

IVA LULASHI

Where I end and
you begin

text by Edi Muka

22.03 - 21.04.2023

Via G. Ventura 6 -
Via Massimiano
Milan

The exhibition *Where I end and you begin* will be accessible Monday through Friday from 11AM to 1PM and 2PM to 7PM in Via G. Ventura 6 - Via Massimiano, Milan

For more information, please contact us at: info@prometeogallery.com
+39 02 83538236

From Tuesday March 21, 2023, the spaces of **Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani** will welcome the latest works of the artist **Iva Lulashi** (b. 1988, Tirana) exhibited for the first time in the project *Where I end and you begin*. By fitting into a path that is already underway - begun in 2018 and carried on in 2021 with the solo shows *Eroticommunism* and *Passione Cola Passione Scorre* - in *Where I end and you begin* Lulashi continues her research on the materiality of the pictorial sign - always ambiguously suspended, almost like an oxymoron, between the condensation of an explicit and contingent carnality and its dilation in an indefinite space-time, out of phase in regard to any narrative linearity.

In this double resonance between the instant and its expansion, Lulashi explores themes characterized by uncertain boundaries: eroticism and sexuality, identity and memory, history and nostalgia, always preserving a constant focus on the body - a jumble of tensions and desires - conceived as the fabric wherein the frayed threads of this emotional entanglement are tied.

Where I end and you begin showcases these flaking, both pictorial and symbolic, which are made visible here while preserving their radical uncertainty. Artworks wherein, as Edi Muka writes in the accompanying text, "The border between innocence and debauchery, desire and pleasure, curiosity and abuse, and even established hierarchies of the gaze are dissolved and dissipated". The figures and the scenes painted by Lulashi appear at once close and distant: immediate in their presence and elusive in the framings that they offer to the gaze. Because framing is what it is all about, such as those taken from archives of erotic and pornographic films that date back to the near past of communist Albania: an epoch and an imagery that the artist, despite never having experienced them firsthand, continues to sound out and translate into the actuality of the pictorial gesture. The latter, as the title of the exhibition suggests, is rooted in a linguistic space that is already incomplete in itself, thus open to different and simultaneous interpretations, each one ready to arise in an attempt to frame in turn the bodies, movements, obscenities and intimacies that appear on the canvas from time to time.

In *Where I end and you begin* Lulashi thus paints in a liminal space, when the bodies (not only the human body organically understood, but also the body of nature, history, and time itself) meet maliciously without letting you guess what is going to happen next. What is revealed is 'only' a carnal and therefore lacking contact, so quiet, opaque and intense that it resolves itself in the seductive loss of any perimeters.

Lulashi's painting invites one to cross this atmosphere of erotic tension: seeing and not seeing, remembering and imagining and, ultimately, chasing something that is hidden, without ever reaching.

In front of these images, stripped of any descriptive or representational intent, it is indeed useless to search for any specific space-time coordinates, since *Where I end and you begin* seems to evoke that waking state that separates sleep from reality, where everything is still blurred. Here then, the exhibition comes across as a deliberate anti-narrative where the act of seeing can get confused with an unintentional voyeurism, swinging between curiosity, embarrassment and seduction. As if Lulashi's canvases were to be looked at surreptitiously, erotically and almost-liberatingly, still imagining all that they might still reveal in the following moment.

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Iva Lulashi (b. 1988, Tirana) is an artist who lives and works in Milan. In 2016, she graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice.

Her work develops from found traces, stills or frames that reflect the visual language of an Albanian history that she has never consciously lived. From there, she incorporates erotic footage, blurring the line between the stills of communist propaganda in films, sex scenes, and healthy outdoor activities.

Lulashi's work has been exhibited, in particular, in the solo shows: "Where I end and you begin", Prometeo Gallery (Milan, 2023); "Passione Cola Passione Scorre", Prometeo Gallery (Milan, 2021); "Libere e Desideranti", Oratorio dei Disciplinati di Santa Caterina (Corniglia, 2021); "Vicino Altrove", double solo show with Regina José Galindo, Prometeo Gallery (Milan, 2020); "Love as a glass of water", Salzburger Kunstverein (Salzburg, 2018); "Eroticism", Prometeo Gallery (Milan, 2018); "Frames", Villa Rondinelli (Fiesole, 2017); "Where I feel there I am", Trart (Trieste, 2016).

Amongst the collective exhibitions: "Così mi vedi?", Club dei Mille (Milan, 2023); "Progetto Genesi. Arte e Diritti Umani", Triennale (Milan, 2023); "Eccentric Spaces", The Artist Room (London, 2023); "Pleasures", Bazament (Tirana, 2022); "Giardino all'Italiana", Match Gallery (Ljubljana, 2022); "Segni di me: il corpo, un palcoscenico", Casa Testori (Milan, 2022); "La Collezione Impermanente 3.0", GAMeC (Bergamo, 2022); "Interaction", Made in Cloister (Napoli, 2022); "Danae Revisited", Villa Brandolini (Treviso, 2021); "Italian Twist", Gallerie delle Prigioni (Treviso, 2021); "Our Other Us", Art Encounters Biennial (Timisoara, 2021); "Synime", National Gallery of Contemporary Arts (Tirana, 2021), National Gallery of Arts (Prishtina, 2021); "Ti Bergamo", GAMeC (Bergamo, 2020); "Ciò che vedo. Nuova figurazione in Italia", Galleria Civica Trento (Trento, 2020); "Libere tutte", Casa Testori (Milan, 2019); "Passing", Prometeo Gallery (Miami, 2019); "BienNoLo" (Milan, 2019); "Collezione San Patrignano", Palazzo Vecchio (Florence, 2019); "Revolution is Us", Autostrada Biennale (Prizren, 2018); "Ex Gratia", Collezione Giuseppe Iannaccone (Milan, 2018); "Mediterranean Biennial", Galeria Kombtare and Arteve (Tirana, 2017); "Combat Prize", Giovanni Fattori (Livorno, 2016); "Premio Francesco Fabbri per le Arti Contemporanee", Villa Brandolini (Treviso, 2016). She has also participated in workshops in Venice (Forte Marghera), Bruges (Het Entrepot), Salzburg (Nata Wien), Shkoder (Arthouse) and Milan (Viafarini in residence).