

PRESS RELEASE

GABRIELE SILLI

ESERCIZI DI ACCANIMENTO OTTATIVO-DIGITALI

OPENING, WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2014 H 6:00 PM
6 FEBRUARY – 15 MARCH 2014

FEDERICA SCHIAVO GALLERY
PIAZZA DI MONTEVECCHIO 16, ROMA

Federica Schiavo Gallery is pleased to present *Esercizi di accanimento ottativo-digitali* (*Exercises of Digital-Optative Stubbornness*), an exhibition of new works by Gabriele Silli that introduces his practice towards the matter and between the trace and the sign. This is the artist's first solo show with the gallery. *Esercizi di accanimento ottativo-digitali* will be on view from February 5 through March 15, 2014. The exhibition comprises works across a variety of media that explore the notion of art creation as a transformative endeavour in which pre-existing subjects and objects have been affected by the common denominators of alteration, decay and rough manipulation. The action of *digital-optative stubbornness* toward a catalogue of selected images and objects is based on the artist's iconoclast desire to destroy and to provoke deviances in respect to the initial paradigm. Through his manual intervention and natural pictorial vision, Silli attempts to transfigure the common conventions of the subject in question creating a new matter, often redefined in a modular form.

The piece titled *Grande ottativo-digitale* (*The Great Digital-Optative*) is a paradigmatic achievement of Gabriele Silli's artistic project. It deals with a polychrome mosaic made of a combination of seventy-five fashion magazines, individually put on caustic baths and altered by the artist's tactile intervention on the surfaces. In other terms, the corrosive property of acids has weakened and made the structure of each volume malleable for the artist who uses his fingers to scratch, punch holes, bend, overlap the decayed paper and pigments. In some cases, the artist has included little fragments of paper, employing the *collage* technique as a coloured brush stroke or a chromatic connection between elements. The entire panel is a wide composition with a mimetic-pictorial effect despite its physical and material nature.

The *Grande ottativo-digitale* piece is shown together with the work *Organo del sommerso nei bagni tripudio caustico-cloridrici*, a bizarre and gloomy device which brings to light a particular cunning, called *mechané* by the Greek, which refers to the expedient, the artifice of the demiurge. The *Organo del sommerso* installation is a complex apparatus presented as a self-celebratory monument dedicated to the artist's tools. At the same time, it enlightens its powerful metaphorical nature of a large maternal womb suitable to receive and return all materials and mixtures employed by the artist. On a table, among tanks and other glass containers used for the acid baths, there are eight conglomerates made out of paper, resins, creams, textiles, animal leathers, iron paste and injections of cement. These mixed media works reproduce again a particular tactile painting effect on a sculptural basis.

Gabriele Silli's work also emphasises the need to deepen a pursuit focused on the concept of variation, especially through the obsessive reuse of subjects, images, materials and formal processes. The room dedicated to the "digital-optative books" series grows out of repetitive iconographic subjects – such as celebrities, actresses, models, landscapes – and their formal associations are also based on rhythm and repetition. The twenty-four books included the *Serie maggiore* (sixteen issues), the *Serie minore* (four issues), the volume titled *Sexy Girls* and the *Papiro-Bidet* (three issues), gather together pages of women's magazines processed with acids and then pigmented and overprinted.

The large-scale works on paper which belong to the *Dominio dell'agente imprevisto* (*tre variazioni di trenta, circa*) series, represent the naturally evolution of Silli's experimentation. The photographs, printed out by the same printer of Vogue Italia, have an unusual size of 70x100. The subject, an original snapshot taken by the artist, echoes and synthesizes several elements in the exhibition such as the sculpture titled *Martello-Fiore n° 3 o "della Potenza"*. This *assemblage* of a long anchor handle with an eyelet and welded to an anvil made in the guise of a hammer is placed in the middle of the room in a precarious equilibrium. This work continues a cycle of sculptures titled *Martello-Fiore* (*Flower-Hammer*), which has been produced and developed in different shapes and media, across the years, by the three members of the Mastequoia art group.

GABRIELE SILLI was born in Rome, Italy in 1982 where he lives and works. He received his Degree in Philosophy from the University of Rome "La Sapienza" in 2009. In 2004 he founded with Giacomo Sponzilli and Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli the Mastequoia art group. His practice has pictorial roots and moves even through sculpture and performance. **Selected Solo Shows:** *Mastequoia op. 09-13*. Rotterdam, Tokyo, Fès (with Mastequoia), screening at Federica Schiavo Gallery, Rome & Viafarini, Milan, Italy, 2014; *Mastequoia op. 09-13*. Rotterdam, Tokyo, Fès (with Mastequoia), screening at Lo schermo dell'arte Film Festival, Florence & Filmstudio, Rome, Italy, 2013; *Forms of the Rock in a Night-Hymn #011* (with Mastequoia), Galleria Otto Zoo, Milan, Italy, 2011. **Selected Group Shows:** *Arimortis*, Museo del Novecento, Milan, Italy, 2013; *Far From Where We Came* (with Mastequoia), Aaran Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran, 2009; *Pharaonesque* (performance with Mastequoia), V° Budapest Dance and Performance Festival, Hungary, 2008; *1+1+1...*, Fondazione Baruchello, Rome, Italy, 2006; *Selvatici bipedi - Otho - Melnikov!* (performance with Mastequoia), Mastequoia Theatre, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 2006; *Scegliere un oggetto, scegliere una parola e raccontare perchè* (with Mastequoia), Fondazione Baruchello, Rome, Italy, 2004; *VII edizione del Festival Romapoesia* (with Mastequoia), Rome, Italy, 2004.