

MASSIMODECARLO

ANDRA URSUTA

Massimo De Carlo is pleased to present three solo presentations by Andra Ursuța, Maria Lai, and Carl Andre. Spanning several generations and countries, the exhibition explores three unique and idiosyncratic voices in various trajectories of art history, with each artist displaying a distinct approach to their practice, unified by a level of intensity towards the subject matter chosen.

Romanian artist Andra Ursuța works primarily within the bounds of sculpture and installation. Her visual language of abjection is provocative, frequently touching upon political controversies with an artistic vocabulary that varies from grotesque, tragicomic, and satirist. For this presentation, Ursuța has based her research on the extremist group known as “ISIS”, titling the show *Vanilla Isis*. This series of works were first shown at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin in 2018.

Vanilla Isis casts an irreverent glance at the extremism prevalent in our modern world, which manifest itself in very different contexts, from terrorist groups to youth subcultures. Through a thorough analysis of the various propaganda strategies of the self-styled Islamic State; which borrows heavily from Western media and popular culture to target a vulnerable demographic of western youth, the exhibition observes the way in which aesthetic trends migrate, or are exploited. In the works on display, Ursuța distorts and transforms these aesthetic tactics, exploring the mixture of promotion, seduction and machismo of which the language of recruitment that Isis airs to the foreign public.

Taking on the perspective of an impressionable and dissatisfied youth, Ursuța uses them as the starting point of the exhibition, referring to them as "vanilla" youth. Culturally, this generation of youth can be distinguished by obscurity in entertainment, niche music, sport-like aesthetics – all of which conflates the playful and the warlike, the fun and the lethal, making them indistinguishable to the ‘vanilla youth’. With her signature wry and iconic tone, Ursuța repurposes the Isis flag into a series of pool inflatables, transforming the lower ground floor into a gripping meditation on the fine line between violent messages disguised as innocent toys, and the vulnerable eyes perceptive to it.

Ursuța’s work has been exhibited in various institutions and private collections worldwide, including the Venice Biennale (2019), Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2018), Massimo De Carlo, Milan, (2018), The New Museum, New York (2016), and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, (2014).

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Andra Ursuța was born in 1979 in Salonta, Romania; she lives and works in New York.

Her solo exhibitions include: *May You Live In Interesting Times*, 58th Venice Biennale, Venice (2019); *Vanilla Isis*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2018); *The Man from the Internet*, Massimo De Carlo, Milano (2017); *Alps*, the New Museum, New York (2016); *Whites*, Kunsthalle Basel, Steinenberg (2015); *Hammer Projects: Andra Ursuța*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2014); *Solitary Fitness*, Venus Over Manhattan, New York (2013).

Her group shows include: *Experience Traps*, Middelheimmuseum, Antwerp (2018); *People*, Jeffrey Deitch, New York (2018); *High Anxiety: New Acquisitions*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2016); *La Vie Modern*, 13th Lyon Biennale, Lyon (2015); *Now At the Latest*, Kunsthalle Krems, Krems an der Donau (2015); *The Encyclopaedic Palace*, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, 55th Venice Biennale, Venice (2013); *Expo 1*, MoMA PS1, Long Island City (2013); *Ostalgia*, New Museum, New York (2012); *Pure Freude*, National Museum, Berlin (2011).

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