

press release

Lanfranco Quadrio/Ruozhe Xue *The Politics of the Void*

22 February 2017 – 13 April 2017

private view : tuesday 21st February 2017
6:30 - 8:45pm

37 rathbone street, w1t 1nz london



Lanfranco Quadrio, *Marea D'Uomini*, 2016,
mixed media on paper on canvas, 90x90cm



Ruozhe Xue, *A Foreshortening Cliff*,
2016, oil on canvas, 250x200cm

rosenfeld porcini is pleased to announce **The Politics of the Void**, a duo exhibition with works by the Italian artist Lanfranco Quadrio and the Chinese artist Ruozhe Xue.

Italian master draughtsman Lanfranco Quadrio (*1966) and Chinese painter Ruozhe Xue (*1987) reaffirm classical aesthetics to explore the condition of the individual in our contemporary world.

With his poignant compositions Lanfranco Quadrio conveys a deep spectrum of emotional torment around the fragility of the human spirit. The all-embracing installation depicting Quadrio's reinterpretation of 'Inferno' occupies one whole room of the gallery providing the fulcrum of the show. A selection of canvasses and works on paper complement the presentation of this latest body of work.

Quadrio contemplates Dante's 'Inferno' as the iconic reference point to confront the political and social upheavals that are relentlessly shaking up our contemporary world. Living in Sicily, he experiences first hand the emergency of the wave of migrants fleeing from flagellated countries, too often miserably abandoned to wrestle for survival at the mercy of unforgiving waters. The circles of Dante's Hell resonate through the procession of figures struggling and falling into emptiness. Contorted, flailing bodies caught in a perpetual maelstrom yearn for salvation, yet the accentuated, spiral-like movement of the composition suggests the difficulty man has in avoiding the abyss.

Notwithstanding the apparent desperation, Quadrio's gaze rather echoes that inner spirit of regeneration, so profoundly embedded within Sicilian history. Sicily was conquered by Greeks, Arabs, Normans and Spanish armies yet through all those centuries of domination it has not only survived but also resulted in the most fertile breeding ground for the flourishing of art and unique cultural syncretism.

This sense of hope is reinforced by the second, site-specific installation featuring a large scale pair of wings hinting at Dante's Paradise ethereal dimension. Drawn onto one of the gallery walls and destined to be destroyed at the end of the exhibition, the wings embrace our desire of ascension, counteracting any force spiralling down. The impermanence of this work is a powerful metaphor and testifies the difficulty that face the human spirit as it strives to better itself.

The paintings by Ruozhe Xue, in contrast, straddle the thin line between realism and dreamlike, surreal imagery. His canvasses are pervaded by a cryptic aura, skillfully emphasized through the use of dark tones that cast a sense of timelessness and suspension upon the figures. The missing context, very often hidden or dissipating into vagueness, eludes any plausible attempt to unravel the enigma.

The 'Clothes' series delves into Xue's fascination with the everlasting mystery of what lies beneath the clothes we wear. Initiated in ancient Greek sculpture, drapery has been an influential artistic conceit throughout history of art and source of inspiration for contemporary artists like Anselm Kiefer and Piero Pizzi Cannella amongst others.

Ruozhe Xue here experiments the reach of metonymy as the contours of the female form enable the image of the woman within to be shaped in the viewer's mind. Yet again the perception feels fragmentary and even when the artist seems to be unveiling the whole corporal presence of human beings as in 'A Foreshortening Cliff', they appear as uncanny doubles stranded on an unlikely ledge staring into space. The premise behind this major work lies in its psychological tension. It emanates silence, mystery, infinity and ultimately an oddness that is unable to be deciphered. The characters display a distinctly contemporary unease, as if they fell prey to an uncertain fate. One figure appears the shadowing alter ego of the other, an acute sense of doubling penetrates the scene challenging the realism of the composition.

Drawn to portray the precarious essence of the individual, both artists inevitably delve into the concept of void. A place of the spirit, incubator of our perennial unease and psychological nakedness in Ruozhe Xue's paintings, the sense of void is in contrast taken on by Lanfranco Quadrio through the lens of Dante's vision of 'Hell' and 'Paradise'. Dante's universe was profoundly entangled with us as political, moral and social beings. Our actions in the world, he would suggest, trigger inexorable repercussions on the rest of our lives. The void of the abyss or the ascension into pure ether is the scenario we face.

Lanfranco Quadrio (Lecco, Italy *1966) currently lives and works in Palermo, Sicily where he teaches Decorative Arts at the National Institute of Art. Lanfranco Quadrio has featured in several solo and group exhibitions internationally including the Grand Palais, Paris; Science Museum, London; 'Grande Finale a.r.t fabric', Freland; Fondation Taylor, Paris; Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Turin; Museo Marino Marini, Florence; Istituto Nazionale della Grafica, Palermo. Quadrio's work also features in numerous public collections such as Bertarelli Collection, Milan; Bisonte Cultural Centre, Florence; Museum of Contemporary Arts 'Villa Croce', Genoa; Civic Galleries of Monreale and Cremona and the National Museum of Krakow.

Ruozhe Xue (Xuzhou, China *1987) lives and works between Beijing and London. After studying at the Painting Department of China Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, he graduated from the Painting Programme at the Royal College of Arts in London. Award winner of the Neville Burston Prize and the Tom Bendhem Prize for Figure Drawing, Xue has presented his work in numerous exhibitions in London and in China.