

Pierpaolo Campanini

Didgeridoo

kaufmann repetto is delighted to present *Didgeridoo*, the sixth solo exhibition to be staged by Pierpaolo Campanini with the gallery.

The *didgeridoo* is a wind instrument that has been used for millennia by the Aboriginal peoples of Australia. Made out of a eucalyptus branch and as much as three meters or more in length, it is played by the technique known as circular breathing, which makes it possible to produce a drone or monophonic note without interrupting the flow of air. Chosen by the artist as the title of the exhibition, and at the same time the title given to each of the twelve works on show, the reference to the *didgeridoo* becomes a semantic device and a key to the entire project.

In his new paintings the dimension of the object, in the past based on *assemblages* constructed in the studio, derives from the intricate interaction between images and 3D models created by the artist and their processing by means of artificial intelligence programs. The starting point is provided by basic forms which, uploaded into an AI generator, give rise to a range of different possible combinations. Intervening in his turn in the linkages of the algorithm during the process, and feeding it with specific elements in which he is interested, Campanini obtains ever-changing mixtures, generating a flow of potential forms and images. The process of negotiation between the artist and the software, comparable to a sequence of inhalations and exhalations, is what reminds him of the circular breathing used to play the *didgeridoo*.

Denying the technological means any authorship, however, Campanini deliberately manipulates the stream of images produced by the algorithm. He induces the program to come up with "wrong" and dystopian results, elaborates them in preliminary drawings and then uses them as the source material for his seductive paintings with their lacquered effect. In the exhibition he presents a number of evolutions of motifs recurrent in his practice, such as the *mise-en-scène* of ballet shoes in gaudy colors, decorated with ribbons and embellished with gilded details, suspended as if they were dancing *en pointe*; and again, the study of the wall of a house in the countryside and glimpses of a luxuriant and quivering vegetation. Other paintings center on strange figures clad in eccentric armor of a tribal flavor, while yet others are complex and enigmatic compositional contrivances, like the sumptuous saddle suspended against a sky blue background, or the surreal heap of shoes at the center of a still life in bright shades of color. Wavering between domestic atmospheres and dreamlike visions, Campanini's pictures are able to stir a rather perverse and childish desire for an unknown and autonomous visual territory. The deliberate, erratic precarity of subjects and compositions fascinates us, and brings us back to the *didgeridoo*, whose flow of sound is not only produced with the breath but also by pronouncing words and making noises. As the artist puts it: "We could imagine what appears on the plane of the painting as a deposit with ragged edges, like the detritus from a tide of ideas that ebbs and flows."

Pierpaolo Campanini was born in Cento (Ferrara), in 1964. He lives and works in Italy. Over his career he has had shows at kaufmann repetto, Milan (2002, 2005, 2009, and 2016), kaufmann repetto, New York (2013), Corvi Mora, London (2012), Blum and Poe, Los Angeles (2008), Corvi Mora, London (2007), Salon 94, New York (2006). Campanini has been included in many group exhibitions as Alchemilla APS, Bologna (2022), Monitor, Pereto (2021), Palazzo Vizzani, Bologna (2020), MASI, Lugano (2018), Lismore Castle Arts, Waterford (2016), Autostazione, Bologna (2016), Centro per l'arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato (2013), Onassis Cultural Centre, Athens (2012), MSU, Zagreb (2012), MAXXI, Rome (2007), Rome Quadriennale, Rome (2005), Villa Manin, Passariano (2004).