

Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo is hosting an important solo show by Luigi Ontani, one of the most representative artists on the international panorama of the past forty years.

He is a versatile figure who has been present on the art scene since the Sixties. In the early Seventies he began to participate in and then make a name for himself in the contemporary artistic debate with his tableaux vivants: dressed or, rather, disguised performances; living iconographies in which Ontani – transformed and masked – impersonates historical, mythological, literary and popular figures, including Pinocchio, Dante Alighieri, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Caravaggio's *St Paul*, Guercino's *St Luke* and Michelangelo's *Prigioni*.

The exhibition features a selection of photographic works that are the outcome of the artist's intense research, considered germinal and especially significant within the development of his production.

Ontani chooses photography as the medium best suited for interpreting his work. It is an instrument that documents his artistic performances translated into photographs in different formats to revive a practice that can be traced back to the living interpretations of the medieval gospels, the allegorical triumphs of the Renaissance and the Baroque, as well as true tableaux vivants that were created during the French Revolution by artists of the calibre of Jacques-Louis David and that came back into style in Roman salons in the early twentieth century.

The artist turns to the photographic technique as an opportunity to experiment with multiple possibilities and formulate new variations on the themes and subjects that interest him most, thus embarking on a "transhistorical" journey through myths, masks, nudes, symbols and iconographic representations.

Reinterpreting situations that are historically and/or geographically far away, the artist revives the forms of famous paintings of the past or of ritual, practising a "language of being elsewhere". At the same time, this shortens the distances between art and life, in which the artist's body is always the subject, thereby recovering what has been a fundamental theme throughout the history of art, starting from the classical tradition.

The exhibition intends to restore the variety of this production, showing the sequence of performances d'après such as *San Sebastiano nel bosco di Calvenzano d'après Guido Reni* (1970), *Meditazione après de la Tour* (1970), *DaviDRatto* (1974–2008) and *Déjeuner sur l'ArT* (1992), as well as works such as *Bacchino* (1970), *Dante* (1972), *Pinocchio* (1972), *Le Ore* (1975), *Lapsus Lupus* (1992), the diptych *EvAdamo* (1973–2004) and an Indian cycle that also includes a series of

works from recent years.

The title of the exhibition is a play on words using the name of the city hosting it, Bergamo, from which the artist has eliminated the “B” and the “g”. The syllables that remain have been alternated with the term *Simulàcrum*, a reference to the true and the false. Once again, this reflects Ontani’s sense of irony, a key characteristic of his entire artistic production.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*