



NASCOSTI ALLA LUCE DEL SOLE

September 21 - October 27, 2023

Nashira Gallery is pleased to invite you to the opening of the group show “Nascosti alla luce del sole” in the gallery spaces to be held on Thursday, Sept. 21 from 6 to 9 p.m. at 21 Vincenzo Monti Street in Milan (1st floor). The participating artists for Nashira Gallery will be Ako Atikossie, Zadok Ben-David, Alik Cavaliere, Maria Positano, Emanuele Resce and Sebastian Thomas. To dialogue with the works of these artists, we have selected a series of works by internationally renowned artists from Collezione 54 in Milan including, Chagas Edson, Emo De Medeiros and Kelechi Charles Nwaneri.

THE EXHIBITION

Fans of movies, mystery books or thrillers know well how often the place to hide the most compromising evidence is in the sunlight, where anyone can see it without noticing it. Since time immemorial men have all been somewhat consciously or unconsciously “Hiding in the sunlight.” With mud the early hominids who covered their faces to camouflage themselves in the act of hunting, with the metal of their helmets the knights during wars or duels; with objects made of wood, shells, feathers, etc., the African and South American animist cultures to converse directly with spirits and gods. Greek actors with clay and wood conveyed their emotions of joy or sadness to the spectators who flocked to see their tragedies as the masks of Noh theater continued to do in Japan centuries later. Powders and earths combined with wigs decorated and adorned the faces of French courtiers in the eighteenth century, almost like the carnival masks born in Christian-Catholic culture to indulge in entertainment and leisure before the restrictions of the Lenten period: Punchinello, Harlequin, Pantalone, Columbine in tradition. Even when posing for a selfie, we decide on the best framing, facial expression, clothing or accessories to bring out our personality, as if we are wearing a mask to appear as we would like others to see us. In fact, there are different types of masks: physical and real or mental and intangible.

The mask is an object that has accompanied man over the centuries with various forms and functions, all-encompassing in all cultures from East to West cited in manuals of anthropology, history of costume, theater, psychoanalysis or novels, suffice it to mention an author such as Luigi Pirandello who precisely to the theme of the mask and its many facets dedicated among his best creations: “One No One and One Hundred Thousand,” “The Fu Mattia Pascal” or “Six Characters in Search of an Author.”

To this powerful theme we at Nashira Gallery decided to dedicate our second group show and with it present a preview of the artists we will be hosting in our spaces with a series of solo exhibitions in the coming months.

The mask was believed to have the power to transform the wearer, allowing them to become the represented character of such garment, investing them with powers and magical characteristics; human becoming divinity, demon, animal, plant or just another form of being. Often times these were complex rituals, narrating of the birth of the universe and its unfolding structures: these were cosmogonies.



Ako Atikossie (Zalivé, 1980), is an artist from Togo of origin, living and working in Italy.

The artist's work is a sensitive enquiry on 'natural' and scientific laws which to the artist are at the root of how the world and the cosmos silently operate, attempting to give the latter a form in an attempt to represent its flows. On the shapes canvases lives a dense swarm of marks and of interrupted lines of various colour, reminding us of the flows of energy. We might not be aware of those, but the artist believes these are the invisible currents which move our lives within the bigger collectivity or, one might say, within the everything. As the title of the work on show reveals, *Congettura dello spazio-tempo* (2023), inspired by the scientific "Theory of Everything".

The whole is also contained within the oppositions, as we learn from the mythological figure of Latin/Roman figure Giano bi-fonte, often represented with a two-faced head which has the peculiar ability to see simultaneously both in the past and in the future. It is also the case for the exhibited work by Zadok Ben-David (Beihan, 1949) - Yemenite and adopted Londoner - which presents two faces and two viewpoints.

The work is inspired by the sculptor's experience during a folk gathering at Quinto in Ecuador, where it happened to gaze upon a man wearing one of the traditional indigenous garments: *Aya Uma*, the representation of a devil. A figure representing the world and the universe in the Achean community, seen as the coming together of all opposites, north-south, husband-wife, light and dark, sun and moon.

On this trail of thought we continue linking together the works in the exhibition this time with the symbol of the sun, presented by the artist Maria Positano (London, 1995), with a bassorilievo called *Mask* (2022). This work elaborates upon the cultural tradition of the Death Masks, objects originally made from gold sheet and hand-beaten to portray and preserve the faces of beloved or considered important dead ones. Particular reference is made here to the Agamemnon's Mask, found in Micene and today kept at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Atene. Positano is replicating the same preciousness and detail work of the original, but employing unassuming materials and combining those with recycled paper pulp and aluminium foil. The artist's practice weaves themes to do with ecology, gender politics, visual culture, starting often from their sense of identity, belonging and embodiment. Positano creates contemporary objects which seem to have lived long gone forgotten histories.

