

MOUSSE

Nino Kapanadze
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By Marta Papini

Nino Kapanadze “Rendezvous” at Fondazione Sandra e Giancarlo Bonollo, Vicenza



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Courtesy: Fondazione Sandra e Giancarlo Bonollo. Photo: Giovanni Canova

Nino Kapanadze. “Rendezvous” marks the first solo exhibition in Italy of Paris-based Georgian artist Nino Kapanadze. From its very title, “Rendezvous” celebrates the dimensions of encounter, dialogue, tenderness, and love—an inspiration kindled by a visit to Padua’s Scrovegni Chapel. The chapel’s southern and northern walls house The Stories of Joachim and Anna, Mary and Christ, and it is amid these various scenes that Giotto rendered what is considered the first kiss in the history of art, the one shared by Anna and Joachim.

In homage to that gesture of affection, within the space of the Chiesa delle Dimesse, Kapanadze has installed two large, soft, and semi-transparent chiffon drapes, hand-coloured with pigments that

evoke the hues of the cloaks worn by the figures in Giotto's painting Joachim and Anne Meeting at the Golden Gate (circa 1303–1305). Each drape, measuring over twelve metres in length, emerges from wooden windows adorning the upper portions of the church's side walls and cascades lightly until they converge on the floor in front of the altar. The drape on the left is rendered in Mars Red, recalling the colour of Saint Joachim's cloak, while the one on the right is painted in Golden Ochre, echoing Saint Anna's mantle, similarly to how the Chiesa delle Dimesse originally featured paintings of these very saints flanking the altar. In lieu of an altarpiece, a large roundel in deep blue tones celebrates Giotto's legendary ability to freehand a perfect circle. In the adjacent spaces, twenty-six monochrome works on paper serve as a visual catalogue for the exhibition, as if the artist wished to unveil her palette before inviting us into a world of delicate hues and suspended atmospheres. These twenty-six cotton sheets capture what is otherwise impossible to seize: fragments of sky, clusters of clouds, subtle nuances of mist, and ethereal substances that have gently settled on the rough texture of the paper.

In the third room, centred on the wall, Rendezvous 31 is exhibited. Set against a starry backdrop, two semi-spherical elements meet, their union sparking flashes of cold fire, the colour of ice, in a seemingly gravity-defying display. One cannot help but recall the word rendezvous as used in astronomical language, a term used to describe the manoeuvre of two objects approaching one another in space. In contrast to such a celestial scenario, Rendezvous 28 and Rendezvous 27, positioned to the left and right respectively, depict the slender branches of a tree silhouetted against a blue sky and a bird so light that it appears to merge with the desert landscape below. In the room at the rear of the church, typically used to display the collection, two additional canvases, Rendezvous 29 and Rendezvous 30, engage in a distant dialogue. The sensuously unfurled bloom of an orchid emerges from a milky white background, conversing with a will-o'-the-wisp that seems to materialise on the water's surface. Kapanadze plays with the elements, rendering them permeable and ephemeral. She blurs the boundaries between air and earth, between fire and water, inviting us into an ancient realm where all was one.

Curated by Marta Papini

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