

Martina Simeti

GAIA VINCENSINI

Double Factor Identification

curated by Eva Svennung

10 September 2021 – 6 November 2021

Opening Thursday 9 September, 4:30 – 8:30 pm

Through hallucinated, comic-like drawings, etching prints, sculptures, embroidery and videos, Gaia Vincensini challenges the language of banks and chain stores, omnipresent in everyday landscape. She deflates the solid image of corporations, inserting their conventional symbols within an analogue autobiographical system. Through a practice that combines and questions the languages of craftsmanship and design, Vincensini reflects on issues analysing the individual within the community.

A scene captured by the artist through the window blinds of a Parisian apartment depicting a strip of bucolic urban landscape occupied by bodies engaging with one another on the sly while ‘exercising’. Or how limited access to outdoor public spaces during the last year and half somehow turned city life into a never-ending performance of the resilience so dear to our times – connected bodies exhaling an “I can bend like a reed!” became a frequent sight. Hence exercising outdoors as an alternative to tutorials indoors or Zoom, but also shopping, and going from A to B and back, as the only available breaks from the mental/home/office maze. Time outside felt as timed and formatted as a commercial. *The videos will be trickled out a day at a time starting Monday in the format of a virtual film festival and following the addictive pattern of streaming services.** Depleted from crowds, some neighbourhoods looked like sterilised film sets in which décor, branding and upscaling attempts, but also collateral signs of rampant misery, came to the fore. As if corporate brands had always been here, before the people.

This mutation isn't really news, but it's become overwhelming. In this script or moodboard, the products that are (mis)placed are us. And it are these premises that inform part of Gaia Vincensini's practice; an existential backdrop on which she deploys various techniques and filters of all kinds. A way to exert alternative powers and to oppose other possible narratives, other mental landscapes.

As in *Dense Hormonal Spring*, the drawing described above, with its improbably lush nature and colours. Or *Faith in me* in which a characters' wide open eyes function indistinctly as windows into a being and as mirrors that reflect what they might be seeing – all this with a sense of macro dramaturgy Manga aesthetics excels at. Bubbles containing sparks of desire temporarily excluding

everything else around. Re-appropriating words that have been drained of their meaning, and spelling them out like an offering.

The scenes depicted, inner poetic visions of sorts, translate the hallucinogenic filters the brain sometimes apply on perception – not unlike the filters we're invited to augment reality with when sharing the world through our e-devices. Imbedded as the scenes are with a good hint of fleetingness, the act of drawing here becomes an attempt to preserve.

In contrast, the composite metal pieces named *Matrices* appear like large moodboards telling tales of multiple transitional states. Elements from the drawings reappear combined with other hybrid creatures, signs and sentences. Washed in paint and acids, the works function like ghostly vessels of contained but untamed feelings and energy. Giant etching plates awaiting reproduction.

The inherent properties of the different media the artist is using – steel but also, as in *Lobby Visions*, stamped clay – inform the tonality of narratives. Likewise the more or less gentle 'bites' and twists they are submitted to in the process bear the physicality of their making, manifesting a need to put the hands in the dirt. A way to exorcise.

Placed by the entrance, the ceramic console shelves - literally trinket trays – are a caricaturesque/ cartoonish version of the Plexiglas brochure displays found in banks. Materialising here the threshold one passes when entering the gallery into a space between worlds and different value systems, the pieces also suggests that some of the latter have no currency anymore.

* *excerpt from a press-release for the seven-part miniseries revealing a fashion brand's latest collection.*

- Eva Svennung

Vincensini was awarded the Manor Cultural Award in 2020. This same year she published *The Riddle with Nieves*, and was invited to a residency in the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. In June 2021, she held her first institutional solo show in Geneva at the MAMCO. "Vincensini's exhibition at the MAMCO showcases a ceramic safe – a formal setting in which to house her grandmother's sculptures – as well as engraving plates, which adorn panels shaped like armoured doors. The piece is accompanied by a film that was shot in the Museum in which various artists' works serve as a backdrop. Vincensini's combination of techniques and narratives explores the interplay between the value systems that structure both art and society."

Amongst her most recent exhibitions: *Haunted Haus* at the Swiss Institute (New York, 2020–21), *Woshbourg* at Weiss Falk (Basel, 2020). She was part of *protect me from what I want* at the Kunsthalle St. Gallen in 2019. In 2018 she had solo shows at *Gaudel de stampa* (Paris), at *Forde* (Geneva) and *1.1 Zeitgeist* (Basel). In 2019, she was nominated for a bursary awarded by the City of Geneva. She was the winner of the Fonds cantonal d'art contemporain of Geneva (FCAC) in 2017 and the *Prix New Heads – Fondation BNP Paribas ART AWARDS* in 2016.

Together with Eliott Villars and Kim Coussée, she founded a collective project focusing on printmaking, embroidery and clothing called *INNER LIGHT*. They exhibited at the Heinzler Rezsler Gallery, (Lausanne), the *salon de Normandie* (Paris), at *No conformism* (Milan), and more recently they staged their first solo exhibition *NO HOLIDAYS* in *Tunnel Tunnel* (Lausanne). They aim to explore the tension between mass-produced garments and pre-industrial techniques.