

LEILA HELLER.

"Rachel Lee Hovnanian, Seravezza the First Italian Exhibiton." *In Toscana*. (July 19, 2019).

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RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN, SERAVEZZA THE FIRST ITALIAN EXHIBITION



Art as a denunciation of new digital dependencies. With the name 'Open Secrets' there are 31 works by the American artist. At Palazzo Mediceo until 15 September 2019

At the start of the first solo show in Italy by the American artist, originally from Texas but established in New York for many years, Rachel Lee Hovnanian, entitled "Open Secrets". The exhibition - which opens Saturday, July 20 (6 pm) in the Palazzo Mediceo in Seravezza (Lucca) and which is curated by Annalisa Bugliani and organized by the Pechersky Family Foundation (London) in collaboration with Galleria Poggiali and the Fondazione Terre Medicee - embraces the last ten years of work of this multi-faceted and multidisciplinary artist, always linked to Versilia and back from a solo show at the Leila Heller Gallery in New York, which combines painting, sculpture, interactive installations, works on paper and video art.

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With "Open Secrets", open until September 15, Hovnanian proposes a personal artistic research on the dependence on social media and substance abuse, such as alcohol and the pressures of contemporary society through a feminine goal that goes to perfection. His works deal with the social themes that reveal the dichotomy between personal value systems and our public image, continuing and deepening his previous project: "Perfect Baby Showroom".



The exhibition path of "Open Secrets" composed of 31 works including installations, works and sculptures, highlights with irony the infatuation of society for hyper-connectivity. Despite all the new means of communication, Hovnanian asks: "Are we connecting more intimately with others in this post-internet era?" From here the exhibition highlights the pressures exerted on individuals to use these new modes, which push us to show our increasingly interesting and cared for lives. But in the quest for gratification, our increasingly virtual lives have begun to influence and obscure our relationship with reality.

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"Open Secrets" then reveals the double existences that have evolved online through the advent of the digital revolution. Among the works on display, one can see in particular the series of works "Too Good to be True", the installation "Swipe Left, Swipe Right", a video installation dominated by faces transformed into emoji, and the monumental "Beauty Queen Totem". The large Carrara marble sculpture, placed in the lawn in front of the Palazzo, winner of a competition in which the artist expresses the idea that our conceptions of beauty are encoded as touchstones of social power. Following the genesis of social media platforms and the ubiquity of smartphones, Hovnanian then created "Dinner for Two", an installation that shows a long dining table. Sitting at both ends there are two diners, represented with their images on a screen. Rather than looking at each other, the two characters spend most of their time looking at their phones. The installation sound reproduces only digital notification sounds.



With the video installation entitled "CREEPS", the artist tells with his style how we offer our personal information in exchange for the opportunity to participate in the virtual "square". With the series "Happy Hour", "House of Empty Bottles" and the sculpture "Taped Shut", Hovnanian then expresses his dramatic personal experience of a woman raised in a family where the effects of addiction, in this case alcohol, are they have been hidden by social pressures aimed at offering an image of perfection in spite of everything. "I conceived and realized this exhibition - explains Rachel Lee Hovnanian - to start complex dialogues on modern relations with technology. With my works I want to challenge viewers to confront themselves with the future potential of digital communication, and on the role that humanity will be able to play ". "Rachel Lee Hovnanian is one of the first artists to have touched on the topic of social media addiction - explains curator Annalisa Bugliani -, in fact for

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years he has understood that these tools have changed and distorted our life and it is the strongest form of dependence that will overwhelm everything ". "Open Secrets" is a positive project that does not stop at the Palazzo Mediceo in Seravezza but expands to other places in Versilia. The Poggiali Gallery of Pietrasanta exhibits until July 26 the exhibition entitled "Silence" with a series of rigorously white works, which in this circumstance allude to the theme of whiteness and naturalness. "Open Secrets" also makes a stop at the Malo Boutique in Forte dei Marmi with NND Immersion Room, an installation presented for the first time in New York. Until mid-September, the boutique's garden becomes the setting for a strong and totally immersive experience. Finally a work by the artist is exhibited in Forte dei Marmi in Piazza Tonini.

Info

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