

GALLERIA POGGIALI

Barbara De Vivi

Controfigura

23.01.2025 – 14.03.2025

Galleria Poggiali – Milan

Foro Buonaparte 52, 20121 Milan

Galleria Poggiali is delighted to announce ***Controfigura***, the first solo show with the gallery of Barbara De Vivi (Venice, 1992), which opens on 23 January in the venue in Foro Buonaparte 52, Milan, accompanied by a critical essay by Lorenzo Madaro. ***Controfigura*** explores the concept of the double, a subject that is deeply entrenched in the history of literature and the visual arts, which De Vivi takes as a starting point to reflect on the dynamics governing the processes of identity formation.

Barbara De Vivi's fascination with this topic stems from the procedure she employs in constructing her images. Using her own sister as a model, the artist began to send her selfies, suggesting the poses to be adopted. When her sister received these, she in turn took selfies and sent them back. In this way a dialogue through images, conceived to overcome a geographical distance, triggered in the artist a reflection on the fragility of the distinction that separates author and subject, the observer and the body observed. This would appear to be a one-sided power relation; however, by mirroring herself in something beyond her, the artist partially relinquishes control over herself and her work.

Controfigura presents a new cycle of works on canvas focused on two aspects of this reflection: representation of the other as if it were a self-portrait, and the possibility of perceiving ourselves from outside as if we were someone else.

Narcissus, Castor and Pollux, Janus, Artemis and Apollo. And again, more recently, as Lorenzo Madaro observes in his critical essay: 'In the second half of the twentieth century and up to the present – in the works of Man Ray, Diane Arbus, Stanley Kubrick, David Cronenberg, Alighiero Boetti, Michelangelo Pistoletto and others – the history of images is crammed with morbid, dramatic, disturbing, playful, and conceptual insights into this subject. Similarly, Wilde, Dostoevsky, Saramago, Calvino and others have probed the same theme with different but always radical nuances of meaning. Barbara De Vivi knows this, but her resonance is above all with anonymous images, the ones to be found on social networks or in other crannies of the web, or in the history of painting of the past, which she

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observes with novel curiosity.’

The works on canvas dialogue in the show with a cycle of paintings on paper that Madaro defines as characterised by ‘a flow of remarkable energy that surfaces in the brushstrokes, making the faces of her imaginary models penetrating and acute’. This original solution sets off the artist’s creative process, providing an overview of her most recent artistic research, drawing a line between the experiments, the subjects of her production, and her arrival at the concept of the double.

The show offers an opportunity for immersion in De Vivi’s visual universe, a narration that unfolds through stratifications of meaning and intimate connections between skins and bodies, references to past and contemporary visual cultures, and to the transfiguration of anonymous profiles. Layers of a narration of self that converge and merge into a single visual field.

Barbara De Vivi (Venice, 1992) is a visual artist specialised in painting. Her work explores the evolution and hybridisation of images over time through the integration of artistic iconographies and moments of her personal life. Starting from a process of archiving through drawing images from different contexts, she discovers unexpected connections. De Vivi graduated from the Accademia di Belle Arti of Venice and attended the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. She has exhibited widely, has received awards such as the Combat Prize and the Euromobil Under 30 Prize, and has completed residencies at the Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa (Venice), the Pilotenkueche (Leipzig) and the Gängeviertel (Hamburg). Her work was the focus of the *Flaming April* show at the Mom Art Center in Hamburg in 2023. Recently her works have been included in the collection of the CRC and displayed at the Castello di Rivoli. She divides her life and work between Hamburg and Venice.

The show will be accompanied by the publication of a catalogue with critical essay by Lorenzo Madaro and a conversation by Elisa Carollo.