



Brussels Inspiration Journal
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EVENTS DIARY

Centrale for Contemporary Art is “Hosting” the Brussels Emergent Art Scene

SALVATORE COSTANTINO JANUARY 19, 2025

Centrale for Contemporary Art reopened after a period of refurbishment, and it is not with an ordinary exhibition but with a genuine celebration, **hosting**, which celebrates the diversity of the huge art scene of the city. Centrale, located in the heart of Brussels in a former power plant, decided to open its spaces to more than two hundred emergent artists from Brussels and its periphery.



MANI ART – SAY HER NAME. MAHSA AMINI

It is of radical importance that an important public institution – like Centrale – takes stance in supporting the heterogenous artistic scene of the city which, on one hand, is highly praised for giving the city its coolness and vibrant status within the European art system, swarming with underground projects and artist-led spaces; on the other side, emergent artists are often left on their own dealing with increasing high rents and little opportunities to show their works if not supported by a gallery.

One way to support artists and their work, a part the visibility and the acknowledgment of an important cultural institution, is the fact that the exhibited works are on sale and all proceeds will go to the artists: a solidarity fund (20% of the proceeds) will be redistributed to all the exhibiting artists.

The philosophy at the base of this exhibition made me think of *balancing conflicts*, one of the conceptual frameworks of Manifesta 15, which took place last year in Barcelona. Balancing conflicts indeed addresses some of the most urgent topics of our society, for instance, the possibility of technological progress to the detriment of entire social classes or having livable cities but not just for a few ones. I think that this framework might apply to the very idea of *hosting* which, in my opinion, tries to address the necessity to balance the city needs of a vivacious and rich artistic scene with what this might bring in terms of wild rent increases and real estate speculation due to the coolness of having a neighborhood full of small galleries, artists and their studios which in the end might lead to the "expulsion" of its inhabitants and sometimes the artists themselves. The intervention of public institutions in preventing this from happening is crucial; of course, it is not just an exhibition that will fix everything but bringing the topic into public discourse could be a first step in that direction.



ADÈLE PASQUIER – FAKE IT UNTIL YOU MAKE IT



CHRYSTEL MUKEBA – JEU D'ENFANT

Curated by Tania Nasielski, artistic director at Centrale, and a committee of guest artists such as, Manon de Boer, Pélagie Gbaguidi, Juan Pablo Plazas and Richard Venlet, the exhibition aims to "question the notions of hospitality, of territory, of solidarity and of emergence in today's art ecosystem."

The exhibition has been conceived as a cabinet of curiosities in which all the works are displayed together without a specific criterion, not of media nor thematic; the works are simply juxtaposed on the walls and on the structures created for the occasion, "it might give the sensation of an Instagram feed" as one of the participating artists pointed out. On the one hand this *horror vacui* might result in a certain difficulty in the readability of the works, as some of them might cannibalize the others, monopolizing the eye of the visitor, causing a certain *visual fatigue*, although an unusual and fruitful association of artworks might stem from such a heteroclite display; as another artist pointed out, it was a good occasion to stir things up, as artists of the same medium tend to work and often be exhibited together. On the other hand, the soft curatorial approach might set the visitor free to create their own meaning path, without an excessively constrictive framework to follow, as part of the stated intention of attracting new audiences that see the contemporary art world as too distant and somehow rejective.

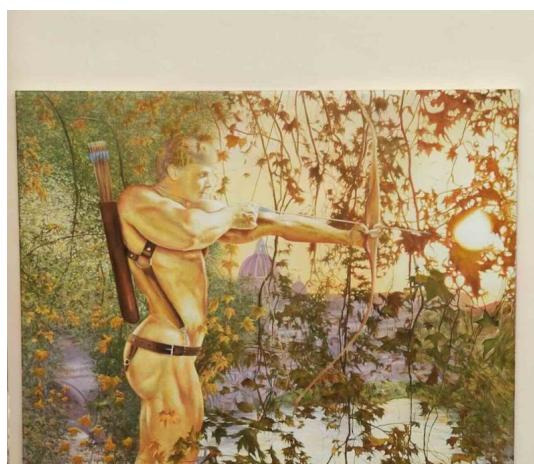


PATRICIA SARTORI – MEMORIAS TROPICAIS



MIRKO CANESI – FREGIO DEI GIGANTI

Trying to provide an exhaustive and detailed panoramic of the entire show would go against the curators' intentions therefore I will abide by them, I will just create my own gallery picking some of those artworks that I personally find thematically fascinating and formally compelling.



ELIO TICCA – THE FORGOTTEN SHORTCUT



ARMAND VAN MASTRIGT – PORN-O-RAMA

Patricia Sartori's *Memorias Tropicais*, where she deals with memory and the loss of it, identity and its relationship with time, all on a very intimate level; **Mirko Canesi's** impressive, monumental diptych bas-relief *Fregio dei Giganti* (*Frieze of the Giants*) a replica of a 90's videogame *Shadow of the Beast's* backdrop, which brings to the foreground and reshape, in a 3-D rendition, something that was conceived to stay in the back and confined in a 2-D world. In subverting the magniloquence of the title and the Wagnerian allure (it references to *The Twilight of the Gods*, in the Norse mythology), the to-be-extinguished species becomes humanity itself. *The Forgotten Shortcut* by **Elio Ticca** with his distinctive style and a clever mix of mythology, queer imagery and magic realism, sheds a light on our deepest emotions and inmost desires. **Armand Van Maastricht** with his *porn-O-rama*, a 4-meter-long charcoal frieze in which he tackles and problematize the links between body and technology and the relentless flux of images (porn and not only) to which we succumb every day. The photographic diptych *Jeu d'enfant* by **Chrystel Mukeba** captures a fragment of life, perhaps anachronistic to a first distract look, however she manages to infuse a tender aura, a meaning that transcends

the representation itself and makes us wander into a different dimension: of nostalgia, melancholy, but also lightheartedness. **Adèle Pasquier** brings her own personal experience approaching sculpture at fine art academy with *Fake it until you make it*, a mixed media assemblage of pink polyethylene hammers and nails and video that shows the challenges and difficulties she encountered in her journey learning how to be a sculptor, a playful subtext of feminist questions intertwining her life and practice. I would like to end this brief overview with a strong and poignant piece by **Mani Art** called *Say Her Name. Mahsa Amini*, not only for the importance of the political subject depicted but also because I find that the technique, relief painting on aluminium, is really the perfect way to convey the firmness of the gesture that was symbolic and at the same time very much tangible.

Hosting is visible until February 9th, 2025.

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Salvatore Costantino

Salvatore is an archeologist who has crossed over into contemporary arts. An urban flâneur always on the look for cool art and cultural events.



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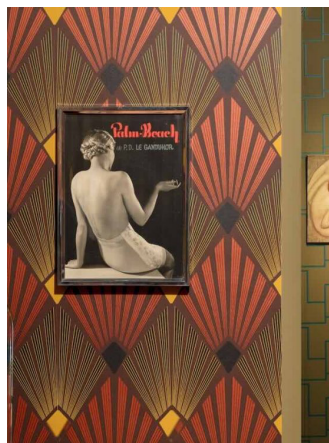
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