

PRESS RELEASE

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CIRCA Gallery London presents Alessandro Papetti, *I Live Here*, 29 April – 4 June 2016

CIRCA Gallery London is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Alessandro Papetti. Entitled, *I Live Here*, the exhibition is Papetti's first in the UK and will comprise some twenty works, including several large oil paintings as well as mixed media on prepared paper. Many of the works were made at the Palazzo Poli in Rome where the artist was in residency leading up to his solo exhibition in September 2015, while others were completed in his studio in early 2016.

Born in 1958 in Milan, where he continues to live and work today, Papetti is one of Italy's foremost contemporary painters. He has exhibited widely for almost 30 years, notably at the Venice Biennale in 2003 and 2011, at major museums in Milan, Paris, Moscow and Tokyo and at commercial galleries around the world, from Vancouver to Cape Town.

A largely self-taught artist, Papetti's most noticeable influences include Alberto Giacometti and Francis Bacon. His most recognizable works are sweeping, cinematic paintings focused on industrial archaeology, urban landscapes and portraits and studies of nudes, frequently painted from a high-angle perspective. Milan has served as an important backdrop for his work: "I tend to use monochromatic colours. The light in my cities is fairly northern because I was born in Milan and that definitely had an influence. These are the colours from my city, from the air that I've breathed."

In 1995 Papetti met the writer and Giacometti biographer, James Lord, who wrote a significant critical essay on his work. Lord described Papetti's work as "profoundly Italian" and referenced the influence of Tintoretto: "The frenetic movement, ghostly perspective and supernatural sense of space so characteristic of the Venetian master have clearly left their mark on the young Milanese painter without, however, overpowering his personal and original view. He has, in short, mastered the configuration of his inner world, and achievement which is essential to the ontological transfiguration that endows with talismanic permanence the transitory detritus of our perishable selves and our world."

Papetti's exhibition at CIRCA London explores memory and interiors of the mind. Papetti describes his exploration in this way: "It is difficult to bring [memory, thoughts] to the fore, but I can come close to this concept by painting according to the rhythm of my thoughts - before they crystallize into object and subject - keeping up with the continuous evolution of the messages of my mind, adapting and altering pictorially, rhythm and manner. It is as if the painted space was the interior of the mind and the objects contained in it were thoughts emerging".

This exhibition marks a turning point in Papetti's work which has previously focused on fixed objects, finite thoughts with the artist using his distinctive way of painting, his quick gestures, to animate an object - an industrial landscape, an interior or a human figure - and give it a sense of movement and speed. In this new body of work, the flow of his thoughts, at the moment an idea is being conceived, has provided the impetus. Papetti describes it thus: "Anticipating memory is impossible, I know, but it is as if, over these last few months of work, I had try to paint the precise moment when an idea, a thought, is born. It was not a rational attempt; it was the need to follow, or anticipate, the flow of my thoughts."

An online catalogue to accompany the exhibition will be published by CIRCA London and includes an interview with Papetti in conversation with Pia Capelli, art critic and writer. In May 2016, Sky Arte Italy will broadcast a new, 30-minute documentary about the artist, and a video by Francesco Papetti, which traces the development of this body of work, will be available for viewing at the gallery and on its website.

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About CIRCA Gallery London

CIRCA Gallery London is a partnership with Everard Read Galleries, South Africa and John Martin Gallery, London. It opened in March 2016 and presents the work of exceptional contemporary artists from around the world, including a core of artists living and working in South Africa.

The gallery London is located at 80 Fulham Road, London SW3 6HR and is open weekdays, 10am – 6pm and Saturdays, 12pm – 4pm. www.circagallerylondon.com

About Alessandro Papetti

Papetti is one of Italy's foremost contemporary painters. Born in 1958 in Milan, where he continues to live and work today, he has exhibited widely for almost 30 years, notably at the Venice Biennale in 2003 and 2011 and at major museums in Milan, Paris, Moscow and Tokyo and at commercial galleries around the world, from Vancouver to Cape Town. This is his first exhibition in the UK.

