

#SOLO/MULTI

27 April – 24 September 2023

IN FIRST PERSON PLURAL

With

Gina Beavers, Alexandra Bircken, Corrado Cagli, Judy Chicago, Enzo Cucchi, Jimmy DeSana, Eliza Douglas, Wayland Flowers, Massimo Grimaldi, Duane Hanson, Mark Leckey, Nancy Lupo, Tala Madani, John Miller, Hudson Mohawke, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Ulrike Ottinger, Lucia Pica, Francisco Sierra, Erik Thys, Gianfilippo Usellini, and other apparitions



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MACRO – Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome

Opening 27 April, from 6pm to 9pm

In First Person Plural is an exhibition conceived as a film set, in which the artworks act as characters capable of activating different stories within the same scenario. A space composed of a complex ensemble of elements—artworks, music, artefacts, masks, reflective surfaces, performers—transporting the viewer into an alternate dimension through their association.

In First Person Plural is the first group show to be presented in the SOLO/MULTI section of MACRO's programme and aims to explore another facet of the exhibition as medium with an experimental approach. The exhibition is designed to be a synesthetic and disorientating experience, which takes form through the works of the artists from diverse generations and backgrounds, evading thematic and temporal classifications but destabilizing the boundaries and definitions of the human, non-human and post-human. It is a space in which our notions of reality and fiction are teased, flipped over, and twisted. A deposit of gestures, signs and emotions belonging to a recent past and marked by a certain abstraction yet resonating conceptually and physically in the present.

In addition to the artworks, throughout the course of the exhibition a series of characters and objects, like apparitions, some static whilst others in motion, will act freely within the space. Among these are a Michael Jackson impersonator, a series of street painters and performers invited to wear masks. A compost of seemingly familiar and harmless elements, yet aimed at suggesting a deeply perturbing experience of reality, as if to prompt a reflection on the enigmatic cognitive and emotional conditions characteristic of our time.

The title of the exhibition originates from the poem *In First Person Plural* by Adam Zagajewski (1945-2021).

The exhibition is promoted by Cultural Department of Roma Capitale and Azienda Speciale Palaexpo.

With the support of Byredo.

Gina Beavers (Athens, 1974)

Gina Beavers lives and works in New Jersey. In her pictorial practice she transforms digital images appropriated from social media and the Internet into thickly layered compositions that border on sculpture.

Alexandra Bircken (Cologne, 1967)

Alexandra Bircken lives and works between Berlin and Munich. The materials incorporated in her sculptures range from manufactured items such as silicon, nylon tights, weapons, and machinery, to organic materials including wool, leather, branches, and dried fruit, often arranged with one another. Her sculptures are concerned with the "immediate environment" in relation to the human form and body, exploring notions of vulnerability and protection.

Corrado Cagli (Ancona, 1910 - Rome, 1976)

Cagli's artistic training takes place first in Rome and then in Paris and New York, where he lives extensively. He experiments with many of the modern painting techniques to arrive at his own stylistic signature that draws inspiration from the 15th century and the Renaissance, with incursions of geometric and abstract motifs. In his youth he also devoted himself to mural painting and later to monumental art and to tapestries. Due to racial persecution, he is forced to leave Italy during the Second World War years, and upon his return, he deepens the subject of abstractionism.

Judy Chicago (Chicago, 1939)

The work of American feminist artist, art educator and writer Judy Chicago encompasses sculpture, painting, installation, ceramics and textile, amongst other mediums. Her work explores the role of women in history and culture, birth, creation, history, humanism and domestic themes. She defines herself as a "moral artist" whose work "has to do with social justice". In 1971 she co-founded the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts with Miriam Schapiro, beginning to work on 1972's groundbreaking Womanhouse, a multi-participant, multimedia installation.

Enzo Cucchi (Morro D'Alba, 1949)

Enzo Cucchi lives and works in Rome. As a teenager he moved to Ancona, where he approached art as a self-taught artist, working as an assistant to restorers of books and paintings. In Rome he came into contact with Sandro Chia and Francesco Clemente, later becoming one of the main protagonists of the Transavanguardia movement. His works can be found in some of the world's major contemporary art collections.

Jimmy DeSana (Detroit, 1949 - New York, 1990)

Jimmy DeSana was an American photographer whose work bridged a myriad of genres and projects, from No Wave counterculture and BDSM subculture, to commercial work and music album covers, working with both colour and black and white photography. The body was central throughout his oeuvre, particularly in the surreal nudes and hybridised bodies, often faceless, staged in domestic, suburban, colourfully lit interiors.

Eliza Douglas (New York, 1984)

Eliza Douglas lives and works in New York and Berlin. Since 2016 Douglas has been working on "meta-paintings" in which she stages images drawn from artistic, fashion, consumer, and underground cultures. Also a musician, performer, and model, Douglas regularly performs and collaborates with German artist Anne Imhof.

Wayland Flowers (Dawson, 1939 - Los Angeles, 1988)

Wayland Flowers was an American actor, comedian and ventriloquist, best known for the comedy acts he played with the puppet Madame. He gained widespread success through his performances on stage and on national U.S. TV in the 1970s and 1980s.

Massimo Grimaldi (Taranto, 1974)

Massimo Grimaldi lives and works in Milan. His practice investigates the notion of "art" and the way in which we perceive, understand, and place value upon it. His research interrogates the criteria for production and the circulation of images, creating works which favour social and ethical content, and which goes beyond

aesthetics. Grimaldi builds images through a multitude of apps, which progressively become deformed, no longer portraits of humans but “approximate humanoids”, as the artist defines them.

