

**COLLYER BRISTOW GALLERY PRESENTS**

***Milan Jam - seven contemporary Italian artists come to London.***

**Private View: Wednesday 22 February 2012, 6 – 8.00pm**

**Collyer Bristow Gallery, Collyer Bristow LLP, 4 Bedford Row, Holborn,  
London WC1R 4TF**

The exhibition continues on weekdays until 16 May 2012.

**Manuel Felisi, Andrea Francolino, Luca Gastaldo, Enzo Guaricci, Matteo Negri, Francesco de Molfetta, Marco Querin.**  
**Curated by Stark Projects and Day+ Gluckman**

Responding to Collyer Bristow's established Italian connection, Day + Gluckman have worked with Stark Projects to curate a show featuring seven artists who are predominantly based in Milan. Whilst this in itself creates its own dynamic, the overarching identity of this show is that of medium and materiality. Each of the artists works in uniquely different media; in the case of **Enzo Guaricci** this is through the development of a bespoke processing technique, a mixture of marble powder and synthetic resin, which gives his work an 'aged' appearance in direct contrast to the contemporary subject matter. Allusions to Italy's historic and cultural past play a part in the visual unravelling of the pieces, such as *Mezzi volanti*, coated balloons that belie a sense of delicacy and temporality beneath a rigid exterior. An artist well established in his homeland and internationally Guaricci's works are in permanent collections of Italian museums of contemporary and modern art.

Using a technique that superimposes digital images onto a painted surface **Manuel Felisi** also considers 'time' and our relation to it. Using his own personal photographs alongside found images and unknown family albums, and using templates for wallpaper, he elegantly explores nostalgia and memory. Playing with both medium and subject matter **Luca Gastaldo's** haunting and evocative paintings suggest an alternative viewpoint to the hierarchical 'Italian landscape' genre. His works are suffused with a deepening sense of darkness, suggestive of the turning point between day and night and emphasised by his technique of combining black bitumen with more traditional materials.

Through his beautifully constructed textile works **Marco Querin** has inserted himself as an emerging Milanese artist at the forefront of the contemporary fiber art movement<sup>i</sup> (more familiarly known in the UK as textile art). Querin's creative process is long and meticulous using thread, nailed or knotted to the canvas and his works vary from taut, subtle designs to the glorious abstract merges of colour in *Organizzazion*.

An underlying sense of subversion is echoed in the works of **Francesco de Molfetta, Andrea Francolino** and **Matteo Negri**. In *Fine del Mondo* **De Molfetta** takes a wry look at how possible it is to redraw or even paint out the world. A small plastic character meticulously covers a globe with cream paint, destroying all that has gone before, or

perhaps working towards a new world order free of boundaries? A winning combination of politics and humour run throughout his work. In a similar vein **Andrea Francolino's** principal interest is the communication of mass consumption, its iconography and its psychology. In the case of *Red Passion*, a series of manipulated cartons he merges familiar domestic packaging with images of well known political figures. By re-imaging familiar brands he aims to confront a perceived sense of general apathy, contrasting a bland acceptance of 'the message' with the power that lies behind it.

**Matteo Negri's** sculptures wonder what might happen if the normal process of growing up was subverted – what if the dream became reality? *L'Ego*, a large golden knight, formed from giant Lego-esque materials can be likened to the equestrian statues which populate city squares across Europe. Is this a simple toy that dreams of a glorious future, or a monument to a 'glorious' past expressed through a plaything? To Negri the childhood blocks of Lego represent the games and rules that follow us into adult life, and our desire to subvert them. These simple plastic building blocks also speak of mass culture - its particular norms and ubiquitous products with their potentially globalised homogeneity.

The collection of works shown at Collyer Bristow Gallery do not attempt to represent 'Italy', nor proclaim an over-arching theme, but the works do playfully tackle politics and present a tussle between the old and the new, both in artistic technique and in subject matter: a small glimpse at the concerns of a country in the midst of great change.

#### **Editors notes:**

For more information on the artists or specific works in this exhibition please contact the curators:  
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To visit the exhibition, please call reception at Collyer Bristow in advance:  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7242 7363

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<sup>i</sup>Fiber art includes any type of artwork which uses linear, pliable elements - fibers - as a major material. Fiber art may be constructed by methods traditionally associated with textile fibers such as stitching, weaving, dyeing, etc. Fiber art may consist of objects traditionally associated with textiles including (actual or virtual) clothing, rugs, linens, wall hangings etc ( from [http://www.suta.com/misc/fiber\\_art.html](http://www.suta.com/misc/fiber_art.html))