What we could call a process of material transmutation and the birth of contemporary artefacts, fetish, idols or totem, is also what links Positano's work to Emanuele Resce (Benevento, 1987) with respectively unique results. Nature is present in the work of Resce: rocks, wood, animals remain and clay become the found objects around which the artist contracts and repurposes bike inner tubes, cans, recycled containers, metal cladding and spray paint. These are all materials the artist digests and assembles to create what we imagine to be contemporary deities, wild beasts, alien creatures, attempting to unite natural and artificial in a whole. Reenacting almost a peace treaty between two worlds which do not often get the chance to come together as one.

Shapeshifting and metamorphosis are ancient topics, as ancient as the objects of the mask.

Both are pivotal within historical imagery and cultural theory, moving within parallel planes and sharing numerous ideas in common. Wearing a mask is a form of transformation, a shapeshifting operation by which we renounce to our existing configuration and we embrace the transition into a new one. Alik Cavaliere (Roma, 1926 – Milano, 1998) has dedicated to the topic of metamorphosis numerous of his works. For this exhibition we are thrilled to have the opportunity to show a bronze sculpture from 1958 from the series *Giochi Proibiti - Metamorfosi*, an anthropomorphic figure appears to be stretching an arm up, the hand grows bigger resembling the branches of a tree: a familiar transmutation which brings us back to the tragic story of Daphne and Apollo, famously narrated by Ovidio in his famous *Metamorfosi*.



Forbidden games, perhaps the ones our parents would ban as considered too dangerous.

There have been countless games in the past, as an example we could think of the Medieval showcases of ability or fight between knights. Such knights are often represented in the work of the American artist Sebastian Thomas (Fayette, Arkansas, 1994). The artist revisits both technically and iconographically the 'miniature' of the medieval incunabulum, appropriating and bringing to the present the relevance of the warrior subjects. The warriors which are represented by the artist, often on horse or in battle, busy conquering a castle or proudly taking with them the princess of the tower, all wear armour and helm. The helm is a protection for the face, which simultaneously becomes a mask to scare the adversary, traveling through histories in its infinite forms.

As with its first group show titled "La Profezia" Nashira Gallery has selected a number of works from Collezione 54 for this occasion to bring to life a game of cross-references and dialogues between artists of different cultures and generations. Collezione 54 is an important private collection of contemporary art based in Milan that for about thirty years has focused its attention on the artistic production of the African Continent and all those artists linked to the diaspora and who make this theme the main subject of their artistic production in their collection. Since the mask theme and its representation is a traditional theme for African culture, the choice for us at Nashira Gallery was very challenging. We decided to opt for works by already internationally recognized artists in different media.

Among the works on display you will be able to find: the photograph *Tipo Passe* (Diana S. Sakulombo) by Angolan Chagas Edson (Luanda, 1977) an ancient African mask is worn over clothes of an elegant and classical formality giving life to an unusual character. The contrast between the mask and the dress, in addition to restoring a kind of estrangement between the object and its representation, in the artist's intent is meant to represent the relationship between African tradition and a now partially "Westernized" country, in which new canons of beauty and representation have now appeared. Emo de Medeiros (Cotonou, Benin, 1979), is a multidisciplinary artist who investigates issues of post-colonialism and multiculturalism from a science fiction perspective by creating, as for example with *Zangbeta*, costumes reminiscent of the continent's traditional ones but re-actualized with artificial materials and robotic parts: science fiction-African. A woman with a painted face and body sits at a table set with an orange tablecloth, at her feet an animal, dog or cat wears the mask of a sphinx. This is the subject of the painting by Kelechi Charles Nwaneri (Lagos, 1994), a very young artist who creates surreal works in which he mixes elements drawn from tradition with subjects and objects drawn from the contemporary world, visual reflections on integration and globalization.



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES NASHIRA GALLERY

Ako Atikossie (Zalivé, Togo, 1980). He lives and works between Milan and Lomé (Togo).

Major solo exhibitions: *The Minus Sign*, Suburbia Contemporary on Artsy; *Confini identitari*, La Portineria, Florence (2021); *Suite proporzionale*, Calisto Cafè, Valiate (2019); 2018: Museo del Carcere “Le Nuove”, Turin (2018); *Europa o l'assenza*, Cattedrale della Fabbrica del Vapore, Milan, curated by Paolo Ferrari; *L'absence de dialogue*, Supernova Gallery, Pavia curated by Mariangela Calisti (2015).

