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LUISA GARDINI - DAVIDE STUCCHI  
*CLIN D'OEIL*

MARCH 13 - APRIL 30

*Clin d'oeil*

Probably, the most famous representation of an encounter of hands is that of the *Creazione di Adamo* by Michelangelo Buonarroti for the Sistine Chapel. With extreme power of synthesis Michelangelo gives form to the mystery of the creation, to the transmission of the life, translating it in an image with a strong iconic valence, *the punctum* of the whole composition. Of hands, however, the history of art is full, even if they are sometimes improperly considered minor details in the broader view of a work, on which the eye finds it difficult to concentrate. One could almost categorize them taxonomically: hands that receive, that repel, that hold, that fight, that caress, that bless... And how not to think, then, to the first rock engravings representing hands in the *Cueva de las Manos* in Patagonia, to the monumental fragment of the hand of the *Colosso di Costantino*, to the perspective cut of the hand of the *Annunciata* by Antonello da Messina, to the drawings of Albrecht Dürer, to the silent dialogue between hands in Leonardo da Vinci's *Cenacolo*, to then arrive, in contemporary times, at the hand that generates itself by Maurits Cornelis Escher, at the hand evoked in its negative by Piero Manzoni's fingerprints, at César's *Le Pouce*, and finally at the hands decorated with verses by Iranian poetesses by Shirin Neshat, and *L.O.V.E.* by Maurizio Cattelan, who finds one of his own possible sources of inspiration in the colossal fragments of classicism. Or, last but not least, to the ironic intelligence of Bruno Munari's *Supplemento al dizionario italiano*, a sample of gestures that are more significant, effective and immediate than simple oral expression. The authenticity of humanity is concentrated in all these hands. They are vectors of emotions, in act or in power.

Those of Luisa Gardini and Davide Stucchi - artists who are generationally distant and, at a first superficial reading, also distant in terms of practice and poetics - are, first and foremost, "found" hands - in books, in magazines - and re-produced, translated, resemanticised, almost deformed, deprived of the bodies they belong to, de-physicalised. They are bare hands, devoid of any rhetorical epicness. Parts for the whole, abstracted from their original context they become something else. In Luisa Gardini the hands, with their lines, - in which echoes and suggestions of Abstract Expressionism, Neo-Dada and psychic automatism converge - are treated as forms. They are the forms of all the abstraction loved and practised by the artist, who here allows herself a *clin d'oeil* to figuration, perhaps reminiscent of her studies of life drawing in the years of academic training and of the technical difficulty in representing these "offshoots", as she defines them. And the hands are colour contrasts, they are powerful blacks and whites. And they are matter, central to the artist. With their fragility - and complexity of execution - Luisa Gardini's photoceramics do not deny defects and imperfections. Every smear, every tear, has its own specific expressive value.

Luisa Gardini's work is thus suspended between this expressivity and a certain, parallel elusiveness. Similarly, Davide Stucchi, whose practice is characterized by trespassing and crossing disciplines, can be elusive. He is minimal and poetic. He proceeds by subtraction, he works in the infrathin, he speaks of diffuse bodies, of spaces, of desire, of eroticism. And of absence. Always starting from his own personal experience, moving along an idiosyncratic ideal line, from Corrado Levi to Felix Gonzalez-Torres. His switches of the *Light Switch* series become displays of fragments of an amorous discourse, im/possible haptic devices of affection.



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They seduce and induce potential activating gestures, but they are, at the same time, bachelor machines, a-functional, indeed depowered in their functionality. When Stucchi “appropriates” the image of a body - or rather, once again, of a part of it and, to be more precise, of one of those bodies frozen in an artificial, glossy perfection - he overturns the dynamics of the construction of desire in the fashion system in order to question them and unhinge their *clichés*. If one of the functions of photography is to grasp the transient and perpetuate memory and remembrance, the mediated use of photography by both Gardini and Stucchi in their work is not so far from this, but the choice of subject is not so central, although both are well aware of the symbolic implications and ancestral significance. Rather, it is a pretext for a reflection on forms/signs/colours or for triggering delicate narratives of everyday domesticity.

