

# LEILA HELLER.

“Open Secrets’: The Works of Rachel Lee Hovnanian at the Mediceo Palace of Seravezza.” AISE. (July 16, 2019).



## "OPEN SECRETS": THE WORKS OF RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN AT THE MEDICEO PALACE OF SERAVEZZA

SERAVEZZA \ aise \ - opens Saturday, July 20 at the Palazzo Medici , Unesco World Heritage Site, in Seravezza in Versilia (Lu), the exhibition of the New York Rachel Lee Hovnanian entitled "Open Secrets" . Curated by Annalisa Bugliani and organized by Pechersky Family Foundation in collaboration with Galleria Poggiali and the Terre Medicee Foundation, the exhibition embraces the last ten years of work of this multi-faceted and multidisciplinary artist who combines painting, sculpture, interactive installations, works on paper and video art .



With "Open Secrets" Hovnanian proposes a personal artistic research on the relationship between man and the digital age, characterized by dependence on perfection, and on the effects of media on our psyche. 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, composed of 14 works, highlights with irony the infatuation of the company for hyper-connectivity. Despite all the new digital media, Hovnanian asks: "Are we connecting more intimately with others in this post-internet era?"

The exhibition, scheduled until September 15th, highlights the pressures exerted on individuals to use these new modes of communication, to show our interesting and cared for lives. In the quest for gratification, our increasingly virtual lives have begun to influence and obscure our relationship with reality. "Open Secrets" 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 "Too Good to be True" series of works, the "Swipe Left, Swipe Right" installation and the monumental "Beauty Queen Totem" . The great Carrara marble sculpture, winner of a competition in which the artist expresses the

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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. an installation showing 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. an installation showing 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 series "Happy Hour", "House of Empty Bottles" and the sculpture "Taped Shut", Hovnanian then expresses his personal experience of a person raised in a family where the effects of addiction have been hidden by the social pressures aimed at offering a image of perfection. The spread of digital technology and great advances in science and global connectivity are another strand of Hovnanian's research. 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 digital revolution. "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 the future potential of digital technology, and the role that humanity can play ". "Open Secrets" will be preceded by an interesting preview. The American artist will in fact present some of his works in an exhibition to be held at the Poggiali Gallery in Pietrasanta and which will be inaugurated on Saturday 13 July at 18.00.

Born in West Virginia and raised in Houston, Texas, Rachel Lee Hovnanian is a New York artist whose multidisciplinary practice explores the complexities of modern feminism, the ideals of perfection and the effects of media on the collective consciousness. Hovnanian earned his Bachelor of Fine Art from the University of Texas at Austin. Since then he has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. His work is in private collections, companies and museums.

The Palazzo Mediceo was built in 1560 by Cosimo I and used as a residence for the Medici family when they visited the nearby marble quarries of Carrara and Pietrasanta. The palace is a UNESCO world heritage site and has been a museum since 1996. Seravezza is a river town near Lucca immersed in the landscape of the Apuan Alps. Originally founded as a mining town for iron, Seravezza soon became a place frequented by sculptors due to its proximity to the marble quarries. (aise)