Major group exhibitions: Art Genève, Gowen Contemporary Gallery (2022); Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Suburbia Contemporary, Cape Town; Urban Environments and imaginary spaces, Suburbia Contemporary, Barcelona (2021); Cairo Arte Editore Prize, Palazzo Reale, Milan (2019); La Biennale Arte & Industria Utopia = realtà, Labin Istria, Croatia; 2015: Shapes, Circoloquadro, Milan (2016).

Zadok Ben-David (Beihan, Yemen, 1949). Lives and works in London.

Major solo exhibitions: *Natural Reserve*, Nashira Gallery, Milan (2023) *Blackfield*, Shirley Sherwood Gallery, Kew Gardens, London; *People I Saw But Never Met*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2021); *People I Saw But Never Met*, 13th Krasnoyarsk Museums Biennale, Siberia, Russia; *People I Saw But Never Met*, Centro de Arte Contemporânea Graça Morais, Brangança, Portugal (2019); *Blackfield*, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris; *Human Nature*, Perth Festival 2018, Lawrence Wilson Gallery, Perth, Australia (2018); *People I saw but never met*, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Los Angeles (2017); *People I saw but never met*, Annandale Galleries, Sydney (2016).

Major group exhibitions: *Les Extatiques*, Open Gallery La Defense, Paris (2021); XXI Cerveira International Art Biennial, Cerveira, Portugal; *Continuous Regeneration*, Columbia Circle, Shanghai; Breda Photo Biennale, Breda, Netherlands (2020); *Continuous Refle(a)ction*, Riverside Art Museum, Beijing (2019); *Through The Looking Glass*, Cob Gallery, London (2018); Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; 1988: Venice Biennale, Biennale (2002).

Alik Cavaliere (Rome 1926 - Milan 1988)

Major solo exhibitions: *Alik Cavaliere - forbidden games and metamorphosis*, Michael Hasenclever Gallery, Munich; *Alik Cavaliere's Nature, food for the mind*, Alik Cavaliere Art Center, Milan (2015); *Artist's Interiors Balla Capogrossi Cavaliere Mazzacurati Morelli Palizz*, National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rome; *Imagined Words*, Alik Cavaliere Art Center, Milan (2014); *Alik Cavaliere - Metamorphosis*, Peccolo Gallery, Livorno (2013); *Alik Cavaliere, Tale*, Milan Gallery, Milan (2012); *Alik Cavaliere Poet, Philosopher, Humanist and Sculptor*, also, Mudima Foundation, Milan (2009).

Main group exhibitions: *ArteNatura, Wonder Yesterday and Today*, Gallerie d'Italia, Milan (2013); *Farewell to the 70s - Art in Milan 1969 - 1980*, Palazzo Reale, Milan (2012); *Sculpture in Milan 1945-1990*, Palazzo della Permanente, Milan (1990); *Contemporary Art for a Museum*, Pavilion of Contemporary Art, Milan (1989); *Milan Point One*, Studio Marconi, Milan (1988); *Poetry for Life*, Galleria San Fedele, Milan (1987); *Contemporary Italian Sculptors*, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Athens (1975); *Contemporary Italian Sculptors*, Palazzo Reale, Milan; XI São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (1971); *Sculpteurs Italiens*, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris (1968); *Neue Realisten & Pop Art*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin (1965); *Pop art etc. , Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Vienna (1964); Biennale Città di Carrara (1957); XXVIII Venice Biennale, Venice (1956).



Maria Positano (London 1995). Lives and works in London.

Major solo exhibitions: *A perfect place*, Studio Block M74, Mexico City (2022); *Take me Somewhere Nice*, Lockbund Gallery, Oxfordshire (2020); *Making Meaning*, Subsidiary Project, London (2018).

Major group exhibitions: *Felt cute, might delete later*, Arusha Gallery, London; *Beyond the matter*, Galerie Der Kunsler Innen, Munich; *Soft Monuments*, Frestonian Gallery, London; *2for1*, Thorp Stavri & Haze x Hyphastudios, London; *Hung Drawn Quartered*, Staffordshire St Studios, London (2023); *The Appearance Formula*, Andrea Festa Fine Art, Rome; *La Camaleona*, Galeria 54, Mexico City; *One By One*, Fiumano Clase, London (2022); *Discoveries 2020 - The Biting Point*, Fiumano Clase, London (2020).

Emanuele Resce (Benevento 1987). Lives and works in Milan.

