

## Beatrice Marchi and a formal illusion over beauty

by Stefano Pirovano - novembre 13, 2017

*Beatrice Marchi presents a new body of works which surveys the artist's role and questions our social identity. Are we really all passengers travelling on the same train?*



Beatrice Marchi, Curriculum-hands in front of a London by Monet, 2017, 100 x 140 cm, acrylic and pastel on wood. Courtesy of the artist, ph. Andrea Rossetti.



The artist is always an 'embedded' existence in any sign, shape, colour, object, action, or moving image she puts on exhibition, as Beatrice Marchi is currently doing at Collezione Giuseppe Iannaccone in Milan. Generally speaking, the information concerning the artist is the very essence of the artworks that we exchange on the art marketplace, or jealously preserve in our museums. A beautiful Renaissance painting, for instance, is worth less if it doesn't have a solid attribution, and art experts know it has nothing to do with marketing rules or human behavioral biases. Rather, it depends on a fundamental visual art's function: generating unique identities.

If you agree on this premise you will also agree that the new set of seven pieces plus one video animation that Beatrice Marchi presented last Thursday in Milan ought to be regarded first and foremost as a meaningful contribution to the knowledge that we have of today's artists (and not only), considering also that artist Beatrice Marchi is indeed the personality that Beatrice has been investigating since the early days of her artistic career, back in 2010, at Motel Lucie ([here](#) the article we wrote a few months ago about it).

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The main new piece currently on exhibition – a painting titled ‘Curriculum-hands in front of a London by Monet’ – pictures a real scale Beatrice Marchi avatar practising yoga meditation, her hands turned into pages of her curriculum vitae, her curly brown hair blown by the same wind that, on the background, is blowing on the British House of Parliament painted by Claude Monet at the beginning of the XX Century.

At first glance it may seem that Beatrice is just representing her avatar’s struggle to keep stress under control, while the city represented by Claude Monet could stand for an ideal world that is likely quite different from the real one. Still, as we all know, the curriculum vitae is not an issue only artists have to face. This cold proof of our professional achievements embodies the conjunction ring between the artist and the beholder.

Unlike the shocking dead body that Puppies Puppies exhibited at the FIAC this year, or Andrea Crespo’s solipsistic approach to gender nonconforming people’s issues, Beatrice Marchi is working on the everyday of a living artist of her generation. While Puppies Puppies and Crespo are a kings ruling over an imaginary kingdom founded by ‘impracticable’ objects or disturbing human body liquids, Marchi prefers to keep both her feet on the ground and looks straight into the viewer’s eyes. Instead of challenging the viewer, she brings her into the artwork with the help of the same symbolic tool Michelangelo Pistoletto has been using since the late Sixties: reflecting surfaces.

Marchi installed a black glass screen at the very centre of three expressive painted boards (is it a reference to smart phones?). She made these paintings in the same style as the previously described work. The most captivating among them is titled ‘Le vacanze dei bag-hands’ and pictures a flock of walking nudists. Heavy bags replace their hands. Their faces are hidden behind long hair blown (again) by the wind. The glass screen is meaningfully placed where also the vanishing point is... A nude figure walks alone on the other side of the street. The glass screen – the artist calls it a black hole – brings our sight physically into the scene. Again, we are there in the company of the artist, carrying the same bags, feeling the same wind on our skin.

A fictional character named Loredana has been reinforcing Beatrice’s tendency to become someone else (or perhaps everyone else), including her dog Mafalda, as we will see later. Loredana first came to life in a short video animation that Beatrice released in 2016 at Hester gallery in New York. Then Beatrice played Loredana in a performance that took place at Galerie der Stadt Schwaz (Schwaz, Austria). In that occasion Loredana/Beatrice served chips and drinks wearing a pair of plastic claws; beholders were told the story of a young woman who wanted to become a waitress. Loredana disturbing limbs popped up again at the The Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg, on the occasion of Beatrice Marchi’s MA degree show; and at Kaya House, Museo MADRE, in Naples, where Loredana, assisted by Davide Stucchi, gave Kerstin Braetsch a chamomile massage. ‘Loredana gets by doing every kind of job’ claims Beatrice, and adds ‘she can learn quickly’. A couple of framed black glass screen included in the current show addresses Loredana fictional character. Marchi originally designed them for her degree show in Hamburg, where she used the two glass screens as side tables. Now they have been turned into a couple of allusive black holes mysteriously hanging on the wall. Are they Loredana’s eyes or body orifices?

Titled ‘Ruffiana la Mafalda e la Loredana del villaggio’, Beatrice Marchi’s current show presents a third fundamental character, Mafalda. Mafalda is the artist family’s pet. Marchi etched her enigmatic snout on the back side of a wide unframed black glass screen. The sleeping dog is also pictured on a second black glass screen, nestled in a baby bed. Two paintings from the Collezione Giuseppe Iannaccone hung on the wall in the same room: a bold male reclined nude by Dana Schutz and a painting from The Beach series that Fausto Pirandello executed in 1940.

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The grotesque bodies pictured by Pirandello call to mind Marchi's hand-bags nudists, and this is but one of the many dialogues occurring between Collezione Giuseppe Iannaccone's works and Marchi's exhibition. With reference to the Beach series art historian and dealer Claudia Gian Ferrari, Mr Iannaccone's earliest mentor, once claimed that 'beauty is a category that belongs neither to the world nor to the humankind. It is a formal illusion" (Collezione Giuseppe Iannaccone, Volume I, 2017). It looks like we should perceive the same formal illusion now, and this illusion is reinforced by the looping video animation we mentioned above. Perhaps Loredana and Beatrice are just passengers of that same looping train that is taking us around, through the illusions of Artlantis.