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**WHERE THE WILD
ROSES GROW**

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As the song by Nick Cave sung in 1995 with fellow Australian Kylie Minogue, which gives the exhibition its title, goes, "*All beauty must die*".

It is that beauty sliced and crystallized into canons, tailored into decorative stylistic devices and codified social and moral formulas, worked on the surface and deprived of ethical and communicative basis in the foundations, conveying only to itself that it must die in order to be reborn from the ashes like a phoenix, a chrysalis with new forms and new colors.

It is this new concept of beauty and aesthetics imbued with meaning and ethics that unites the research of the four artists in the exhibition, differing in cultural background and style, who also find themselves on the same path that leads away from the beaten paths of contemporary art to take on new, unprotected but promising routes, like any unprotected exploration.

Four artists belonging to the infamous Generation Z, digital natives with substantial cultural backgrounds refined during their academic journey, who are proactive elements of technological hyper-connectedness but nevertheless chose painting, the oldest medium of representation, to express themselves.

They have chosen it because painting despite the repeated choruses of prefaces announcing its death, its reduction to the zero degree or the Trans and Post dimension, its hybridization with first electronic and then digital technological forms, continues to be the tool that best satisfies the scopical drive of human beings and best suits expression and reflection, the only one that translates philosophy into visual form.

But above all, they chose it because of its subversive charge and its "criminal" dimension, as the title of the exhibition hosted by the Louvre and curated by Régis Michel at the turn of 2001-2002, "*Painting as a Crime*," read. That same charge, which combined with the unrelenting desire to search for forms that metaphorically translate "reality," connotes Nick Cave's video of the murder ballad, inspired by the 1851 painting of one of the protagonists of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, John Everett Millais, "*Ophelia*," now housed at Tate Britain; still death and beauty united inseparably. Aware and conscious of the Western and non-Western art-historical cultural baggage,

orphaned of the super homistic concepts of their artistic grandparents' compatriots, Transavantgarde and postmodern addenthetics, they choose exile from that artistic catechism to which the registry and professional iter of brush virguts would destine them.

They know how to create absolutely personal symbolic and mythopoeic universes, which reread from heterogeneous dimensions and latitudes the Zeitgeist and in a refined metalinguistic operation the same pictorial praxis.

Whether it is Ingrid Piccinini's Poland to Vladimir Kartashov's extreme Siberia, passing through the favored cold and terse lights of Sweden by which Francesca Perrone's observed and observant cannot escape to the special binoculars with which Angela Marisa Fiore selects and shapes gaze and representation, the poker of artists chooses a path that consciously provides in perfect Baconian style a pars destruens and a construens.

They synergistically combine the abstract, image-concept component with a pictorial praxis, which leads them to scratch the image, disdainfully rejecting in most cases traditional perspective and anatomical exactitude and all related decorative canons, rewriting compositional modules such as the depth of field in which the visual narrative is articulated and the range of color relationships as well as technical parameters in favor of a conquest of distilled horizontality on paper and canvas (acrylics, pastel, pencils, spray, oil,...).

But beware, it is not a tabula rasa that the poker of young artists enacts but rather, it is a conscious operation of analysis and rewriting of the parameters of the pictorial language they have implemented, which necessitates culture and continuous deepening, which detaches itself from the haughtiness of Saturnian isolation and imposes a continuous participation in the debate accompanied by a distancing (from the media circus and the glamorous one of contemporary art) necessary for observation as Agamben pointed out sharply in the wake of Nietzsche first and Barthes later.

The four artists, without hierarchical forms, are able to take selected elements from cinema, literature, mythology, comics, fashion design, publishing, art, and the web and pass them through the blender according to self-imposed modes and speeds, with a harmonious and coherent outcome.

They are also united by the ability to introspect and process elements taken from their own experience to make them ascend to a valence of universal character, in the same way for all of them the body is a support and battlefield, an element of identity and an instrument of expression as well as a "customized" subject of the various poetics.

The four artists conscious and accustomed to navigating the pelagus of instability and metamorphosis (for the propagation of the echoes of the end of history announced by Fukuyama in the eponymous essay after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the emergence of the related geocultural melting pot, the short century, weak thinking, the age of post-reality, of the liquid society of Baumanian memory and of the "presentification" of time in the digital age and the spread of ethnic and religious conflicts) consciously choose expressive formulas that are both ethical and metaphysical positions, of conflict with respect to a passive perceptual and cognitive attitude instigated by the Odierna media fruition. Francesca Perrone's pastels on paper and paintings feed on the fluid and unstable identity instances and multiple declinations of eroticism articulated in apparent graphic infantilism, while Vladimir Kartashov seamles sly fishes from the online world to pictorially transfer it offline, choreographing the subcultures of the Internet into a mythopoeic structure that disseminates the knowledge of the adored Greek mythology. He embeds it all in an articulated self-produced symbolic universe that alludes to a traumatically lost arcadia (visible are the echoes of the conflict in which he is unwittingly a protagonist like his peers). Ingrid Piccinini frees herself from technical orthodoxy to illustrate the idea of an ephemeral beauty and an oscillation of human identity between the sublime and the grotesque as staged in her dark fairy tales animated by unease and precariousness, in which an irrepressible feminine search for identity seeks to make its way. This search for identity also fuels the painting of Angela Maria Fiore, whose oil paintings make the chords of nostalgia vibrate in the the observer, but above all, they mark the time of memory by declining it to the imperfect, the ideal dimension of the octative, uniting personal history and universal reflection, attempting to fill a void, as her sign paths on the canvas with an all over trend without hierarchies testify.

The four artists seem to outline a kind of coming-of-age that may never end in light of the instability that connotes our historical conjuncture, but they make this precariousness an inexhaustible food for the eye.

Long live painting and the scornful resourcefulness of youth.

Alessandro Romanini