

Diana Al-Hadid, Leonardo Meoni, Jonathan Okoronkwo, Claudio Parmiggiani, Yunyao Zhang
Felt, Velvet, Soot, Gypsum, Engine Oil
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39 Walker

Bortolami is pleased to present an exhibition of new and recent works by Diana Al-Hadid, Leonardo Meoni, Jonathan Okoronkwo, Claudio Parmiggiani, and Yunyao Zhang. The two-dimensional artworks produced by these five artists forego painting's traditional materials; while their approaches vary, the artists' practices are united by a shared turn toward more experimental modes of image-making. In their use of unexpected pigments and supports, the artists establish painting as an expansive field of possibilities in arrangement and form, marking the latest transformation in a long-lasting technology. Hailing from and working across the globe, the artists' materials conjure specific contexts of production, from national art historical movements to industrial trade.

One of the most prominent figures of postwar Italian art, Claudio Parmiggiani began his *Delocazioni* (Italian for "displacement") series in 1970, under the eave of the crisis and subsequent reinvention of the visual arts in Italy. Now in its fifth decade, the series consists of works produced with only smoke and soot, which coat the surfaces of objects that, once removed, trace their outlines. Shelves of books, in this case, are compiled to simulate a library. This now iconic technique, resulting in these spectral impressions, recalls the twin shadows of art history post-World War II, Arte Povera and Minimalism, which are both defined by their own forms of asceticism and material restraint.

The gypsum, steel, and fiberglass materials employed by Syrian-born, New York-based Diana Al-Hadid underline image-making as a literal act of construction. In the artist's hands, this construction is a form of world-building which skirts the particularities of time and place; Al-Hadid's abstracted forms have depicted sanctified sites, ancient civilizations, skyscrapers, and colonial expansionist projects alike. Her reticulated surfaces imply retrieved narratives, as quasi-legible interfaces are caught in moments of disintegration.

Italian artist Leonardo Meoni's subtle and deft interplays are the result of velvet acting as both support and medium. Through subtle manipulations of the textile's fibers, the artist reveals a poetic interplay of imagery emerging as a nuanced chiaroscuro. Eschewing paintbrushes, Meoni works with his hands and every day tools—from the backs of paintbrushes, to gardening tools, and hardware—caressing and directing the velvet's nap to shape form. The resulting compositions form a theater of shadows; they appear as if transitory and delicate, but remain unwavering and steadfast in their presence.

Ghanaian artist Jonathan Okoronkwo repurposes industrial fragments—motor oil, metal paste, plywood—pollutant metals notably sourced from Suame Magazine, one of West Africa's largest scrapyards in Kumasi, Ghana. Discarded

at the end of global cycles of use, these salvages are granted a second life in Okoronkwo's hands, their surfaces registering the friction, endurance, and eventual decay from which they bear witness. In his compositions, machinery stripped of utility reemerge as surrogates for the human body, quietly mirroring cycles of invention, wear, and obsolescence tied to conditions of human mortality. Okoronkwo's titles, derived from snippets of pidgin overheard in the scrapyards, further situate his oeuvre within a site shaped by labor, translation, and shared, fragmented language.

Yunyao Zhang's *The Connector* series investigates the transformation of material and perception through an extended process of drawing with graphite on felt. Repeated application gradually darkens the artist's surfaces, producing fields of black and grey that foreground materiality as both a physical condition and a visual experience. Defined by organic forms, symmetrical structures, and a consistent scale, the series reflects an interest in rhythm, balance, and repetition emerging from material-driven processes rather than representation. The recent works draw from a fragment of an armchair designed by Patricia Urquiola in 2000, recontextualized within the meditative spatial atmosphere of On Kawara's gallery at Dia Beacon. Flowing organic lines are counterbalanced by dispersed black rectangular elements, creating a stark black-and-white contrast revealing a quiet, underlying force and inviting sustained, contemplative viewing.

