

**Gabbi Cattani**  
**grandeur**

15.11 – 14.12.2024

The solo exhibition *grandeur*—intended both as a delusional pursuit of impressiveness and the original French sense of “life size” or “scale”—pairs two body of works by Gabbi Cattani.

In the ground floor, *Death Mask, Immanuel Kant* (2024) features 21 digital photographs of the German philosopher’s plaster likeness, created by painter Andreas Knorre in 1804, now housed in the Charité Anatomical Collection in Berlin.

Kant’s *Totenmaske* appears as a recurring figure in the video work *ERSATZ, a Mystery Play in Nineteen Tableaux* (2021-2024), a three-hour filmed performance projected in the basement. The work reenacts French author Raymond Roussel 1909’s novel *Impressions d’Afrique* (Impressions of Africa) which depicts an eccentric colonial-show performed by White captives for the coronation ceremony of the fictional African king Talou VII. Living statues, concerts, numbers, and technological prowess are followed, culminating in cinematic machines that project ‘inverted’ dioramas of Western economic and cultural history.

*ERSATZ*’s nineteen vignettes proceed from Roussel’s descriptions of actions and sets, while integrating episodes from Gabbi Cattani’s life and family history—closely tied to Italian Fascism and colonial regime in Libya. The structure of the film refers to medieval *Mystery Plays* and student- or guild-led representations where written texts—biblical, historical and mythological—are rendered as immersive living still-images composed by and for those who are taking part in it rather than a public.

Realised in collaboration with Lena Appel and with the choreography by Katja Cheraneva, *ERSATZ* involved more than 30 performers and was filmed in a single night, between October the 30th and 31st 2021, at Städelsschule, Frankfurt am Main, with no audience.

Gabbi Cattani (b. 1990 in Rome, Italy) lives and works in Frankfurt am Main. He studied at Städelsschule in the class of Gerard Byrne. Recently his works were shown at the Guggenheim Collection, Venice (IT); CCA: Center for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow (UK); MEWO Kunsthalle (DE); Return Gallery (IR); Mediterranea Biennial (RSM); Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art (IT); OUTPOST (UK); and he is part of the collection of Museion, Bolzano (IT).