Duane Hanson (Alexandria, 1925 - Boca Raton, 1996)

Duane Hanson was a US-American sculptor known for his hyper-realistic depictions of ordinary people. Using polyester resin, bondo, bronze, or fiberglass, Hanson's technique involved casting living people and then painstakingly painting the fiberglass figure with all the imperfections and veins of actual skin.

Mark Leckey (Birkenhead, 1964)

Mark Leckey lives and works in London. Since the late 1990s, his work has looked at the relationship between popular culture and technology as well as exploring the subjects of youth, class and nostalgia, through sculpture, film, sound, and performance.

Nancy Lupo (Flagstaff, 1983)

Nancy Lupo lives and works in Los Angeles. Intricate networks of materials, objects, and spaces characterize Nancy Lupo's installation work, which draws attention to our presence among everyday materials, spaces, and objects that are often overlooked but deeply affect our understanding of the world.

Tala Madani (Tehran, 1981)

Tala Madani lives and works in Los Angeles. In her pictorial and animation work Madani brings together various modes of critique about gender, particularly masculine and feminine stereotypes, as well as questioning westernised idealistic notions of childhood, family and the art historical canon. Her work is inflected with a peevish sense of humour and brings to bear basic human feelings and emotions, such as anxiety, anger, fear, isolation, paranoia, envy and lust.

John Miller (Cleveland, 1965)

John Miller lives and works in New York City. Throughout his multi-layered and extensive oeuvre Miller has deployed photo wallpaper, globes, photographs, advertising columns, shaped paintings of pedestrians, as well as conventional paintings of landscapes, reality TV programs, and game shows. Mannequins are yet another recurrent element that the artist utilises to play with what feel like appearances of reality. With his ironic approach, Miller investigates the autonomy of a work of art, as well as the established values, perception, and understanding of art within contemporary conditions of production and consumption.

Hudson Mohawke (Glasgow, 1986)

Ross Matthew Birchard (known by his stage name Hudson Mohawke) is a Scottish-American producer, composer and DJ, collaborating extensively within the hip-hop and electronic music scene. In 2007 he co-founded the UK record label and design studio LuckyMe, which specializes in new electronic, hip hop, pop, rock and underground dance music. He is also one-half of the duo TNGHT with producer Lunice.

Paul Mpagi Sepuya (San Bernardino, 1982).

Paul Mpagi Sepuya lives and works in Los Angeles. Sepuya's work highlights the constructed nature of the photographic document and the performative space of the photographic studio, embracing the medium's potentials for fragmentation and connection.

Ulrike Ottinger (Konstanz, 1942)

Ulrike Ottinger is a Berlin-based filmmaker and visual artist. She has been a leading figure in German cinema since the early 1970s, directing both feature length fiction and experimental documentaries. She views her work as a layering of political, social and aesthetic strata, analyzing the myth of mass culture, characterized by on-screen pomp, as well as intricate, ethnographic detail. During filmmaking, Ottinger is simultaneously her own cinematographer: she photographs during her productions, highlighting the careful composition and mise-en-scène as a still image.

Lucia Pica (Naples, 1976)

Lucia Pica lives and works in Paris. Pica is a make-up artist, in 2022 she was appointed creative image & make-up partner at Byredo. She was responsible for developing new products for the beauty line, as well as playing a part in the creation of CHANEL's beauty campaigns and runway looks. She has collaborated with photographers such as Karim Sadli, Alasdair McLellan, Juergen Teller, Steven Meisel, Zoë Ghertner, Harley Weir, Mario Sorrenti, Jamie Hawkesworth, Glen Luchford, and Craig McDean, among others. She has collaborated with several editorial partners, among them: British Vogue, Vogue Paris, Vogue Italia, Interview, Dazed, Self Service, i-D, and W Magazine.

Francisco Sierra (Santiago del Chile, 1977)

Francisco Sierra lives and works in Switzerland. Self-trained, Sierra's artistic practice includes painting, drawings, sculpture and installations, where the motifs of his work have ranged from still lifes of objects and food, to animal portraits and erotic absurdities. Although seemingly faithful to reality, his works subvert this very notion through a humorous, surreal or conceptual approach, transforming what appears to be real and clear into something enigmatic whilst questioning the transformative potential of painting as a medium.

Erik Thys (1961)

Erik Thys lives and works in Brussels. He works as a psychiatrist and studies the links between psychiatry, art and stigma. He founded KAOS, an organisation promoting artists with a psychiatric vulnerability. He wrote psychiatric comic strips and books about WWII. He composes music and draws extensively.

Gianfilippo Usellini (Milan, 1903 - Arona, 1971)

Usellini began painting at a very young age. He attended the Brera Academy of Fine Arts with Ambrogio Alciati, graduating in 1927. He was invited to exhibit at the Venice Biennale as early as 1926. He participated in the First Quadrennial in Rome in 1931. He was close to the Novecento movement, but did not take part in the group's exhibitions. During these years he comes to define his artistic language, characterized by a metaphysical classicism inspired by the great Italian painting of the 15th century. He also devoted himself to mural painting and mosaics. From 1928, until his death, he taught decoration, drawing and fresco painting in various institutions.

Eliza Douglas, *Untitled*, 2023. Oil on canvas. Photo Marc Damage. Courtesy the artist and Air de Paris, Romainville and VI VII, Oslo

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