

LEILA HELLER.

"The pitfalls of technology on show in Lucca: the Rachel Lee Hovnanian exhibition inaugurated." *LaPresse*. (July 21, 2019).



The pitfalls of technology on show in Lucca: the Rachel Lee Hovnanian exhibition inaugurated

The central theme of his courageous artistic research is the denunciation of dependencies; those as old as alcohol, but above all new ones related to the unbridled use of technology such as smartphones and social media

The first solo show in Italy of the American artist, who was originally from Texas but has lived and worked in New York for years, was inaugurated on Saturday 20 July in the Palazzo Mediceo in Seravezza in Versilia (Lucca), Rachel Lee Hovnanian entitled 'Open Secrets'. It was a great event, the organizers underlined in a note, which was attended by many visitors who crowded the rooms of the Medici until late in the evening to admire the works of this artist who poses the denunciation of addictions; those as old as alcohol, but above all new ones related to the unbridled use of technology such as smartphones and social media.

LEILA HELLER.

The art of the Hovnanian makes us reflect, even with a dose of irony and from the feminine point of view, on the pitfalls of a society that is increasingly infatuated with hyper-connectivity, which aims to annul human relationships and that drives us to obsessively search for a virtual identity that aims to show our increasingly interesting and cared for lives. "But in the search for this gratification - the artist maintains - our digital existences have begun to influence and obscure our relationship with reality".

Together with the public also many experts, gallery owners, critics, journalists and institutions represented at all levels. Together with the mayor of Seravezza Riccardo Tarabella and the councilor for culture Giacomo Genovesi, in fact, the president of the Regional Council Eugenio Giani and the parliamentarian Umberto Buratti were present. The exhibition, curated by Annalisa Bugliani and organized by Pechersky Family Foundation (London) in collaboration with Galleria Poggiali and the Terre Medicee Foundation, embraces the last ten years of work of this multi-faceted and multidisciplinary artist who combines painting, sculpture, interactive installations and works on paper and video art. The exhibition path of 'Open Secrets' consists of 31 works including the series of works 'Too Good to be True', the installation 'Swipe Left, Swipe Right', video installation dominated by faces transformed into emoji, and the monumental 'Beauty Queen Totem'. A 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',

'Open Secrets' is an exhibition project that does not stop only at the Palazzo Mediceo in Seravezza but expands into 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 bronze sculpture by the artist will be exhibited in Forte dei Marmi in Piazza Tonini. The exhibition will be opened in the Medici Palace of Seravezza, Via Leonetto Amadei 230,