Main solo exhibitions: *Counter Mythology (by Transpecies)*, Irpino Museum, Avellino (2023); *Al-Khwarizmi*, Archaeological Museum, Spoleto (2022); *Alban Eluded*, Galleria Brera Uno, Milan (2018);

Distanza del tempo presente, The Room Studios Gallery, Rome (2017)

Major group exhibitions: *Nascosti alla luce del sole*, Nashira Gallery, Milan (2023); *La fonte dell'opera*, consorzio la Giacinta, Rome (2022); *Storie di altre storie*, Piazza della Repubblica, Turin (2021); *Chronoeye, I fumi della fornace*, Macerata (2021); *Cambio lavoro*, Carrozzeria delle Rose, Milan (2021); *Portal il / 2021*, Co-atto, Milan (2021); *Dark Hawaii*, Omuamua, Milan (2020); *Shame mobile residence*, Palazzo Santi, Perugia (2020); *Zarathustra Disorder*, Palazzo Angelini, Benevento (2019).

Sebastian Thomas (Fayette, Arkansas 1994). Lives and works in Chicago.

Major solo exhibitions: *Under the Sun*, Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago (2023); *Tiny Apartment Show*, 308 Gallery, Chicago (2022); *Pop-Up Exhibition*, Michigan Space, Chicago (2022); *Attach Files*, 50/50 Gallery, Kansas City (2017).

Major group exhibitions: *Last Call Alumni Exhibition*, Color Club, Chicago (2023); *Contemporary Painting Exhibition*, The Brick Lane Gallery, London (2022); *Open Studios Maclean Center*, School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2021); *Thesis Exhibition*, Dodge Painting Gallery, Kansas City (2017).



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES COLLECTION 54

Chagas Edson (Luanda, 1977). Lives between Angola and Portugal. Winner of the Golden Lion at the 2013 Venice Biennale.

Major solo exhibitions: *Muxima: feels like earth, smells like heaven*, insofar Gallery, Lisbon (2021); *Factory of Disposable Feelings*, Stevenson, Cape Town (2019); *Found Not Taken*, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town (2017); *Found Not Taken*, Kunst Haus Wien, Museum Hundertwasser, Vienna (2016); *Edson Chagas*, Galleria A Palazzo, Brescia; *Luanda, Encyclopedic City*, Angola Pavilion, Palazzo Cini, Venice Biennale, Venice (2013).

Major group exhibitions: *A World in Common: Contemporary African Photography*, Tate Modern, London (2023); Ozangé African Photography Biennial, Malaga; *Currency*, 8th Triennial of Photography, Hamburg; *Shifting Dialogues: Photography from The Walther Collection*, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (2022); *Crossing Night: Regional Identities X Global Context*, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, USA; *IncarNations: African Art as Philosophy*, BOZAR Centre for Arts, Brussels, Belgium; *Mask - The Art of Transformation*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany; *Sixth Nature*, Porto Photography Biennial, Porto (2019).

Emo De Medeiros (Cotonou, Benin, 1979). Lives and works between Cotonou and Paris.

Major solo exhibitions: *Now Look Here (The African Art of Appearance)*. New North, Amsterdam (2020); *TIIT, performance*. Goethe Institut, Salvador de Bahia, Brazil (2019); *Chromatics*, 50 Golborne gallery, London (2018); *Transmutations*, Backslash Gallery, Paris (2016).

Major group exhibitions: *Unraveling the (under-)development complex or toward a post-(under-)development interdependence*, SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin; *Cosmogony*. Cobra Museum voor Moderne Kunst. Amsterdam; *Vertical Atlas*. Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam; *Le Serpent cosmique. Lille3000 / Musée de l'Hospice Comtesse*. Lille, France; *Time is going - Archive and Future Memories*. Dakar Biennale OFF. Dakar (2022); 13th Gwangju biennale. Gwangju, South Korea; *Ex Africa*. Musée du Quai Branly, Paris; *Rhizomes*. La Base Sous Marine, Bordeaux (2021); *Cosmopolis #2.0: Rethinking the Human*. Curator: Kathryn Weir. Centre Pompidou, Paris (2019); *Dak'art Biennale*, The Red Hour, Dakar; *Do Disturb performance festival*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2018).

Kelechi Charles Nwaneri (Lagos, 1994). Lives and works in Lagos.

Major solo exhibitions: *Kelechi Nwaneri: Figures*, AKKA Project Venezia (2023); *Through my eyes*, AKKA Project Venezia; *Myths*, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Berlino (2021); *Modern Marks*, Ebony Curated, Cape Town (2020).

Major group exhibitions: *Stop, Listen!* CFHILL Stockholm (2021); *Doors, Eyes and Tribal Marks*, AKKA Project, Dubai; 1:54 New York; *All the Days and Nights*, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London (2020).

FOR INFO:

mail. info@nashiragallery.com

www.nashiragallery.com