

EDSON LULI

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

essay by
Elsa Barbieri

19.05 - 23.06.2023

Via G. Ventura 6 -
Via Massimiano
Milan

The exhibition *A Glimpse into the Future* will be accessible Monday through Friday from 11h to 13h and 14h to 19h in Via G. Ventura 6 - Via Massimiano, Milan

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Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani explores humanity's impact on nature and its attempt to control it with the exhibition *A Glimpse into the Future* by Edson Luli (b. 1989, Shkoder), accompanied by an essay by Elsa Barbieri.

Two years after *It Begins with You and Me*, which approached the incoherent and vibrant multiplicity that is part of contemporary life, Luli now proposes a new body of works that stimulates a discussion with the impact that our society has on the environment: saving the planet is a fundamental act for human survival, but can the planet save itself? And does it need us?

True to his ability to provide contemporary reference frames that impose a process of criticism of the present, Luli lands on a large scale by transforming the gallery ambience into a space that is both a work of art and easily lends itself to becoming a metaphor: loaded with hidden meanings - and at the same time clear as mirrors -, the works on display become prototypes of the future.

On the upper floor, the work *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations* is designed as the only source of light coming from seven pre-fabricated LED blocks, suspended from the ceiling, decorated with the image of a cloudy sky. These blocks, or forms, typical of the game Tetris, contribute to the vertical development of an environment that synchronously expands horizontally with three monolithic screens of different sizes that show three compelling Tetris challenges (*Don't blame yourself! It's just a game.*). In an exciting game of perspective, the falling tetrominoes that settle on the bottom or on other already deposited blocks are recalled to those suspended so that when an uninterrupted block of sky is created, the sky itself disappears. Luli's visual intervention is decisive in communicating and evoking in the public a configuration on the limit between reality and representation in which the clash between human and inhuman agency intensifies in the micro-universe of sounds - typical of the game - diffused in the environment.

In the transition to the lower floor, a new source of light - recycled water bottles, filled and illuminated with LED - is proposed in relation to the space, transformed into a desert with sand coming from it. Participatory by nature, the work *Footsteps Towards the Future* invites us to cross it, leaving our own footprint on that sand, as if to recall the imprint we give to plastic water bottles before throwing them away. Through these bottles, the only tool we have to see and consequently understand where we are, Luli highlights how the world is increasingly thirsty, but above all, prototypes a new model of renewability and sustainability that, similarly to his research, short-circuits what we believe. The gesture with which one throws away a bottle, declaring its end, is for Luli synonymous with a new use and a new fullness. Once again, agency is in play, explored from a point of view of variations, and therefore contingency and inevitably freedom of action.

The discourse that Luli initiates with the new exhibition is the result of an articulated research process of which a first and recognized start is dated March 2020. This is the work *Now, 1.3.2020*, an installation of 10 inkjet prints on cotton paper that looks at climate and environmental changes in relation to human thought. The work, exhibited in the dividing space between the first and the second environment of the exhibition, can be assumed as the manifest request, by the artist, for conscious reflection: our fragmented way of thinking is the main cause of our society, which we consider disposable.

Human agency, which assumes a central conceptual importance - above in the form of game control, below according to a recalculation of the path -, finds formal correspondence in the constant and double register - at the boundary between light and darkness, life and death - from which emerges, not by chance, an idea of fragmentation that is common to the game as well as to reality: for thousands of years, humans have been practicing challenging the surroundings by destroying and reshaping, both in the realm of the concrete and in that of play. *A Glimpse into the Future* invites us to focus on the challenges that await us, to avoid finding ourselves in front of an unrecognizable future.

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Edson Luli (b. 1989, Shkoder) is a contemporary artist currently based in Milan, whose work grapples with the complex interplay between ontology and epistemology. Luli's practice explores the relationship between observer and observed, interrogating the ways in which our perceptions and experiences are shaped by language and culture.

At the heart of Luli's work is a deep concern with the role of thought in shaping our world. For Luli, thought is not simply a passive reflection of reality, but an active force that shapes and creates the world around us. Drawing on his background in New Technologies of Art and Cinema and Video, Luli invites viewers to participate in a process of exploration and observation, probing the boundaries of what it means to think and perceive in a complex and rapidly changing world. Through his practice, Luli offers a powerful critique of the problematic and conflictual modes of thinking that dominate contemporary society, calling for a renewed commitment to open-ended exploration and inquiry.

Luli's work has been exhibited in galleries and museums around the world, amongst them: "War is sweet to those who have never experienced it", Fondazione MACC, Calasetta, 2022; "It Begins With you and Me", (solo show), Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani, Milan, 2021; "Back and Forth, Again", Black Box Genesis, Vaasa, Finland, 2021; "Resisting the Trouble – Moving Images in Times of Crisis", VISIO - Schermo dell'Arte, Manifattura Tabacchi, Florence, 2021; "I don't know. Let's see!", (solo show) Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani. online gallery space, 2020; "ARCADIA E APOCALISSE, Paesaggi italiani in 150 anni di arte, fotografia, video e installazioni", PALP, Pontedera, 2019; "Premio Cairo XX", Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2019; 16th edition of International Biennial of Photography and Award "Gjon Mili" curated by João Ribas, National Gallery of Kosovo, Prishtina, 2019. Heavenly Creatures - Strategies of Being and Seeing, Kunsthalle West Lana, Bolzano, 2019; "L'Arte nei Pixel. Videoart & Arte Contemporanea", Lucca Film Festival, Lucca, 2018; "This Exhibition Will Have a Title Soon" (solo show), Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milan, 2017; "Mediterranea 18 Young Artists Biennale", Tirana e Durres, 2017; "Media Art Festival", MAXXI Museum, Rome, 2017; "22nd International Onufri Prize", National Art Gallery, Tirana, 2016; "Tirana Film Festival, Tirana, 2016; "Milano Film Festival", Milan, 2015; "The rhythm of art lies somewhere in between", Bial del Fin del Mundo IV, Chile, 2015.