

Giulia Andreani

L'improduttiva

First Floor, 41 Dover Street, London W1S 4NS

30 May – 3 August 2024

Opening: Thursday, 30 May, 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Max Hetzler, London, is pleased to present *L'improduttiva*, a new body of seventeen paintings and works on paper by **Giulia Andreani**. This is the artist's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery, and the second in the London space.

Recently exhibited at the Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia, Italy, the present works encapsulate Andreani's compelling yet haunting painterly practice. Across her oeuvre, Andreani repurposes personal memorabilia and archival photographs, addressing forgotten histories through a subversive and feminist lens. Working primarily in her signature palette of Payne's grey – a blue-grey hue rich with echos of the past – her works unearth buried narratives to reconstruct timeless and prescient stories for the present moment.

Emerging from a compendium of collective memories, the exhibited works find their origins in the archives of Reggio Emilia. Faded letters, yellowed documents and, above all, black-and-white photographs comprise the foundation of the artist's practice. Guided by an unorthodox approach to research, Andreani selects, gathers and filters archival material in a non-linear way, sifting, layering and interweaving freeze-framed moments in time. Driven by the sociopolitical history of Reggio Emilia, the resulting compositions raise poignant questions about the perceived societal roles of women throughout history, contending with underlying power dynamics while dismantling gender stereotypes.

Lending the exhibition its title, Andreani's painting *L'improduttiva* (The Unproductive One), 2023, presents a group of students entirely absorbed in their work as seamstresses. All but one, that is, who looks out towards the viewer defiantly, a mischievous smile flitting across her face. The work is based on an archival photograph from the early 1940s which documents the tailoring school of Reggio Emilia, founded at this time by Giulia Maramotti. While women's acceptance into the workforce during World War II marked a breakthrough moment of emancipation, it simultaneously highlighted the vast gulf of opportunity and liberty between the sexes. Capturing the viewer's attention, the woman's brazen smirk and gaze serve as a symbol of this inherent irony.

A smiling woman has often been denigrated as mad or hysterical throughout history. Such themes of insanity, internal exile and imprisonment, tied so closely to women's history, are integral to Andreani's research. Drawing from the archival material of the former Psychiatric Hospital of San Lazzaro, dating from the late nineteenth



Giulia Andreani, *La traghettatrice*, 2023 (detail)
Photo: Dario Lasagni

century to the 1970s, the artist painted her seven canvas work, *Le sette sante* (The Seven Holy Ones), 2023. Based on small identity photographs of seven female internees, originally taken for documentation purposes, Andreani enlarges each image to the scale of a human face, as if restoring her subjects with dignity and compassion.

Melding fact and fiction, Andreani's works offer visual montages in which histories, temporalities and topographies collide. In the largest painting in the exhibition, *La traghettatrice* (The Ferryman), 2023, four seemingly disparate figures are represented along a picture-postcard seafront, as two warplanes dive ominously in the background. Based on photographs from different archives, each figure looks directly out at the viewer, drawing us in to their individual worlds.

Giving voice to the voiceless of bygone eras, Andreani's works frequently centre anonymous subjects, particularly female ones, elevating the traditionally sidelined to historical status. The motif of the mask is a recurring trope across her oeuvre. Prevalent in two of the exhibited works from 2023, *L'anonima* (The Anonymous One) and *La gitana anarchica (Djali-Leda)* (The Anarchist Gypsy (Djali-Leda)), it becomes representative of the performative roles enacted by women to survive in society. In masking her protagonists, Andreani in fact draws attention to them, endowing them with an unbreakable, formidable strength. Thus foregrounding the small but mighty ripples made by defiant women through history, Andreani weaves new life from the dust of forgotten archives.

Giulia Andreani (*1985, Venice) lives and works in Paris. Andreani's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions in international institutions including Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia (2024); Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dole (2019–2020); Labanque, Béthune (2019); Villa Médicis, Rome (2018); Centre d'Art Nei Liicht de Dudelange, Luxembourg (2017); La Conserverie, Metz (2016); Lab Labanque Béthune, Richebourg (2014); Centre culturel l'Escale, Levallois (2013); and Premier Regard, Paris (2012), among others.

Andreani's work is in the public collections of Centre Pompidou, Paris; MASP, São Paulo; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF), Paris; Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia; Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris; FRAC Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême; Centre Culturel Opderschmelz, Dudelange; Collection de la Ville de Montrouge; and URDLA, Villeurbanne.

Giulia Andreani's work is currently on view as part the 60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.

Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

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Sean Scully

Dark Yet

Bleibtreustraße 45 & 15/16, 10623

3 May – 1 June 2024

Tursic & Mille

Stains, Stars and other Catastrophes

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

16 April – 1 June 2024

Pièce Unique: Barry Flanagan

Thinker on Computer, 1996

Window Gallery, Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

25 April – 8 June 2024

Mark Grotjahn

Kitchens

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785

Paris:

13 April – 25 May 2024

Ida Ekblad

STRANGE FREEDOMS

46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004

London:

23 April – 25 May 2024

**Ida Ekblad, Jeff Elrod, Katharina Grosse,
Mark Grotjahn, Hans Hartung**

Instinctive Gestures

41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

Marfa:

9 May – 8 December 2024

Katharina Grosse

The Super Eight

1976 Antelope Hills Road

Press Contact

Galerie Max Hetzler

Stephanie Garcia

stephanie@maxhetzler.com

London: +44 20 7629 7733

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