Claudio Parmiggiani (b. 1943, Luzzara, Italy; lives in Parma, Italy) has been shown six times at the Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (1972, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1995 and 2015). Solo museum exhibitions have been held at the Estorick Collection, London (2025); Frist Museum, Nashville (2019); Accademia di Francia Villa Medici, Roma, Italy (2015); Palais des Beaux Arts - BOZAR, Brussels, Belgium (2013); The Musée des Beaux-arts de Nantes, Nantes, France (2007); The Grand Palais, Paris, France (2005); and Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Bologna (2003). His work is part of the collections of Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Museo de Bellas Artes of Havana, Havana, Cuba; The National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland; Mamco - Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland; Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, France; Francois Pinault Foundation, Venice, Italy, and Museo del Novecento, Milan, Italy.

Diana Al Hadid (b. Aleppo, Syria in 1981) lives and works between upstate New York and Brooklyn, NY. She received a BFA in Sculpture and a BA in Art History from Kent State University (2003); an MFA in Sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University (2005); and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2007). Recent commissioned works include a large-scale, site specific sculpture for Princeton University Art Museum, mosaic murals for NYC's Penn Station, and large-scale sculptures in Madison Square Park, New York, NY. My work can be found in numerous institutional collections worldwide, including the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum; the Bronx Museum of the Arts; the Frist Art Museum; and San Jose Museum of Art.

Leonardo Meoni (b. Florence, Italy; lives and works in Prato, Italy) has held solo exhibitions at Museo Bardini, Florence (2024); Fondazione Bonollo, Thiene (2024); Amanita, Los Angeles (2024); Amanita, New York (2022); Galleria Fuori Campo, Siena (2023); Amanita, Florence (2021); and Safavi House, Isfahan, Iran (2021), among others. He has also been presented in group exhibitions at the Museo del '900, Florence (2018); Galleria Continua, Castelvechio di Rocca Barbena, Liguria (2023); Palazzo Branciforte, Palermo (2022); Palazzo Monti, Brescia (2022); Palazzo Chigi, San Quirico d'Orcia, Siena (2018); Limonaia di Villa Vogel, Florence (2018); and The Address, Brescia (2023), among others. Meoni's work is held in the public collections of the Museo Bilotti Ruggi d'Aragona Art Contemporanea, Rende, Italy, and the Sandra and Giancarlo Bonollo Collection, Vicenza, Italy.

Jonathan Okoronkwo (b. 1993, Aflao, Volta Region, Ghana; lives and works in Accra, Ghana) was the subject of a 2025 exhibition titled *Ask Not What We Were Made For* at Emalin in London, UK. In 2023, his solo show *Some Things Stay Broken* took place at Gallery 1957 in Accra, Ghana. In 2021, he staged *CONDEM CONDEM*, a site-specific installation that took place at a mechanic scrapyard in Kumasi, Ghana. Okoronkwo has been featured in group exhibitions at Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana (2023); the KNUST Museum, Kumasi, Ghana

KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana (2021); Kunstvereine Freiburg and Karlsruhe, Germany (2019); the State Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Germany (2019); the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana (2017); and the KNUST campus, Kumasi, Ghana (2016–2018), among others.

Yunyao Zhang (b. 1985, Shanghai, China; lives and works in Shanghai, China and Paris, France) has been presented in numerous global solo exhibitions, including ones at Galerie Marguo, Paris, France (2020); Asia Now, Paris, France (2020); Qiao Space, Shanghai, China (2019); Don Gallery, Shanghai, China (2017); and Perrotin, Hong Kong, China (2017), among others. Group exhibitions include ones at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom (2020); La Galerie Louis Vuitton, Paris, France (2021); Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium (2021); Watou Arts Festival, Poperinge, Belgium (2021); Musée Fenaille, Rodez, France (2021); chi K11 Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2016); and CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China (2015); Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China (2014); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai, China (2013), among others.