Biography

At the beginning of his career Alessandro Papetti concentrated on the theme of *Ritratti visti dall'alto*, a series to which Giovanni Testori devoted an article in *Il Corriere della Sera* in 1989. This wide-angle view of real life was followed by a series of paintings created between 1990 and 1992 entitled *Reperti* (Relics), in which his attention was more focused on detail and on the marks left by time in factory workshops and interiors. His studies of what he calls 'industrial archaeology' would become more in-depth in the years that followed – as demonstrated, for example, in the 1996 exhibition at the Musei Civici in Villa Manzoni, Lecco.

From 1992, Papetti began participating in exhibitions in public spaces and art fairs in Europe and the United States. In 1995, he started working between Milan and Paris. That same year, he met writer and biographer James Lord, who dedicated an important critical text to him in 1996. During this period, his portraits and depictions of interiors ran parallel with his studies on the nude – which became the subject of the show *La forza dell'immagine, la pittura del realismo in Europa*, held at the Gropius Bau Museum in Berlin in 1996, and *Sui Generis* at PAC in Milan, commissioned by Alessandro Riva.

These studies led him to create the paintings in the cycle *Acqua* (Water) from 1998 onwards, exhibited for the first time at the Studio Forni in Milan in 1999. Here we find bodies suspended motionless in swimming pools, or – as in the series *Il bagno di notte* (Night-swimming) – caught just

before plunging into the blackness of a sea illuminated by a livid, lunar light. These were some of his first images of figures in outdoor settings.

The result of his new pictorial series and of the preceding cycle dedicated to industrial environments was the production of *Cantieri navali* (Shipyards). In the 2002 show dedicated to this theme, Papetti exhibited the landscape of industrial ports, dry docks and gigantic hulls, together with a series of huge faceless nudes. It was an expression of the bodies of ships and humans in all their epic scale and fragility.

During 2003 and 2004 Papetti was invited to take part in several museum exhibitions – including one dedicated to Giovanni Testori at the Palazzo Reale in Milan and another entitled *La ricerca dell'identità*, commissioned by Vittorio Sgarbi and showing in various different public spaces through Italy.

In 2005, Papetti took part in the exhibitions *Miracolo a Milano* at Palazzo della Ragione and *Il paesaggio italiano contemporaneo* at Palazzo Ducale in Gubbio. In the same year, the Fondazione Mudima dedicated a retrospective of his work entitled *Il disagio della pittura*, in which Papetti exhibited the last twenty years of his oeuvre in a selection of paintings ranging from Testorian figures viewed from above to the paintings on the theme of the Città. This was followed by a show six months later entitled *Il ventre della città*.

In all these years, Papetti has regularly reworked themes and subject matter, exploring urban scenes on the streets, interior and exterior spaces – and the spill-over between public and private spaces. His interest in industrial archaeology led to a series of paintings dedicated to the former Renault factory, exhibited in 2007 at the Musée des Années 30 in Paris, in a show entitled *Île Seguin*. In 2007, Vittorio Sgarbi also invited Papetti to take part in the show *Arte italiana. 1968-2007 Pittura* at the Palazzo Reale in Milan. This year also saw him take part in the exhibition *La nuova figurazione italiana*. To be continued... at the Fabbrica Borroni in Bollate.

In 2009, Papetti participated in the show *No Landscape - La sparizione del paesaggio*, held at the Fondazione Bandera in Busto Arsizio and the group exhibition *L'anima dell'acqua* at the Ca' d'Oro in Venice. In the same year, he also exhibited his cycle of circular paintings dedicated to water, the forest and the wind, in the exhibition *Il ciclo del tempo* at Palazzo Reale in Milan, curated by Achille

Bonito Oliva. In these monumental works (each painting is eight meters in diameter), the viewer's sense of perspective is disorientated by the format and scale of the paintings.

