

ADRIAN PACI***Prova***

January 10 – February 15, 2020

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to announce *Prova*, the sixth solo exhibition of Adrian Paci at the gallery. Paci was born in 1969 in Shkodër, Albania. He lives and works in Milan. Paci's artistic repertoire manifests itself in various forms of expression such as video installation, painting and sculpture which he brings together in such a way that they interact with each other. The exhibition will take place in the gallery's two main rooms presenting a new group of paintings in acrylic and oil on canvas and a video installation.

For many years the focus of Paci's artistic practice has been his repeated concern with the individual. Intrinsic and non-culturally-dependent dimensions of human emotions are illuminated from many perspectives and translated into timeless images, whether in everyday contexts or circumstances characterized by historical conflicts. Special weight is attached to the protagonists' gestures and facial expressions which often take on a narrative component in Paci's work. Without words they tell of exile and expropriation, identification and belonging and mechanisms of self-empowerment and emancipation within a society. Personality traits that are usually perceived as weak in society such as fragility and hypersensitivity are freed from their negative connotations and shown as basic qualities that bestow people beauty and dignity. Here, video and painting enter into deliberate interaction. Pithy key scenes of the various protagonists are often taken out of the context of the realistic elemental force of the film to become painted stills in soft pastel colors in paintings. They thus take on their own level of meaning and are redefined.

The complexity of expressing the narrative and its inmost being in words is reflected in Paci's video work *Prova*. In this film he takes his earlier work *Turn on* (2004) as a starting point and works with the same protagonists, job-seekers from Shkodër in Albania. The backdrop is the concrete spine of a building that was never completed, in the middle stands a group of men who seem to be silently waiting. It is dark and the only source of light is the town's street-lamps. A whole night long, from sunset to sunrise, the protagonists look at each other, smile or fall asleep on their feet. The perceived silence is interrupted from time to time by the repeated call of the words "Prova, prova..." ("Test, test...") spoken by the men into the microphones they hold as if at a soundcheck. It is as if they are waiting for their appearance, which however never comes. As soon as one of the men stops talking the narration is continued with glances, poses and gestures. Their body language and their faces marked by life tell a story that words cannot express. After a while the camera follows a group of horses and dogs for several minutes as they run freely through the streets and seem to mock the protagonists with their own liberal acting. It seems as if the animals are warning of the urgency of action and reflecting opportunities and freedom but also evoking the yearning to break out. A photograph was taken during the shooting of the film (color print, see invitation card) which will be on show in the gallery's office space.

In the series of paintings entitled *Him* an ambiguous situation is depicted featuring the performative movement of a male body. The scenes are taken from footage of neuropathological cases of war-traumatized soldiers shot by Camillo Negro at the Military Hospital in Turin after World War I. This trauma was known as „Shell Shock“ and considered a reaction to the intensity of fighting and the sensation of fear and panic. Taken out of the original video context, the movement of the protagonist turns in a kind of choreographed act. His body reflects tension and it remains unclear whether this is mere stretching or the physical expression of an agitated distraught mental state. At the same time it can be read as a reenactment of a traumatic moment that brings the experience of the trauma together with a positive fictional aspect. Being isolated, the images underline this ambiguity and the traumatized body, beside the tension, appears almost as a dancer. Paci is very much interested in the question of the memories of the body and the ways of expressing these memories beyond the rational narratives of the discourse. This way the body who passed through the traumatic experience elaborates the traces of this experience through a language made of gestures.

Paci's works have been exhibited worldwide since 1999. The museum Kunsthalle Krems in Austria is currently presenting his solo exhibition *Lost Communities* (until Feb. 23). Recent solo exhibitions have taken place at the National Gallery of Arts, Tirana; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (both 2019); TR3 Gallery, Ljubljana and Brigham Young University Museum of Art, New York, (both 2018); Le Murate/ Museo Novecento, Florence (2017); MAXXI - Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome (2015); Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Norway (2014) and MAC, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal (2014), among others. Paci's works have also been shown at various biennials including the 7th Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism / Architecture, Shenzhen, China; 14th. International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia (2014); Biennale de Lyon (2009); 15th Quadriennale di Roma (2008); Biennale of Sydney (2006); at the 48th and 51st International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia (1999 and 2005). His works are represented in the collections of the following institutions (selection): National Gallery of Art, Tirana; Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal; Centre Pompidou, Paris; FNAC – Fond National Art Contemporain, Paris; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France; Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel; GAMEC, Bergamo; Galleria Civica di Modena, Modena; MAXXI, Rome; Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz; Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, New York, US Seattle Art Museum. In 2016 Paci won the Art for Peace Award.

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