

For his solo exhibition at Sant'Andrea de Scaphis, Thomas Bayrle presents six large canvases, inspired by Caravaggio's famous painting of St. Matthew and the Angel made in 1602.

Bayrle began working on this series of works after a vacation to Rome in 2015 during which he visited the church of San Luigi dei Francesi and saw Caravaggio's masterpiece in the Contarelli Chapel.

A continuation of his renowned compositional techniques, Bayrle offers a dual image: a first one sees the silhouettes of Saint Matthew and of the angel; upon closer inspection, one sees the modular repetition of hundreds of miniature iPhones. The image is repeated obsessively in the exhibited canvases, pervading every wall of the deconsecrated church.

For over half a century, through his artistic practice Bayrle has analyzed and criticized contemporary society, its means of production and communication mechanisms, expressing feelings of fascination and alertness for the technologies it produces. The artist has coined the term Superform for his works based on the multiplication of images repeated endlessly and collected to create larger images. These compositions of micro elements in relation recall the human, the idea of a "superorganism", and at the same time express a strong criticism. In fact, Bayrle provides us with a powerful portrait of the contemporary mass-man, of the complexity of his identity, oscillating between the self and the others, between solitary alienation and paradoxical plurality of relationships. The iPhone is emblematic in this sense, as an appendix or digital prosthesis on which we spend an increasingly large part of our hyperconnected life.

Thomas Bayrle (b. 1937, Berlin) was first trained as a weaver, fundamentally influencing his artistic reflection on patterns, surfaces and grids, and contributing to his prescient forecasting of our current digital era. From 1958 to 1961 Bayrle studied at the Werkkunstschule Offenbach. For over 30 years, he taught at Städelschule, Frankfurt where he influenced three generations of young artists. Since the 1960s he has created a substantial body of work, including objects, graphics, drawings, collages, films and sound installations.

Bayrle received the Arnold-Bode prize for his participation in DOCUMENTA (13), 2012 in Kassel. His works have been shown at international museums and institutions such as Portikus, Frankfurt/Main (1990, 1994); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt/Main (2002, 2006); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2008); Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona and Musée d'art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva (2009). In 2013, WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels held a large retrospective of his works which will also travel to the Museo d'arte contemporanea Donna Regina, Naples. Thomas

Bayrle participated in numerous group exhibitions such as documenta, Kassel (1964, 1977, 2012); von hier aus, Düsseldorf (1984) as well as Biennales including Venice (2003, 2009), Guangzhou (2005), Berlin (2006), Gwangju (2006, 2010), Tbilisi (2007), Sydney (2008) and Busan (2012).

Recent solo exhibitions include Playtime, a retrospective at New Museum, New York (2018), and If It's Too Long -- Make It Longer at MAK, Vienna (2018).

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