

Diane Dal-Pra

No Room for Emptiness

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MASSIMODECARLO is delighted to present *No Room for Emptiness*, the first Italian solo exhibition by French artist Diane Dal-Pra. A title like this might hint at an overwhelming fullness, an attempt to keep emptiness at bay - but Dal-Pra subverts this expectation entirely. She courts emptiness, plays with it, stretches it until it becomes tangible. Her paintings exist in a state of beautiful instability: bodies flicker in and out of form, textiles morph into landscapes, and spaces fold in on themselves like fabric.

Dal-Pra's compositions are layered, veiled, ambiguous. Folds, omnipresent in her work, do not just drape, they conceal and seduce. Inspired by Gilles Deleuze's philosophy, her paintings embrace the idea that matter bends endlessly, never quite settling. "The Baroque trait twists and turns its folds, pushing them to infinity, fold over fold, one upon the other," wrote Deleuze, describing a world in constant transformation. Dal-Pra takes this idea to heart, turning fabric into a site of memory, a surface that absorbs and distorts like a living entity with a will of its own.

Deleuze's *The Fold* (1993) explores a world of endless undulations, where reality resists linear clarity, flowing between the material and the metaphysical. His idea of folds weaves together the physical world and our internal landscapes. Dal-Pra's paintings breathe this same paradox. Her works, like Deleuze's labyrinthine folds, do not settle - they twist, recoil, and envelop. Yet, where Deleuze theorises abstraction, Dal-Pra grounds her folds in the tangible - the creases of fabric resting under a heavy head, the almost oppressive calmness of drawn curtains signalling the transition from day to night. Hers is a fold that is both intellectual and deeply, irrevocably human.

Her works titles - *Eternal Interval*, *Echoes of Patience*, *From Solid to Gaseous*, *Voids Refuge* - read like cryptic instructions, telling a story of transience and transformation. These suggest that emptiness itself might be a sanctuary, a space to inhabit rather than fear.

And yet, despite their quietude, these works are deeply visceral. The figures - broad-shouldered with

solid braids - seem on the brink of disappearance. Their presence is fragile, an afterimage of something once corporeal. The details are meticulously, almost obsessively, rendered: the weight of a draped cloth, the hush of skin against fabric. Absence, in Dal-Pra's hands, is anything but empty - it is thick, charged, pressing in from all sides.

There is a certain irony in Dal-Pra's embrace of the void. She does not mourn emptiness - she orchestrates it, makes it perform. Even stillness is deceptive; each painting pulses with the tension of something about to happen.

No Room for Emptiness is not about filling space, but about questioning what space even is. In Dal-Pra's world, emptiness is a dense, draped pattern. It lingers in the pauses, between folds, in the negative spaces where stories take shape. These works insist on slowness, on intimacy, on the quiet pull of something just out of reach.

Diane Dal-Pra

Diane Dal-Pra was born in 1991 in Périgueux. She lives and works in Paris.

Dal-Pra's paintings delve into the rituals associated with and sustained by the objects we collect throughout our lives. By nature, she is superstitious, questioning the degree to which our material possessions influence our inner equilibrium and define our identities. In her body of work, the artist highlights the dual nature of our possessions: while they have the potential to engulf us, they also shape our habits and selves.

Working primarily on large canvases, Dal-Pra imbues her sculptural figures with a monolithic presence, constructed from an array of objects and monumental bodily forms. Her choice of oil paint further enhances the amalgamated forms, as oil paints naturally add depth and volume. However, her subtle and tonal colour palette, coupled with her manipulation of translucency in textiles, along with smooth, imperceptible brushwork and intricate texture descriptions, counterbalances the weightiness of the forms, restoring the works to a state of perfect equilibrium and harmony.

The paintings exhibit a decidedly modern aesthetic and choice of objects while retaining a timeless quality. The figures, elevated to the status of Classical statues, and the artist's preferred medium of oil, used with technical precision, establish a connection to the history of oil painting and the Renaissance painters whom Dal-Pra cites as significant influences. By presenting works finely balanced on multiple levels, Dal-Pra encourages viewers to derive their own interpretations from the juxtapositions within the narrative of the artwork.

Dal-Pra's work is included in the collections of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington; HEM Museum, Foshan; the Yuz Museum, Shanghai; the Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris; the Fondation Lafayette Anticipations, Paris and the ICA Miami, Miami.