

Bilico

Claude Cortinovis, Antonio Riello, Gino Sabatini Odoardi

June 28 - September 2, 2023

GOWEN is pleased to present *Bilico* (Equilibrium), a group exhibition featuring Italian artists Claude Cortinovis, Antonio Riello and Gino Sabatini Odoardi.

Defined as a state of balance between opposing forces, or a calm state of mind, equilibrium is a consistent aspect throughout the exhibition, deployed as the artist's metaphor to reflect intuitive impressions of balance or imbalance.



Gino Sabatini Odoardi, *Senza Titolo con Sedia* (Untitled with Chair), 2016, polystyrene thermoforming, wood, straw, enamel, 40 x 80 x 90 cm

The selected works of Cortinovis, Riello and Sabatini Odoardi embody the idea of equilibrium's conceptual mobility, striving to hold a vital balance between all contrasts. In Cortinovis' *Au plus près de ma ligne* (Closest to My Line) series, drawn lines on paper are a physical and metaphoric attempt to maintain a direction, while Sabatini Odoardi's *Untitled with Chair* sculpture rests upon a fragile point of stability.



Gino Sabatini Odoardi, *Senza titolo con valigia* (Untitled with suitcase), 2023, polystyrene thermoforming, wood, velvet, leather, aluminum, 36 x 64 x 44 cm



Claude Cortinovis, *Au plus près de ma ligne magenta*, 22.06.2019, acrylic ink on handmade grid paper, 100 x 70 cm

Everyday objects, such as books housed in glass forms in Riello's *Ashes to Ashes* unconventional library, inspired by the tradition of venetian glass, as well as formal elements, like Cortinovis' lines or Sabatini Odoardi's draperies and Palladium floor plans are decontextualized, isolating their original function. Furthermore, the works observe contradictions and opposing emotions. The three artists transform such material into ideal subjects of experimentation, exploring differing degrees of tension, often by way of ordered variations in compositions of subtle, asymmetrical balance. The outcome is surprising, eccentric, improbable, even enigmatic.



Antonio Riello, *Jungle tales of Tarzan (Ashes to Ashes)*, 2012, blown borosilicate glass and book ashes, 37 x 14 x 14 cm



Antonio Riello, *La divina commedia (Ashes to Ashes)*, 2009, blown borosilicate glass and book ashes, 36 x 15 x 15 cm



Antonio Riello, *L'amica geniale (Ashes to Ashes)*, 2013, blown borosilicate glass and book ashes, 38 x 11 x 11 cm



The exhibition coincides with the publication of Sabatini Odoardi's second monograph entitled *Between the Folds of Doubt*, a comprehensive review of the artist's oeuvre including essays by Claudio Libero Pisano and Adriana Polveroni, as well as an extended conversation with Beatrice Audrito.

The gallery extends a special thank you to Laetitia Florescu for her contribution to the project and her participation in the dialogue with Antonio Riello.

CLAUDE CORTINOVIS (Swiss-Italian, b. 1967)

Claude Cortinovis was born in Geneva in 1967 to Italian parents. He lives and works in Geneva.

Cortinovis' preferred medium is paper, on which he hand-draws squares and composes his figurative or abstract drawings, as well as photographic paper which he suffuses with writing. The images, dilated and veiled by color or by text, allow themselves to be interpreted and elucidated via the distance required for their reading. In his landscape photos it is only on approaching that the viewer perceives the double meaning of sentences repeated ad infinitum, covering the surface in its entirety such as *I was here and could not see anything, or I draw a line and fill a void*.

Like performances, Cortinovis' works are realized slowly, calmly, in a scientifically-ordered manner, accompanied by hints of moments that the artist seeks in the refinement of the detail of the image, meticulously parceled out, or simply in the pleasure of accomplishing a gesture, even without apparent reason, such as drawing a line. The gestures are repeated, and the work follows mathematical and temporal patterns that Cortinovis defines beforehand. After the conception of each work, the time and the modalities of its execution become subject themselves. The details are inscribed like a trace of a fragile, oscillating, irreversible time and offer the artist a very ordered and precise space of quiet refuge. It is through this infinitely repeated expression, executed with a constant discipline, that the artist explores the notion of human existence, its place and duration in the universe.

Claude Cortinovis (Swiss-Italian, b.1967) graduated from the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Geneva in 1991, followed by further training in mixed media. His solo exhibitions include: La Cabinerie, Fribourg, CH (2019); Gowen Contemporary, Geneva, CH (2018); Keitelman Gallery, Brussels, BE (2002, 2008, 2014); ONE contemporary Art Gallery, Verbier, CH (2011); Galerie Mitterrand+Cramer, Geneva, CH (2007); Centre de la photographie, Geneva, CH (1997); Nouvelle Galerie, Grenoble, FR (1997); Palais de l'Athénée, Salle Crosnier, Geneva, CH (1993). Among his group exhibitions: Musée Jenisch, Vevey, CH (2021, 2022, 2023); Centre d'art contemporain d'Yverdon-les-Bains (CACY) (2017, 2020); artgenève - The Living Room: Modules, curated by Samuel Gross, Geneva, CH (2020); Gowen Contemporary, Geneva, CH (2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023); Château de Vullierens, organised by the Centre d'art Contemporain Yverdon-les-Bains (CACY), CH (2017); Villa Empain - Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, BE (2011); FLUXmUSEum, Pagosa Springs, Colorado, USA (2010); RNG Gallery, Omaha, Nebraska, USA (2010); Galerie Gisèle Linder, Basel, CH (2009); Hall-Palermo at the Kunsthalle Palazzo, Liestal, Basel, CH (2002); Espace Arlaud, Lausanne, CH (1999); Centre de la photographie, Bienne, CH (1999); Palais Wilson organised by the FCDV, Geneva, CH (1998); 5th international photography triennial in Tampere, Nykyaiika, Tampere, FIN (1999).