In 2010, Papetti had three solo exhibitions – in Tokyo, Vancouver and the Palladio's Villa Manin (Italy) – and in the following year he attended the Biennale di Venezia at the Italian Pavillon, curated by Vittorio Sgarbi, and the Cuban Pavillo. Still devoted to industrial archaeology, his 2012 show entitled *Factories of Utopia* was held at the Moscow Museum of Architecture – Muar. At the end of the same year, his solo exhibition *Autobiografia della pittura* was held at the Contini Art Gallery, with a critical essay by Luca Beatrice published in the catalogue.

During the Spring of 2013, several significant solo exhibitions took place outside of Italy including at the Everard Read Gallery in Johannesburg; in Berlin at the Halle am Wasser @ Hamburger Bahnhof, curated by Frederik Foert and Gianluca Ranzi; and in Paris at the Mairie du 1er arrondissement.

At the beginning of 2014, Papetti participated at the exhibition *Doppio sogno*, curated by Luca Beatrice and Arnaldo Colasanti, held in Palazzo Chiabrese in Turin. In June, he opened a show at the Palazzo della Penna of Perugia, entitled *La pelle attraverso* and curated by Luca Beatrice.

Over the last fifteen years, Papetti has exhibited his works at major art fairs and collaborated with several foreign galleries. He is one of Italy's most innovative and exciting contemporary painters. This his first solo exhibition in the UK.

Solo exhibitions (1984-2015)

2015

Io abito qui, Palazzo Poli, Roma

2014

La pelle attraverso, Palazzo della Penna, Perugia

2013

The Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg

Mairie 1er arrondissement, Paris

Halle am Wasser @ Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, edited by Gianluca Ranzi and Frederik Foert

2012

Mosca, Le fabbriche dell'utopia, Museo dell'Architettura – MUAR, edited by Umberto Zanetti

Autobiografia della pittura, Galleria Contini, Cortina d'Ampezzo

2011

Cycle of time, Auditorium Parco della Musica, Rome

2010

Dynamic Spaces, Italian Institute of Culture, Tokyo

Investigation on movement, Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, Vancouver

Eyes and Moons, Villa Manin, Passariano di Codroipo, Udine, edited by Marco Goldin

2009

Cycle of time, Palazzo Reale, Milano – edited by Achille Bonito Oliva

Passages, First Gallery, Rome

2007

Alessandro Papetti. Île seguin, Musées des Années 30, Boulogne-Billancourt, Paris, edited by Pietro Mariani

Galerie Alain Blondel, Parigi

2006

Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, Vancouver

2005

The Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg

Il disagio della pittura, Fondazione Mudima, Milan

Il ventre della città, Galleria Forni, Milano, edited by Luca Doninelli

2004

Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, Vancouver

2003

Reperti, Galleria dello Scudo, Verona, edited by Mimmo di Marzio and Marco Vallora

Blue, Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, Palm Desert, California; Vancouver, Canada

2002

Galerie Alain Blondel, Paris

The Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg

Galleria Forni, Milan

2001

Wasser, Museo Civico di Chiusa, Bolzano

De Twee Pauwen Gallery, Den Haag

2000

Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, Italian Institute of Culture, Vancouver

Galleria Forni, Bologna

1999

Water, Galleria Forni, Milan

1998

Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, Vancouver

Galerie Alain Blondel, Paris

1997

Galleria Comunale d'Arte, Cesena

1996

Factory interiors, Musei Civici di Villa Manzoni, Lecco, edited by Mario Pancera

Galleria Forni, Bologna

1995

Galerie Alain Blondel, Paris

1993

Zedes Art Gallery, Bruxelles

1992

Galleria Rotta, Genova

Galleria del Cavallino, Venice

1990

Università Bocconi, Milan

1989

Galleria Rotta, Genoa

1985

Galleria Schubert, Milan

Fondazione Corrente, Milano

1984

Galleria San Michele, Brescia

1983

Bayerische Vereinsbank, Milan