Text by Damiano Gulli

Luisa Gardini (\*1935, Ravenna, IT) lives and works in Rome

Selected solo exhibitions: 2019 *Aspecifici - Lavori anni '60 e '70*, Federica Schiavo Gallery, Milan, IT; 2017 *Trialogo/Rossini & Beiderbecke*, Librogalleria La Diagonale, Rome, IT; 2016 *Luisa Gardini & Felix*, Guimarães, Vienna, AT; *Luisa Gardini*, Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò, New York University, NY, US; *Luisa Gardini | 1965 - 2015*, Federica Schiavo Gallery, Rome, IT; 2014 *Carte e sculture - Anni Settanta e Anni Duemila*, curated by P. Bonani, La Diagonale, Rome, IT; 1996 *Luisa Gardini (29 aprile)*, in *Martiri e Santi*, Associazione Culturale L'Attico, Rome, IT; *Luisa Gardini*, Ronchini Arte Contemporanea, Terni, IT; *Luisa Gardini*, The Voxxx. Kultur und Kommunikation Zentrum, Chemnitz, DE; 1993 *Luisa Gardini*, Galleria Miralli, Viterbo, IT; 1992 *Luisa Gardini. Opere recenti*, Chiesa SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Spoleto, IT; 1989 *Luisa Gardini. Opere recenti*, Studio Durante, Rome, IT; 1984 *Luisa Gardini. Opere recenti*, Galleria Mèta Arte Contemporanea, Bolzano, IT; 1983 *Luisa Gardini. Opere recenti*, Roma, Galleria L'Isola, Rome, IT; 1981 *Luisa Gardini. Opere su carta e su tela 1977-1980*, Galleria d'Arte Grafica dei Greci, Rome, IT.

Selected group exhibitions: 2018 *Trimini Rising*, Belmacz, London, UK; *Gli amici di Toti Scialoja e Gabriella Drudi (nell'ambito della mostra "100 Scialoja - Azione e Pensiero")*, MACRO, Rome, IT; 2014 *To continue. Notes towards a Sculpture Cycle. Parte prima: Materia*, curated by C. Canziani and I. Gianni, Nomas Foundation, Rome, IT; 2012 *Smearred with the gold of the Opulent Sun*, curated by C. Sharp, Nomas Foundation, Rome, IT; 2010 *L'anima della Terra - Cinquant'anni di ceramica nell'arte italiana 1960-2010 (50° Mostra della ceramica)*, Castellamonte, IT; 2008 *Omaggio a Toti Scialoja. Amici e allievi*, curated by B. Drudi, Galleria Il Segno, Rome, IT; 1997 *Babele III. Italia-Germania: un terzo incontro*, Accademia Tedesca-Villa Massimo, Rome, IT; *Sentieri selvaggi. Un'ipotesi contemporanea. 34° Festival dei Due Mondi*, Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Spoleto, IT; 1989 *Senza titolo. Claudio Adami, Luisa Gardini, Nunzio, Pizzi Cannella, Marco Tirelli, Toti Scialoja*, curated by G. Drudi, Studio Durante, Spoleto-Rome, IT; *Se una sera d'autunno un artista volesse inventare un oggetto da regalare...*, Galleria Dell'Oca, Rome, IT; 1979 *From page to space. Women in the Italian Avant-Garde Between Language and Image*, curated by M. Bentivoglio, Center for Italian Studies-Columbia University, New York, NY, US

Davide Stucchi (\*1988, Vimercate, IT), lives and works in Milan

Selected solo exhibitions: 2021 *Falli (Phalluses)*, Martina Simeti, Milan, IT; 2020 *DS*, Deborah Schamoni, Munich, DE; 2019 *Light Switch (Entrance)*, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich, CH; 2546/9728, SUNDODGS, Paris, FR; *Davide Stucchi con Corrado Levi, Zazà*, Naples, IT; 2017 *Davide STUCCHI*, Deborah Schamoni, Munich, DE; 2016 *NENA*, curated by Francesco Garutti, Sant'Ilario Pavilion, Genoa, IT; 2015 *Davide Stucchi, What's Left Unsaid, Says It All*, curated by Mattia Ruffolo, Taylor Macklin, Zurich, CH; 2014 *Oggetti Traditi*, MACRO - Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma, Rome, IT; 2013 *Davide Stucchi 1993-2013*, curated by Luca Lo Pinto, Caffè Perù, Rome, IT.

Selected group exhibitions: 2021 *RETROFUTURO*, MACRO, Rome, IT; *STILL TIME*, Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris, FR; 2020 *FUORI! Quadriennale d'Arte di Roma*, curated by Stefano Colicelli Cagol and Sarah Cosulich, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, IT; *All Clothes Artists' Own*, A project by Davide Stucchi, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Milan, IT; *KASTEN*, by Cédric Eisenring und Luca Beeler, Stadgalerie Bern, Bern, CH; *Il Lenzuolo Viola*, Ermes Ermes, Wien, AT; *Performativity*, curated by Denis Isaia and Sara Enrico, Centrale Fies, Dro, IT; 2019, *Coming Soon*, curated by Kari Rittenbach, Nora Heidorn, Mira Asriningtyas, Fondazione Sandretto Re Reaudengo, Torino, IT; 2016 *DIE MARMORY SHOW III, Guilty Pleasures*, curated by Eva Birkenstock, Deborah Schamoni, Munich, DE; *Altri tempi, altri miti*, 16a Quadriennale di Roma, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, IT