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ANTONIO RIELLO (Italian, b. 1958)

Antonio Riello was born in Marostica, near Treviso, in 1958. He lives and works between Italy and London.

Riello is interested in techniques as varied as painting, sculpture, design, photography, installation and video games, manipulating images and objects to create ambiguous narratives, often related to controversial issues of Western contemporary society.

In 2009, the artist embarked on the *Ashes to Ashes* project in which he ceremonially burns certain influential books in his studio, reducing them to illegible ashes. The remnants of every book are encapsulated in their own bespoke glass urn, designed and fabricated by the artist. Each vessel, made of borosilicate glass, is printed with the name of the author and title of the book, its first place and year of publication, and its place and year of destruction. Around 400 books have been transformed into artworks to date.

Forty-six pieces from the project are featured in the current show in a personal library in which Riello discloses his cultural heritage, education, personal references, tastes and deep love for books. The work goes beyond this innermost archive, seemingly suspended between the attempt to preserve the legacy of the past, not without a certain nostalgia, and the urgency for new cultural paradigms.

Fragments of the *Ashes to Ashes* project have been exhibited and are hosted in international museums including the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; MAD (Museum of Arts and Design of New York); MUDAC, Lausanne and the Musée Ariana, Geneva.

In 1993, Antonio Riello (Italian, b. 1958) was awarded a grant from The Pollock-Krasner Foundation. His works have been exhibited extensively in numerous Museums. Amongst them: Baltic, Gateshead, UK; NGBK, Berlin, DE; Neuhausen Kunstsverein, Neuhausen, DE; Mart, Rovereto, IT; Musée d'art de Saint Etienne, Saint Etienne, FR; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, AT; Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Milano, IT; PAC, Milano, IT; Neue Galerie, Graz, AT; Wolfsburg Kunstverein, Wolfsburg, DE; Museo Pecci, Prato, IT; Freiburg

Kunstverein, Freiburg, DE; Wiesbaden Kunstverein; Wiesbaden, DE; Museo Storia Naturale, Milano, IT; Borusian Foundation, Istanbul, TR; Chelsea Museum of Art, New York, USA; Elgiz Museum, Istanbul, TR; Galleria Arte Moderna, Torino, IT; Museum Art Design, New York, US; MUDAC, Lausanne, CH; Museo Civico Bassano, Bassano, IT; Openspace London-Istanbul, London, UK; Museum Der Welt, Berlin, DE; Dordrecht Museum, Dordrecht, NL; Fondazione Benetton, Treviso, IT; Fondazione Berengo, Venezia, IT; Hermitage State Museum, St.Petersburg, RU; Arkas Art Center, Izmir, TR.

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GINO SABATINI ODOARDI (Italian, b. 1968)

The decades-long work of Gino Sabatini Odoardi (Pescara, 1968) has always been a research-based and in-depth study of life and art. Often beginning with simple forms and everyday objects, Sabatini Odoardi has followed a broad and complex iconographic path that has led him, in the last ten years, to engage with the sinuous and ancient artform of drapery. Drapery, or *il panneggio*, according to the artist's vision, is considered as «*a nomadic labyrinth without windows capable of concealing the innumerable facets of life, where nothing is clear and revealed*». He has also, over the years, investigated various symbolic fields of interest: religious and political dogma, memory, the concept of posthumousness and above all, the glass as an anti-symbolic object.

Over time, Sabatini Odoardi has developed a singular form of expression. «*Polystyrene thermoforming*» is the technical definition of the industrial process used by the artist to create most of his works; the appropriation of this material process makes him a unique artist on the Italian and international scene (from *Between the Folds of Doubt*, 2023).

Claudio Libero Pisano writes: "*The finished works are perfect, even in the clear, millimetric study of every single fold and the obsession with mathematical calculation. Even a few centimetres can compromise what (Sabatini Odoardi) wants to say; a positioning error would leave those objects mute, which instead also know how to scream through the mouldings.*"

Gino Sabatini Odoardi's (Italian, b.1968) work became known internationally after his participation in the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011, with the work *Untitled + cube with secret noise* (2010). Sabatini Odoardi was awarded various prizes: in 1999 he received *Les prix des Jeunes Createurs* by Alfred Pacquement (Centre George Pompidou) in the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. His works can be found in many private and public collections, including the MLAC, Laboratory Museum of Contemporary Art University «La Sapienza», Rome, IT; MUSPAC, Experimental Museum of Contemporary Art, L'Aquila, IT; Museum of Arts, De Sterlich-Aliprandi Castle, Nocciano, IT. Among the numerous solo exhibitions: *In the cylinder of doubt*, Forte Leopoldo I, Forte dei Marmi, IT (2022); *Untitled Incipit*, Chini Museum, Borgo San Lorenzo, Florence, IT (2018); *Unfold*, Spazio Canova 22 (Antonio Canova's Ancient Furnace), Rome, IT (2018); *Decentralized*, Whitelight Art Gallery, Milan, IT (2016); *Folds and Dust*, PAN Museum, Naples, IT (2016); *Between the folds*, Gowen Contemporary, Geneva, CH (2013).