

Renata Fabbri

## Bea Bonafini *Luminescence*

29 May – 14 September 2024

Opening: Tuesday 28 May 2024, 6pm–9pm

### Press Release

Renata Fabbri is pleased to present *Luminescence*, the third solo exhibition by Bea Bonafini (Bonn, 1990) at the gallery. Characterised by a dynamic exchange between mediums, this new body of work includes textiles, ceramics, prints and paintings on cork.

Among the exhibited works are a variety of practices that are fundamental to the artist's research, such as the inlaid carpet, alongside new material explorations, such as the layering of cork fabric. We encounter paintings whose compositions and subjects shape the very form of their structures. Finally, the ancient technique of lithography meets new materials. As visitors, we are projected into a multitude of loose forms, where everything finds its place: forming a visual synthesis of the vast research material spanning anthropology, sociology, science, mythology and art history. The relationship to the multitude that inhabits this world is the fulcrum of the show.

Upon entering the gallery, we encounter quasi-specular scenes of conflict and ecstasy (*Hottest Blood*, 2024 and *Picnic Lunch*, 2024). The protagonist is a blue-haired female figure, the Japanese diver and princess of Kuniyoshi's prints, now engaged in a duel with a sea creature, now relishing a carnal encounter. A primordial sea and a lunch on the grass, where the harmony between natural and human elements is constantly negotiated through fragmentary representations and iridescent hues. Bonafini evokes a metamorphic element, a plural and inter-relational vision between life forms and matter, drawing as much from oriental and Mediterranean legends as from archetypal images of fecundity.

As we move deeper into the gallery spaces, we are confronted with twin ceramic works (*Eukarya*, 2024 and *How On We Grow*, 2024) that allude to Clarissa Pinkola Estes' short story "Seal Skin, Soul Skin". Clusters of bodies with anthropomorphic features are charged with symbolic energy. They recall the herding of animals, the catch of the day, the bodies of the Mediterranean sea, and the primary forms in the evolutionary cycle. Floating and swimming, they

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Tuesday – Saturday  
3.30pm – 7.30pm  
Monday by appointment

grow into spirals and rainbow-cumuli. The force of gravity is reversed in the wall-based collage *Soulskin* (2024) whose hybrid figures seemingly freefall in a red-orange amniotic fluid.

*Luminescence* exposes a world basking in an aura of light, colour and energy. A single work acts in direct opposition, the lithograph *Aphotic* (2024), inspired by the deepest and darkest corners of the ocean. Tentacled creatures reach out to each other, surviving thanks to their anatomically adapted sensory abilities. This highly personal iconography draws on prehistoric representations of shapeshifters and on modern philosophy, such as Donna Haraway's thoughts on "tentacular thinking". Moving in parallel are the paintings *Ama* and *Ablaze* (both 2024). Reminiscent of the twentieth-century artistic movement of figurative deconstruction, the artist abandons the anthropocentric dimension and fertilises new meanings with respect to our relationship with earth, life and death.

Traversing magical and symbolic imagery with seductive and mystical overtones, the exhibition synthesises the artist's most recent period of research, dedicated to material and theoretical exploration. Bonafini continues her study of hybrid techniques, investigating practices close to craftsmanship and the expressive possibilities arising from the way these contaminate each other across the geography and history of the Mediterranean basin and Asia Minor.

## Biography

Bea Bonafini (Bonn, 1990) is an interdisciplinary artist working between London and Barcelona. She graduated from MA painting from the Royal College of Art in London (2016) and BA Fine Art from the Slade School of Fine Art in London (2014). She was artist-in-residence at the ArtExplora Mediterranean Project (2024) and the British School at Rome (2020); commissions include site-specific works for ALA Prize, Italy (2023); Palazzo Abatellis, Italy (2022); Meta HQ, UK (2022); La Berlugane-Maleki residence, France; Maison Estelle, UK (2018); and Jonköping Council, Sweden (2018).

Recent solo exhibitions: *Acque Amare*, ALA Art Foundation (2023); *Il Chiostrò Animato*, Museo di Roma in Trastevere, Rome (2022); *A Monstrous Fruit*, Setareh, Berlin (2022); *Animals Of Your Lips*, Bosse & Baum, London (2022); *Unearthly*, Nosbaum Reding, Luxembourg (2022); *Ghosts for a Post-Modern Tale*, LAAA, Mexico City (2022); *Luna Piena (Stomaco Vuoto)*, Renata Fabbri, Milan (2021); *Sfiorare Fantasmì*, Eduardo Secci, Florence (2021); *Twin Waves*, Operativa, Rome (2019); *Chimère*, Chloe Salgado, Paris (2018); *Shed Shreds*, Lychee One, London (2018); and *Dovetail's Nest*, Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2017).

Recent group exhibitions: *Diario Notturmo*, MAXXI, L'Aquila (2023); *Italian Painting Today*, Triennale Milano (2023); *Imagina*, Biennale di Gubbio (2023); *Horizon of the Void*, Artocène, Chamonix (2023); *Coppa di Stelle nel Cerchio del Sole*, Palazzo Abatellis Museum, Palermo (2022); Fondazione per l'Arte, Rome (2022); Kristen Hjellegjerde, London (2022); *The Artsy Vanguard Fourth Edition*, Miami (2021); Fondazione Sandretto, Guarene (2020); Premio Cairo, Palazzo Reale Milan (2019); and *Memories Arrested in Space*, The Italian Cultural Institute, London (2018).