

'Artforum', March 2017, New York NY

wonderful events. Moreover, I have at other times used tar and other materials, as well as tranquilizers. My stylistic research is oriented toward a new color, starting from the principle that brown and amaranth are two colors outside the spectrum."

In both series' simulation of astral maps and geologies, we see a purification of reality, physicality constantly confirmed by the object or material presence (pills, sand, foam rubber) but also contradicted by the gradual predomination of perception, rendered through color's extraordinary expressive force.

—Francesca Pola

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

NAPLES

Fabio Mauri

MUSEO MADRE

Giving priority to ethics over aesthetics, Fabio Mauri has penetrated the West's heart of darkness, analyzing the falsehoods of the ideologies that have characterized twentieth-century European history, revealing their pervasive mechanisms of cruelty. His rigorous inquiry focuses on the system of signs and symbols that Nazism and Fascism used to create consensus, seductively manipulating the masses. Investigating the forms—and even the beauty—through which totalitarian regimes have represented themselves, he asks us to personally participate in historical contradictions and to confront them with critical awareness. This demanding retrospective, curated by Laura Cherubini and Andrea Viliani, points out the multiplicity of means that Mauri has engaged—painting, sculpture, installations, performance, theater—and demonstrates how his pioneering and multifaceted production can be seen as a coherent, total work, in which thinking reigns supreme.

Works with strictly political significance occupy the ground floor. A potent metaphor for every form of separation or segregation, *Il Muro Occidentale o del Pianto* (The Western or the Wailing Wall), 1993, greets visitors at the entrance with the powerful impact of memories of suffering. Composed of old and new leather suitcases, it describes exile, deportation, and flight, from the Holocaust to the present. But the next work, *Sala del Gran Consiglio (Oscuramento)* (Hall of the Grand Council [Darkening]), a segment of the multipart performance piece *Oscuramento* (Darkening), 1975, hurls the viewer, like a reluctant witness, into the very heart of history, via the form of a reconstruction of the Fascist Party conference at which Benito Mussolini was deposed in

Fabio Mauri,
Intellettuale
(Intellectual), 1975,
mixed media.
Installation view.
Photo: Amedeo
Benestante.



1943. Life-size wax statues depict attendees seated around a U-shaped table, dressed in black shirts; a recording of their agitated conversation drags the public into an almost intolerable temporal vortex and toxic atmosphere. The performance *Ideologia e Natura* (Ideology and Nature), 1973, compels yet another confrontation of discomfort. A young woman takes off her Fascist uniform and then puts it on again, but mixes up the garments randomly, having now become incapable of wearing the repugnant outfit after coming into contact with the free natural state of nudity. The naked body resists the ideology in which it is clad and reveals the dogma's fiction. It is precisely there, on the human body, that evil exerts its influence, where the suppression of individual identity is unleashed. But Mauri also redeems this subjugation, celebrating the body in *Intellettuale* (Intellectual), 1975, a performance in which he projected Pier Paolo Pasolini's film *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo* (The Gospel According to Matthew, 1964) onto the body of the seated director, as if the latter were being pierced by his own creation. Here, in Pasolini's absence, it is the idea itself that cuts into naked flesh. The work and its author become one; Mauri opposes the body as sacrificial victim with the body as creator, representing the ultimate identity of the individual who, in turn, identifies with his own work.

The second portion of the show, which features works in different media displayed chronologically, includes many reconstructions of actions and performances with projections on bodies and disparate objects—a fan, a bureau, a scale—specifically to indicate that, for Mauri, the idea is projected onto the world and has weight, substance, and a social dimension. Projectors and TV and film screens, witnesses to history, vehicles and receptors of the signs with which regimes express their propaganda, are his chosen tools. The screen is the subtle demarcation line between private and public, and it is there that our individual responsibility to adhere, or not, to collective ideas is situated. It is with the works on which the phrase *THE END* appears that Mauri indicates, on the one hand, the impossibility of adding words to the horror of the “final solution,” but also points, on the other hand, toward the possible end of belief in the deceiving lies of propaganda. Without offering solace, Mauri's work unmasks and condemns false ideologies, and in the artist's unflinching ethical stance proves today to be terribly relevant.

—Ida Panicelli

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

BRESCIA, ITALY

Nathalie Du Pasquier

A PALAZZO GALLERY

There is no doubt that the expressive freedom of painting extends far beyond the techniques with which it has historically been associated. Yet oil painting—a relatively traditional method—continues to define the medium. This fundamental continuity lies at the heart of Nathalie Du Pasquier's fascination with painting, and is the reason she continues to breathe fresh life into the finite space of the two-dimensional painted image. The two works that opened the show contained both paintings and three-dimensional wooden elements—a plinth and a shelf—that seemed to evoke Renaissance-era frame-making, which at the time was as relevant as the painting itself. The gallery's main room held a series of painted pictorial compositions that expanded beyond the perimeters of their canvases to become wall paintings, invading the space. Forms and volumes that might be described as abstract (even if they express meanings far from objective) established a dialogue with the splendid friezes that decorate the spaces of this Brescian gallery, housed in a lavish eighteenth-century palazzo. As is typical of the artist's practice,