

PROMETEO GALLERY

by **Ida Pisani**

CRUCE and GALERÍA NUEVA

Doctor Fourquet 5 y 10, Madrid

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The PROMETEO GALLERY, from Milan, returns to Madrid with the support of GALERÍA NUEVA and CRUCE to present the works of a series of artists who propose new perspectives on topics such as feminism, or homophobia. Occupying the facilities of GALERÍA NUEVA and CRUCE, PROMETEO GALLERY brings us closer to the work of Fabrizio Cotognini, Zehra Doğan, Regina José Galindo, Iva Lulashi, Ruben Montini and Giuseppe Stampone. In this way, for the first time in Spain, the gallery presents some of its youngest artists, while offering the possibility of knowing the most updated work of its most famous artists.

On the premises of GALERÍA NUEVA, the works of Fabrizio Cotognini, Iva Lulashi, Ruben Montini and Giuseppe Stampone enter into a conversation with one another across the two floors of the building, through references to the history of art and the personal conflicts with which we can identify. At CRUCE, we find a dual exhibition through which the works of Regina José Galindo and Zehra Doğan brings us closer to the reality of violence against women in Guatemala and Armenia.

Fabrizio Cotognini was born in Macerata (Italy), in 1983. He lives and works in Civitanova Marche (Macerata, Italy). His work is characterised by a constant reference to ancient times revisited by a contemporary perspective. Drawing, as well as new technologies, is a key element in his research. Cotognini's work focuses on the various declines of the archaeological and historical-artistic horizons. In his research, time, memory and history are majestic, as well as twisted, overturned or curved figures placed at a scene destined to instability. Cotognini's work is a discourse where words merge with images in an intimate dialogue among sign, design and writing, which becomes a place of contemplation and, at the same time, of thoughtful concentration.

In Fabrizio Cotognini's words, "my artistic research is based on a process of contamination conceived as a matter of interactions, meddling and fusion between images and verbal signs. (...) The goal of my work is to detect the link between writing and anti-writing".

The most recent work by Iva Lulashi (Tirana, 1988) proposes a reflection on a new and contemporary counter-representation of desire and a narrative about power and history from the

female point of view. The work from which she starts is the research that she presented in his 2018 solo exhibition, *Eroticism*, at the Prometeo Gallery (Milan), which addressed the communist imaginary and the relations between political propaganda and eroticism. In the work that we will see in Madrid, she investigates the representation of desire as a device of liberation and subversive charge of an erotic capital yet to be explored.

Her painting does not reject the exposure of women's bodies and nudity, nor does it omit the original source of the chosen subjects, but rather reverts it through a personal way of looking at the body, at pleasure and its representation. It is an intelligent and provocative shot to the male eye, fired with the same means that power and the historical narrative have always used. In the suspended atmospheres of her erotically charged works, we find a new position of the feminine as a desiring being.

Over the last fifteen years, Rubén Montini's research (Oristano - Italy, 1986) has been oriented to attacking heteronormative stereotypes linked to sex, sexual orientation and gender identities. He has dealt with uncomfortable but current and critical issues through the performative. These features have defined the results of an aesthetic strategy that has imprinted a mark on the investigation of this complex artist in the world of Italian performance. Montini exhibits his own naked body, which has been tattooed, humiliated, sometimes wounded, and it has even bled, though it has also been glorified. Through this exhibition, he has represented his passion, his secular martyrdom, a Via Crucis composed of actions that reveal the topography of an imperfect body, a desacralized *Ecce Homo*. Montini has engraved in his body the trauma, the pain and the suffering that the Social Body inflicts on people seen as "different."

Embroidery is central to Montini's multifaceted artistic vocabulary. It recontextualises an activity usually associated with women's duties that it is often relegated to the category of "minor arts". This turns it into a tool capable of celebrating, both ironically and controversially, the subversion of socially accepted norms, as it often happens in the work of this artist.

Giuseppe Stampone's artistic search (Cluses, France, 1974) synthesises and formalises the concept of "Global Education". His artistic production encompasses a myriad of artistic manifestations, from interactive multimedia installations to monumental and participatory public art projects. His work method is based on a chain of relationships, collaborations, connections and participations developed through the Solstizio network, which he founded in 2008 together with Maria Crispal.

In this cyber age that we live in, knowledge becomes connective, as everyone can interact by exchanging their own experiences on shared topics and areas of interest with others. "Global Education" is a project that was born as a response to these changes. It begins with

alphabetically ordered notebooks containing drawings made with a BIC pen (a school supply par excellence), playing with popular themes, labels, symbols and images that often belong to historical facts or current events. This is followed by concept maps, slogans, interactive installations and tours across various countries around the world, such as those that the artist considered for the Kochi and Havana Biennials (2012).

Aged just over thirty years old, Zehra Doğan (Diyarbakır, Kurdistan, 1989) is an artist, a journalist and an activist. She has become a spokesperson for her people, as well as for the Armenian community, whose women - including her grandmother - were sold as slaves, forcibly converted to Islam, victims of unimaginable violence during the genocide that took place between 1915 and 1916.

Mainstream history has only recently recognised the deportation and murder of 1.5 million people by the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, little great stories like those of Fatma, Hawê, Xanê, women deprived even of their names, have left evidence of their traces, their testimony, which is an example of courage and bravery. In 2019, on the commemoration day of the centenary of the massacre, Pope Francis and Barack Obama - together with the United States Congress - officially took a position by recognizing that event as "the first genocide of the 20th century." At present, in Turkey, there is still a complex denial of the massacre endorsed by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. For this reason, the scream of the women evoked by the artist appears even more deafening and reveal the artist's own traumas, rather than falling into silence, letting her be destroyed by the dogmas imposed to eradicate her roots - or even killing herself. Doğan has transformed traumas into works, into dolls hanging from the ceiling around which unknown canvases and videos complete the fresco embracing these stories that acquire an eternal character through art.

The souls of other women, along with their tragic stories, find a voice in the work of Regina José Galindo (Guatemala, 1974), artist and poet, through various performances conceived during confinement. *Detrás de la ventana* (Behind the window, 2020), *Aparición* (Appearance, 2020) and *Monumento a las desaparecidas* (Monument to the Dissapeared, 2020) are some of the pieces created by the artist, who was also the winner of the prestigious "Robert Rauschenberg" award in 2021. Some of these works record the performances planned by the artist, and they have been directed remotely due to the travelling restrictions imposed during the health emergency. *Monumento a las desaparecidas* (Monument to the Dissapeared) is a living and temporary monument to the women who have been victims of femicide. It honours their souls through the physical presence of the performers, covered by cloaks resembling vanishing spirits. Graceful, deafening, powerful as a scream, they claim: "Our greatest revenge - as

Galindo wrote - is to stay alive." Playing, singing, shouting are acts of vindication and denunciation.

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