

MICHELE CIACCIOFERA

Pathosformel

15.01 - 21.02.2026

Michel Rein gallery is pleased to present the 5th solo exhibition of Michele Ciacciofera.

« In 2020, during the lockdown imposed to counter the viral pandemic, I revisited Aby Warburg's renowned theory of pathos formulas, reinterpreting the works of several Renaissance artists. Central to my research is the idea of social memory and the engram, both connected to visual and cultural experiences. Through specific images and symbols, these experiences link classical antiquity to the present. I draw details from European, particularly Italian, Renaissance artworks, relocating them into sparse, metaphysical spaces.

Devoid of the iconographic recognizability of faces and emptied of bodies except for limbs, which extend empathy through gesture and movement, the figures I choose and reinterpret seem to dance in an indeterminate space. This transcendence of disciplinary boundaries traditionally framed by art history is heightened by the fall of mysterious spatial debris. Their restlessness celebrates the afterlife of classicism, born of the union between the Apollonian ethos and Dionysian pathos, thereby redefining historical images and their meanings within a contemporary dialectic. "Different epochs overlap like layers of various geological phases, ready to suddenly unearth an image long absent," Warburg observed.

I share this axiom with many 20th-century artists across various movements, and I use it as a springboard to chart a course toward an «unknown direction.» My compositional choice to "reveal an image" aims to create a disorienting perception. By intertwining with mnemonic traces, I seek to engage in a dialogue with the viewer, appealing to their unconscious and memory. This ongoing cycle now includes 80 small-format paintings (50 x 40 cm and 40 x 30 cm) and a large triptych (three canvases, each 200 x 170 cm). »

Michele Ciacciofera



Pathosformel - Homage to Lorenzo Costa, 2023
Pencil, gouache, tempera on cardboard, wooden frame, anti-UV, 40 x 30 cm



Pathosformel - Homage to Paolo Uccello, 2023
Pencil, gouache, tempera on cardboard, wooden frame, anti-UV and anti-reflective glass, 50 x 40 cm

Michele Ciacciofera works from several medium, from painting to sculpture, including ceramics, assemblages, drawings and sound. In an anthropological approach, he explores various themes related to his native land, Sardinia and Sicily, through the prism of the Mediterranean. Collective memory, revisited myths and contemporary political reality are intertwined in works marked by a sensitivity to the material and an acute awareness of current issues related to the reconfiguration of socio-economic balances.

Michele Ciacciofera's works have been exhibited at the 57th International Art Biennale ; Viva Arte Viva (Venice) ; Documenta 14 (Athens/Kassel) ; Museo MAGA (Gallarate, Italy) ; Museo MAN (Nuoro) ; CAFA Museum (Beijing) ; Musée d'art contemporain de la Haute Vienne ; château de Rochechouart ; NMNM (Monaco) ; Summerhall (Edinburgh) ; Palazzo Montalto (Siracusa) ; Fondazione Sambuca (Palermo) ; White Box (New York) ; Light of Creativity Miami Beach (Miami) ; IMMA Museum (Dublin). He was awarded by the Civitella Ranieri NYC Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship for 2015-16.