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Presents

Valentina Murabito: *La donna del mare*

Opening: Thursday, 31 October 2024, 6pm - 9pm

Exhibition: 31 October 2024 – 18 January 2025, Tue–Sat, 11am–6pm

The Italian-German artist Valentina Murabito (*1981, Giarre, Italy) presents her latest works in the context of her exhibition *La donna del mare*. In these works, the artist approaches nature, mythology, and literary sources instinctively and playfully.

The title of the exhibition and its central work are borrowed from the 1888 play *The Lady from the Sea* (original title: *Fruen fra havet*) by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Johan Ibsen. Ibsen tells the story of Ellida, a woman torn between the longing for freedom and a sense of duty. Ultimately, she follows her instincts and leaves her husband for a sailor because he smells of the sea. In Murabito's version, a woman is seen on a rock by the sea, her arms outstretched as if she is about to take flight with the large wings made of bird of paradise flower petals (also known as *Strelitzia*) that she holds.

In another work, Murabito depicts the mythological figure of the faun, playing a flute that, upon closer inspection, transforms into a long zucchini. References to Greek stories are frequently found in her monochromatic photo-sculptures.

For the past twenty years, Murabito has been experimenting in her studio with an elaborate photography technique in which she exposes various materials such as wood, steel, and concrete, stretching and distorting the image surfaces. This results in three-dimensional artworks. In the darkroom, she creates analog photographs of imaginative creatures, which she has captured in various historical locations. In her works, Valentina Murabito blends fiction and reality, ancient myths and political philosophy, as well as art and biopolitics. She breaks with conventional forms of representation, blurs the boundaries between painting and sculpture, and delves deep into the realm of photography.

Her analog images are created over months in a complex process reminiscent of early photography pioneers like Edward Muybridge. The production was supported by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

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Valentina Murabito, born in 1981 in Giarre, Italy, studied at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design in Budapest, Hungary, and at the Academy of Fine Art in Catania, Italy. Now based in Berlin, Murabito's work revolves around the creation of "in-between-creatures," hybrid figures that transcend traditional categories, blending elements of man and woman, human and animal. Her experimental approach to analog photography involves manipulating the photographic surface, dissolving it to resemble skin or cracking it like dry earth, thus challenging conventional ideas of gender and identity. In addition to her artistic practice, Murabito has engaged in academic research, giving lectures at the University of Florence through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Florence, Italy. Her work has been showcased in various international exhibitions and is represented in prominent collections, including the SpallArt Collection in Salzburg, Austria.

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