

## Adrian Paci *Dancers and Mourners*

kaufmann repetto is pleased to announce *Dancers and Mourners*, Adrian Paci's ninth solo exhibition with the gallery. The artist presents a new body of work on canvas, resulting from his ongoing research around the spiritual, the ritual and the collective act of celebration, portrayed through the lens of found footage, amateur videos and authorial cinema.

Adrian Paci's multi-media practice stems from training as a painter at the Art Academy of Tirana in the early 1990s. Gaining popularity through videos such as *Albanian Stories* (1997) - his work was represented at the Albanian pavilion, 48th Venice Biennale; Manifesta 2000 - over the years Paci developed a very personal approach to painting. While fluctuating between a variety of mediums, he has always described himself as "a painter who makes videos and other things". For Paci, the use of existing images as subjects of his paintings becomes an occasion to analyze the withdrawal of subjective authorship and to explore the enigma and ambiguity of the image, further liberating figurative painting from its representational and ideological duties.

In a conversation about his relationship to painting with curator Alessandro Rabottini, Paci stated: "When you select one particular frame from a larger story, in a way you save it from its single role as a carrier of information: you put it in a space of contemplation, you open up a possibility for doubt and complexity. We are used to perceiving images taken from a video as "documents" since they embody a factual proximity to the event that they record. Painting allows you to detach that image from the narrative and to create a small shift, which is precisely the space within which that image can vibrate and breathe." <sup>1</sup>

The series *Dancers and Mourners* is based on multiple stills from diverse sources: videos of weddings and celebratory rituals in Albania, *film d'auteur*, frames taken from various documentaries. The continuous human presence, moments of daily life and bodies that fade into phantom-like presences, are among the recurring elements represented with a vibrant gesture in Paci's work. These subjects belong to an existential theater, both organized and anarchic, where the familiar nature of tradition blends with an erratic sense of unpredictability. Something solemn materializes from Paci's brushstrokes, a feeling of awakening, channeled by ancient memories and cultural references, now breathing new life on the artist's canvas.

The pivotal role of the video in Adrian Paci's practice is further explored in a dedicated room. For a couple of weeks each, a series of recent video works will be screened throughout the duration of the exhibition. An eventful public program will dissect each work with the participation of curators, artists and scholars in the gallery.

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<sup>1</sup> De Bellis, Vincenzo; Rabottini, Alessandro, *Strata: Italian Art since 2000 - The Words of the Artists*, Les presses du réel, Milan, 2023

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On Saturday, November 25th at 6pm, philosopher Leonardo Caffo will host a talk to investigate the themes of displacement and landscape, and how they reflect on Adrian Paci's *The Wanderers* (2021).

On Thursday, December 14th at 6pm, Corrado Gugliotta, owner and founder of art gallery Laveronica, Modica, will talk about the reenactment of the ritual of *Madonna Vasa Vasa* as a secret and nocturnal meeting between the two statues that gave birth to the video *U'ncuontru* (2021), which will be screened.

On Thursday, January 11th at 6pm, a joint talk by writer and researcher Anna Castelli and philosopher Gianluca Solla will take place to explore the importance of the act of observation and the question of potentiality in Adrian Paci's *Vedo Rosso* (2020) and *Prova* (2019).

On Thursday, January 25th at 6pm, musician Admir Shkurtaaj, with whom Paci collaborated for the production of the video *Shamatà* (2021), will conclude the public program with a musical performance at the *finissage* of Adrian Paci's exhibition.

Full screening calendar:

24.11.2023 - 11.12.2023 *The Wanderers*

12.12.2023 - 03.01.2024 *U'ncuontru*

04.01.2024 - 11.01.2024 *Vedo Rosso*

11.01.2024 - 20.01.2024 *Prova*

21.01.2024 - 25.01.2024 *Shamatà*

Adrian Paci (born in 1969 in Shkoder, Albania) studied painting at the Academy of Art of Tirana. In 1997 he moved to Milan where he lives and works.

Throughout his career he held numerous solo shows in various international institutions such as: Haifa Museum of Art (2022); Kunsthalle Krems (2019); National Gallery of Art, Tirana (2019); Museo Novecento, Florence (2017); Chiostrì di Sant'Eustorgio, Milan (2017); UNSW | Art & Design, Paddington, Australia (2016); MAXXI - Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome (2015); Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Norway (2014); Röda Sten Konsthall, Goteborg (2014); MAC, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal (2014); Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea - PAC, Milan (2014); Jeu de Paume, Paris (2013); National Gallery of Kosovo, Prishtina (2012); Kunsthau Zurich, Zurich (2010); Bloomberg Space, London (2010); The Center for Contemporary Art - CCA, Tel Aviv (2009); Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund (2007); MoMA PS1, New York (2006) and Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2005).

Amongst the various group shows, Adrian Paci's work has also been featured in the 14th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia (2014); in the 48th and the 51st edition of the International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia (respectively in 1999 and 2005); in the 15th Biennale of Sydney (2006); in the 15th Quadriennale di Roma, where he won first prize (2008); in the Biennale de Lyon (2009); and in the 4th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2013). In 2024 he will take part in the Malta Biennial.