

It Begins with You and Me

Edson Luli

Text by Elsa Barbieri

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PROMETEO GALLERY Ida Pisani | Via Ventura 6, 20134 Milano

On the 17th of June 2021, Prometeogallery by Ida Pisani opens *It Begins with You and Me*, the second solo exhibition of Edson Luli (Shkoder, 1989). The Albanian artist, who recently took part in *Resisting the Trouble - Moving Images in Times of Crisis*, curated by Leonardo Bigazzi for VISIO - Schermo dell'Arte, returns to the gallery spaces after *This Exhibition Will Have a Title Soon* (2017) and *I don't Know. Let's see!* (Online show, 2020), proposes a new body of works that approaches the (in)coherent and vibrant multifaceted realities of contemporary life.

It Begins with You and Me does not promote an undivided version of life characterised by an isolated point of view. Rather, the way in which this has been imagined by Luli has a direct influence on the position of the audience; in turn, this participates to the creation of a new narrative which "begins with me and you". The display – hypnotic, yet slow and measured, is structured on two levels, balancing solids (the time of perception) with voids (the time of reflection), and it comes to life through installations, neon and video works in character with the artist's style.

The exhibition is, first of all, a fertile ground for stimuli that allow the viewer to measure themselves against themselves, before deciding whether to enter the works and participate to their state of concentration, or to just look at them in the vortex of the "here and now". "*We can thus read them as an ensemble of conceptual schemes, with a preparatory and educational value aimed at future behavioural experiments*" – Barbieri writes, suggesting that these works initiate a conversation – different every time and never a replication of itself – with the actions of the onlooker. They activate time and space, and the physical presence of their gaze.

It takes two to know one and *Fragmented Chairs produce fragmented Thoughts* are the result of an interaction between idea and action. They do not reproduce the ordinary but highlight the relational dynamics to which they take part, and they do so by instilling doubt and stimulating a "*critical and personal rearrangement of elements and relationships*". *organism-as-a-whole-in-environment*, *Life-Death* e *Looking through a translucent Surface* engage with reality by revealing with clarity that, oftentimes, what is perceived as real and immediate is just a cleverly mediated relationship between experience and medium. Original and highly characteristic of Luli's visual journey – that is, of where he is coming from and where is directed to – these works are full-fledged pictures of contemporary references that impose a process of recollection and of critique of the present. For the first time on show we find *L'assenza delle parole nella struttura del silenzio* [*The Absence of Words in the Structure of Silence*], finalist of the *Premio Cairo* (2019). The work is emblematic of the era of the domestication of life, which was highly clamorous, yet lived in fear of silence, and with the awareness that there will always be something awaiting our attention, and, at the same time, that anything will be around us to divert it (*including this*).

Lyrical and sophisticated, yet masterful, *It Begins with You and Me* begins and ends – and this is not a coincidence – with *What are you looking for?*. Even where there seems to be an unquestionable sense of things, Luli warns us to concern ourselves with the object of our search, "*before loudness and speed come back, before sliding back into life*".