

CASTIGLIONI

UNO DI VOI

- [1.] ONE OF YOU. The untruthful way of existence is characterized by an increasingly zombie-like, superficial everyday life that hides the doubt, fear, and helplessness behind it. The untruthful person knows that they should act differently, or at least could, but they do not allow this knowledge to translate into action by maintaining a split in their consciousness—because it is exhausting, costly, or frightening. In refusing to accept responsibility, the untruthful person chooses to live in *mauvaise foi*. Losing resonance, muting the reciprocity between the subject and the world.
- [2.] ONE LIKE YOU. Convincing ourselves that we agree seamlessly with a social role or an adopted way of life is to be virtually identical with it. So we pretend. One like many. May we be indifferent to a situation or grow accustomed to a lifestyle, accepting things as they are without questioning them. They question us. Those harmful structures were built to persist unchallenged. We build them, too. Unable to notice. One of us. We do not know how to carry on from here. So we'll just carry on for now in collective alienation.
- [3.] ONE AMONGST YOU. The stranger is an element of the collective itself, no different from the manifold internal enemies—an element whose immanent position simultaneously encompasses an outside and an opposite. The unity of closeness and distance: The stranger is both inside and outside at once. They belong to the group by living within it, yet their position is defined by not originating from it and by bringing in qualities that cannot arise from within. Their inclusion is always partial — they are »one of us,« but never fully so. Here, the stranger is not meant in the often-invoked sense of the wanderer who comes today and departs tomorrow, but rather as the one who comes today and stays tomorrow — the *potential wanderer* who, even though he has not moved on, has never fully shed the transience of coming and going.
- [4.] ONE WITH YOU. It is possible but its not happening. No measures are being taken, while we are being asked to bear the burden for a future that may or may not exist. What path is left once the threshold has already been crossed? The excess of superlatives can no longer be contained. We hypernormalize those glorified portrayals of an ideological fantasy. Nevertheless, we carry on, even though we know that the system had already collapsed and was no longer functioning. And even though we knew what we knew, we continued to act as if we didn't. We continued to live as if we believed in the future of what is familiar. Every day, we performed the charade of hypernormality, because we couldn't imagine an alternative and therefore shied away from the idea of radical change. After cognitive restructuring it is possible but its not happening.

Nils Ben Brahim's works produce spaces of contradiction: dynamic yet still, together yet isolated. Oversaturated in color, his paintings appear intense and almost glaring, creating an atmosphere of tension and unease, while reflecting states of stress, anxiety, and subtle eeriness, where the ordinary and the threatening coexist. With a raw, sometimes brutal aesthetic, his works explore the duality of »us« and »them« and reveal the often invisible social and economic hierarchies that shape urban spaces, where power, privilege, and exclusion exist side by side. In *Uno Di Voi*, Ben Brahim deepens this exploration, confronting the viewer with the question of belonging. The exhibition brings into focus how individual presence intersects with collective structures, highlighting both inclusion and isolation, intimacy and alienation, where the borders between the private and the collective blur and the need for connection meets the fear of estrangement.

Text by Marla Elisabeth Heid

Uno di voi

Curated by Domenico Positano

Nils Ben Brahim. 1999, Berlin

2020, Universität der Künste (UdK), Germany, class of Thomas Zipp. Graduated in 2025.

Exhibitions

2024, Miettinen Collection, Berlin, *Hundstage in der Hasenheide*; 2024, Eigen + Art Lab, Berlin, *It's Memories That We Steal*; 2023, Galerie Thomas Fuchs, Stuttgart, *In den Seilen*; 2022, Peter-Weiss-Haus, Rostock, *Kayfabe*

Group Exhibitions

2025, Setareh, Berlin, *Bare Things*; 2022, Studio Hannibal, Berlin, *All the World's a Stage*; 2021, P7 Gallery, Berlin, *Heute ist nicht alle Tage*

Fairs

2025, PingPong for Art Basel, Basel with Eigen + Art Lab (two person booth); 2025, Art Düsseldorf with Setareh (group booth)