

NOVO

La Chute Marco De Sanctis

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Destruction and creation. Ancient and modern technologies. Eternal and ephemeral materials. Brussels and Milan. Balanced dichotomies, those of Marco De Sanctis (Milan, 1983). The Milanese artist has been living and working in Belgium for years. His entire artistic practice is rooted in the past, rips, and stitches with surgical precision. It catapults us into the present and beyond, towards the future. A possible future focuses on the details - and how many devils, in the details of De Sanctis.

La Chute (the fall), a solo exhibition at the Florentine spaces of Novo, project space by Eduardo Secci, presents nine unpublished works by Marco De Sanctis, made during a year of intense production. Painting, sculpture, fusion, engraving, and drawing respond to the call. They accompany us in the artist's workshop, showing us the versatility of De Sanctis' work and thought.

It starts with **Marine**, belonging to a famous series that the artist continues for years. We are faced with a direct gesture, irremediable. Technology, loved by De Sanctis in all its forms and disciplines, as an important engine of creation, not only serves to concretize ideas and manifest them in the material world but also serves itself as a motor that moves concepts and leads towards new directions. The subject of research for Marine is painting, in its material and physical aspect, even before the final composition. Applying restorative techniques, De Sanctis surgically removes the original pictorial layer of ancient canvases, purchased from antique dealers, erasing the painted image to create a new one. All layers of paint and surface paints are eroded, exposing the fragile texture of the canvas itself. The intervention is preceded by meticulous steps: investigation, safety, lining, cleaning, consolidation, and forming of the color, interventions to the wooden support, reintegration, and final protection. Little survives of the original canvas, restored and immediately annihilated. Only fragments remain a memory. However, the fragments give life to another image: a stormy sea and a silhouette of a sailing ship at the mercy of the waves. De Sanctis affirms its existence, by removing this landscape. Highlight and erasing.

To dive is an old screen that presents an intervention son of the experience with the Marines and brings with it an autobiographical element. The screen protects us, creates an intimate space, and shields us from imaginary splashes of a dive that is perhaps a voluntary, controlled fall. Many references to the past, historical and private: the diver of Paestum, the 'Leap into the void' by Yves Klein, a real dive, dangerous, happened too early in the rehabilitation process to a shoulder injury. By diving, we cross land, air, and water in a few seconds. It's a rite of passage, between life and death and life again.

Forme uniche continuità nello spazio is a bronze whose title is a clear reference to the famous work of Boccioni and is also present on the 20 Italian cents. This core of Oceano, in patinated bronze, expresses the desire to confront Futurism and answers the question that arises from the pure analysis of the work's title alone, forgetting for a moment its physical form. Well, a stormy ocean, when no one sees it, perfectly represents the unique form of the continuity of space, the interpenetration between the liquid, usual, gaseous world.

In **2021-2022**, the thorny branches of a wild blackberry, endemic to the urban center of Brussels, are torn from the city walls that were infesting, are pruned, lost in melting, welded and coated in green to cold. They return to take possession of the gallery's wall, self-defining themselves as works of art, erecting themselves like museum bronzes. And it is

precisely the use of this noble metal to celebrate the rebirth, symbolically represented by a wild plant, which takes possession of everything and everyone without discrimination, is protected with sharp thorns, now eternal and repellent, made such by fusion. A natural barbed wire, a warning, a form of protection, and a strong plant that tells us: that for every fall, a rebirth. A still life, in the true sense of the term, celebrates an unstoppable life cycle.

Fallite Fallentes, recited Ovid in the *Ars Amatoria*, addressing lovers and considering love a ruthless war in which the end justifies the means, honest or unfair. The work, titled just like the incitement of Ovid, dialogues with a famous story narrated by the Roman poet in the *Metamorphoses*, that of the shepherd Battus and the god Mercury, who punishes the poor mortal by turning him into a stone, following a report immediately discovered. The phrase, engraved on a marble sphere of 40cm in diameter and whose weight is close to that of an adult person, comes in power imprinted on the ground with each rotation again and again. Attention to detail returns, on which *De Sanctis* focuses on the umpteenth rereading of a text he almost knows by heart. The sphere is a pure form. It praises perfection, wisdom, and knowledge. The exaggerated weight does not guarantee stability; indeed, it deprives it, and rotating not always, on the same axis gives letters and compound words to the ground without cognition, inviting us to return to that powerful and almost violent phrase, which brings with it another meaning, deep, wise, moralizing.

Still bronze, so dear to the practice of an artist-restorer-craftsman-scholar. **Requiem for the sea**, candle flames perhaps already extinguished, whose delicate existence is manifested by the presence of soot on the white wall. Votive candles, spent torches, ex-votos dedicated to the sea, without which we cannot live and without which the practice of *De Sanctis* would be quite another thing. A childhood memory, the cuttlefish bones were collected on the beach and engraved on them scribbles, pure calcium carbonate now made eternal by the shiny bronze. It celebrates prayer, reflection, and meditation. These themes instead are absent in *Vanitas* (cut lemon), a still life that perpetuates a noble gesture, capricious: a lemon is cut clean, resting on a shelf, end. The freshly consumed lemon evaporates in the heat of the oven, is wrapped in refractory earth, turns into metal, and gains a place in eternity. This strange fruit, acidic and protected by thorny branches, turns into a decadent, perennially deciduous object.

In **Icona** we delude ourselves to look at golden frames and concentric geometries of Belgian black marble. As in the orthodox icons, where we do not observe the representation of a deity but THE deity, we realize that we can not only see with the eyes but also with the mind. It takes predisposition, faith, a transversal knowledge, not vertical. *De Sanctis* opens a window, praising the frame and its function, unlocking a mental process as Pavel Florenskij did in *The Royal Doors*. An essay on the world of icon painting that in the absence of it would be forever incomprehensible if you approached it with the usual tools of art criticism. *De Sanctis* denounces false knowledge, inviting us to analyze the world with other senses than bodily ones, with trust.

In conclusion, **La Chute**, an eighteenth-century engraving installed on a wooden table presents an intervention in ink drawing and shares its title with that of the exhibition. Exactly a year ago, *De Sanctis* fell off his bike, and breaks his left shoulder, life changed in an instant: he evades the temporary disability by inventing a new way of thinking, not being able to do otherwise. In this period the work on Saint Michael, on Satan dominated, a fallen angel who suffers an unprecedented violence, is born. The sharp, lethal javelin of the Saint is stretched, comes out of the very surface of the incision, the proportions explode, approach our dimension, and we can almost grab it. If before San Michele seemed unstoppable, eternally protected by the golden armor, elegant in the iconography of Raphael, now he seems vulnerable, pathetic in the attempt to control a weapon three times as large. Satan, the fallen, the rebel, has a new chance. For every fall, there is always a rebirth.

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