT) and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (ME), where Harouni also served as Acting Director in 2019.

INFINITE (ITALY, 1990)

Infinite was born in Italy in the 1990s and currently lives and works in Milan. His artistic practice is varied and articulate and has been influenced by the Squat movement in Northern Italy. The choice of name is linked to the fact that the artist intended to remain anonymous. His work focuses on the critique of geopolitics and contemporary society. His works have been exhibited internationally, including AIR Gallery, New York City; Project For Empty Space, Newark, New Jersey; Satellite Art Show, Miami; 3rdEthos Gallery, New York City; Super+Centercourt, Munich; Lankay Gallery/Luxun Academy of Fine Arts, Anshan, China; SVA Chelsea Gallery, New York City; Colorado Photographic Arts Center, Denver and Mattatoio, Short Theatre, Rome, among others. Exhibitions include GANRA, curated by Ari Matsuoka and Mols Magazine, at Syndacate, Kagawa // Torary Nand, Osaka // Soto, Kyoto // Tetra, Fukuoka // Whitehouse, Tokyo // Ochiai Soup, Tokyo, Japan (2024).

ZAZZARO OTTO (SASSUOLO, 1988)

Zazzaro Otto graduated in 2016 from the Universität der Kunst (Berlin) where he won the Preis der Ursula-Hanke-Förster-Stiftung 2016 and Bernhard-Heiliger Stiftung in 2018. His artistic practice revolves around content related to social hierarchies, labour alienation and other issues that characterise the precariousness of today's and the past. Between post-war salvaged elements, textiles and bronze work, materials and objects take on a different meaning, inviting the viewer to change their point of view. Through his works, Z.Otto highlights the complexities of the multifaceted contemporary world with lightness and irony. His work has been presented in many international institutions and project spaces, including: Kunsthau Dahlem (Berlin, Germany) Art Stays Festival (Ptuj, Slovenia), Kunstraum Kreuzberg Bethanien (Berlin, Germany), Westpol (Leipzig, Germany), Mediterranea 18 Young Artist Biennale (Tirana, Albania), 20qm (Berlin Art Week 2018), Rinomina (Paris, France), Sadnaot HaOmanim (Tel Aviv, Israel) Triennale di Milano (with Chezplinio). Over the years he founded Schwanzo Kollektiv (Berlin, 2012-*), EinMal temporary gallery (Modena, 2014-2016) and CHEZPLINIO (Milan 2022-*).

DÉLIO JASSE (ANGOLA, 1980)

In his photographic work, Délio Jasse often interweaves found images with clues from past lives (photos of found passports, family albums) to draw connections between the photographer - particularly the concept of the 'latent image' - and memory. Jasse is known for experimenting with analogue photographic printing processes, including cyanotype, platinum and early printing processes such as 'Van Dyke Brown', as well as developing his own printing techniques. He uses analogue processes to subvert the reproducibility of the photographic medium, creating subtle variations and interventions with paint, liquid light, gilding and collage. Jasse's recent exhibitions include: E22 - Hacking identity, dancing diversity, Möllerei/Esch-Belval, (Luxembourg, 2022), Città Foresta, SRISA, (Florence, 2022); Europa, Oxalá, Mucem, (Marseille, 2021-2022); L'inarchiviabile, KunstRaum Goethe (Rome, 2021), Arquivo Urbano, Tiwani Contemporary (London, 2019); The Other Chapter, PHotoESPAÑA (Spain, 2019); An imaginary city, MAXXI (Rome, 2018); Schengen, Villa Romana (Florence, 2018); La Cité dans le Jour Bleu, Dak'art Biennale (Dakar, 2018).

STEFANO SERRETTA (GENOVA, 1987)

Stefano Serretta's work is underpinned by a rigorous historical and analytical framework, which aims to highlight the fragile self-celebrating foundations of globalised capitalism and the communicative machine that governs it, of which man is both protagonist and victim. With an inquisitive gaze, Serretta highlights the contradictions and schizophrenic aspects of our post-ideological present. He is currently professor of Public Art at NABA Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan. Solo exhibitions include: Kipple Spin-dryer, Celeste Kunst, Teramo (2022), Naked Lunch Money, Spazio Leonardo, Milan (2019), Do not go gentle in that good night, Almanac Inn, Turin (2019), Shoegaze, Italian Cultural Institute, Stockholm (2019).

FRANCESCO VULLO (PALERMO, 1994)

In his artistic research, Vullo uses and reinterprets common objects to narrate aspects of human beings and modern society. Fascinated by the symbolic power they can assume, the artist investigates their capacity to evoke feelings and emotional scenarios and to collect and transmit memories. The search for materials plays a primary role, meeting the sculptural practice to which he devotes himself and distinguishing himself for a multiform formal and technical variety. Found objects, natural elements and discarded materials become catalysts for his explorations. The most recurring themes concern the relationship between the natural and artificial worlds and the emotional tensions of man. The reinterpretation and reconfiguration of objects, utensils or work tools create new surreal and at the same time poetic representations that narrate contemporaneity.



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