

saracenoArtgallery

Carlo Rocchi Bilancini

In-chiostri



Invite to the opening

Wednesday 8 February from 17.30 to 21.00
Via di Monserrato 40 | Rome

Curated by Marilena Saraceno

The Saraceno Art gallery presents the exhibition *In-chiostri* by the artist Carlo Rocchi Bilancini (born in Todi where he lives and works).

It's difficult to introduce an artist whose poetry contains so many impressions, all achieved by producing a different series of photographs united by the lowest common denominator accomplished by using the water of a swimming pool.

The element of water, skillfully captured in the interplay of light and hues, as to sometimes give the impression of being in front of a hyper realist painting, in truth it's only the framework of the representation that the artist wants to bring to life; therefore, becoming the neutral element that enhances what is being represented.

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In the series In-chiostri, water plays a role in creating a suggestive, suspended timeless space, where it's possible to interpret different tales: first and foremost the pirandellian mystification of the mask, as a depersonalizing element shattering the I, into a multitude of identities that adapt according to the context of reference: *'you will learn at your own expense, that in the long journey of life you will encounter many masks and few faces...'* a theme that is current today more than ever, where we passively witness the predominance of the image, in the world of social media and in our daily life and our evermore conveniently concealed identities.

But it's also possible to read the tale, ancient and complexed - conjured up by the title In-chiostri - of claustrum, a secluded place in which to this very day, the female world is forced to exist, whether it be eastern or western, and in some of the proposed works, the embraces portrayed seem to clinch the weakness within and state the need to partake.

The exhibition with its colours that bring to mind those of a dripping nib, as a whole works as a backdrop that invites us to ponder on who we really are and what we want to be.

Carlo Rocchi Bilancini's Biography

Carlo Rocchi Bilancini was born in Todi, into a historical family of glassworkers.

He is a photographer known for his use of pools and bright turquoise as a backdrop in his photographic work.

After graduating in Economics, he attends the Forma Foundation for photography in Milan.

In 2011, with the editor Skira, he publishes *Pesci fuor d'acqua*. (Fish out of water)

Some of the photos from the publication *Pesci fuor d'acqua* were exhibited in Venice in 2012, in a personal exhibition that took place during the XIII Biennale of Architecture at the exhibition area The Pool, on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, organized in collaboration with the Giorgio Cini Foundation; as well as in Doha (Qatar) in 2015, at the Katara Cultural Foundation, in collaboration with the Italian Embassy in Qatar.

In 2018 he held his first personal exhibition *Migration* in New York, at the Italian House Zerilli-Marimò of the New York University.

The artist's photographs have been published in different books, newspapers and magazines and are present in many collections in Italy and abroad.

8 February - 18 March 2023

from Tuesday to Friday 3 - 7 pm

Saturday 11 am - 7 pm

In the following critical text by Costantino D'Orazio

The power of water. A reading of Carlo Rocchi Bilancini's work

By Costantino D'Orazio

Water is the most powerful element in nature. One may live without light, make do without fire, possess gills and not feel the need for air. But without water it's impossible to hold out, it's impossible to exist. It's no coincidence, that the biggest blockbuster film in history Avatar 2 foresees a future world where water is the unequivocal leading character. Water blurs the edges, species mingle, all traces of time and weight are lost. Underwater everything can be cast into doubt. The submerged dimension constitutes a parallel cosmos to that of earth, just as complex and as fascinating. Water doesn't separate, but rather fuses and unites. For this very reason, it has always had a fundamental role in art. At First it appeared in Egypt, the waters of the Nile, so fertile as to cater for human activity, mythological scenes and religious rites, which precisely why it is referred to by archaeologists as "Nilotic scenes". Then there was the water of the shrines of the Silvestri Gods, mysterious and fascinating places, dotted across the frescoed walls of many Roman domus. And lastly the waters of the Jordan, where Jesus was baptized, thus giving water a whole new religious significance. The water of Christianity not only nourishes animals and plants, but also man's soul. From then onwards, artists have engaged in depicting this transparent element, each time trying to give substance and body to something that in itself is elusive. Maybe Perugino was the first to change the sense of perception once submerged in water, but most certainly he had observed Piero della Francesca. They are the painters of grace and perfection whose realism is filtered by the laws of perception as by those of mathematics. Artist that worked in places not far from where Carlo Rocchi Bilancini creates today, he may not have anything to do with these Renaissance masters, but he has a lot to say regarding the purpose of water, or better still, the effects that water produces in images. The presence of water is a constant challenge for an artist, especially so for a photographer that needs to capture the instant forasmuch as, once immersed things (and people) lose their contours and constantly move. I believe that above all this must have fascinated Lindsay Kemp, when in 2014 he accepted to stand in front of Carlo's photographic lens, immersed in a pool. Maybe it's for this reason that women covered by the burqa seem to be in their natural environment. They are so elusive and ineffable, as to dissolve in the liquid with complete serenity, without arousing fear or concern. They are not lost in water, if anything they find themselves, thus gaining their freedom which is denied to them on land. It may be an excessively romantic perception of Rocchi Bilancini's work, but deep down it is he who restores dignity to these creatures, whom on earth are forced to be covered up, but under water they acquire capacity of letting go.

The power of water, against which it's pointless to resist.