

Giorgia Garzilli

zaza'

*zaza' at Bleichestrasse 3, Basel
17–22 June 2025 12-7pm*

When zaza' invited me to exhibit here, I was already working on the painting you now see on display, titled 'Ai tempi c'era più tempo' (Back in time there was more time). It depicts a manhole I had paused to observe on my way between home and studio—one which I decided to transform from square to rectangular.

Reflecting on the constant movement of people from place to place in Basel during its famous week, manholes and chimneys struck me as fitting subjects for the occasion.

“Of course, painting has always belonged to networks of distribution and exhibition, but Kippenberger claims something more: that, in the early 1990s, a single painting should explicitly visualize such networks.”

(D. Joselit)

I don't believe this thesis is outdated in 2025.

Looking out the window—whether of one's own or someone else's home—in search of a vantage point to gain a sense of place and an elevated view is a natural human impulse. It is linked not only to orientation, but also to the need for a moment of pause. In fact, windows and access to natural light in workplaces are vital to workers' mental well-being.

One aspect of chimneys and manholes that should not be overlooked, as Fabrizio rightly observed, is their function as portals into the hidden spaces of the metropolis—the sewers and chimneys—onto which the fears, anxieties, and fantasies of urban life are projected. Santa Claus descends through the chimney; the Ninja Turtles dwell in the sewers.

Italian painters of the 20th century tirelessly depicted the streets and rooftops of Rome, as well as those of London, Paris, and other cities. Cityscapes are an essential part of Europe's artistic heritage.

Artists will forever persist in portraying their surroundings, whether overtly or implicitly.

This exhibition is intended as an almost satirical celebration of this tradition, through recurring and familiar urban elements that take on anthropomorphic qualities—representing not merely urban décor, but the very functions they perform.

To me, the result is somewhat reminiscent of the city symphony documentary genre.

Giorgia Garzilli, May 2025