

Embodied Selfhood

Arslan Eroglu // Melania Toma // Maria Positano // H.E. Morris // Dennis Scholl

Pictorum Gallery presents *Embodied Selfhood*, a group exhibition of five international artists: H. E. Morris, Melania Toma, Dennis Scholl, Arslan Eroglu, and Maria Positano. Spanning installation, sculpture, painting and textile, the exhibition focuses on how art can be used as a vehicle for the expression of identity, selfhood, and individuality. The artists' unique practices investigate the many iterations of self as a product of culture, society, and psychological experience.

Utilising a spectrum of approaches ranging from directly figurative, to nebulous and abstract, the works shown capture the ephemerality inherent in capturing one's inner emotions and 'selfhood'. Through the works shown, the artists investigate the multiplicitous nature of the self, taking into consideration nudity, class, age, location, society, and so forth.

Melania Toma's raw, textured, and riotous canvases depict colourful forms made from paint and dyed wool. Toma's practice sits on the edge of representation and abstraction, hinting at recognisable symbols and traversing webs of gender, power, hierarchies, and ecological degradation. Key to the works presented, is Toma's research into the transformative power of the self. Fascinated by how language and reality coexist, Toma's semantic research plays with the double forces of construction and deconstruction of the real. As a result, the works produced are a manifestation of the process of translation. They hold a hybridity in form and content – in her own words, they are 'ghost hybrid creatures whose powers cross the boundaries between individual and the collective'.

Born in 1955 in a small village in Turkey, **Arslan Eroglu** graduated from the Fine Arts Academy in Istanbul. The artist focuses on depicting the naked body in any form. Fascinated by the differing physicality inherent in age, gender and sex, Eroglu's works capture the mundanities of everyday life, with a truthfulness that cuts through his use of unnatural and often lurid colour.

Maria Positano's sculptural practice shifts between speculative, personal and pseudo-ethnographic. Maria proposes places of illusion, of non-binary thinking, spaces to regain ownership over the imaginative, and sense of self. In both practical terms and in research, the artist's works hint at defensive body armours and shields. As a result, these often humanised, but ultimately inanimate, forms contain a vulnerability centred in an understanding of societal and gendered political resilience and resistance.

H.E. Morris, much like Toma, often finds herself caught between abstraction and representation. Structuring her paintings through memory, she explores the impact of emotion on narratives. Often utilising fabrics sourced from her surrounding communities, Morris sews together materials such as linen and silk before working on them. As a result, the impact of the artist's paint is often unbounded – spreading and sinking into the material, imprinting permanently, and building a distinctive visual language personal to Morris.

Dennis Scholl's practice focuses on acquiring objects of desire and reworking them using assemblage. He mines archival materials, creating unexpected entanglements between memory, artifact and conceptual drawing, while interrogating history. The artist uses source materials that reflect his own lived experience, while also accessing more divergent historical and popular cultural resources. His practice questions how we assign meaning and value to these objects and though it seems to conserve and resuscitate archival material, it also reimagines its very form.