

Merlin James
25.09 – 07.11.2020

Marie Cool Fabio Balducci
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The exhibitions will be on view from Friday 25 September, 3–8 pm.

The actions of Marie Cool Fabio Balducci will take place on Friday 25 September from 3 pm to 8 pm, and on Saturday 26 September from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm and from 3 pm to 7.30 pm. To facilitate control of the number of visitors in the gallery, the action will be repeated halfway through each hour.

Entry is permitted only with a mask, and is limited to a maximum number of visitors at a time. It is obligatory to comply with current safety standards to limit the spread of Covid19.

Opening times

Tuesday-Saturday:
10.30–13.30 and 15–19.30

For more information

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Galleria P420 is pleased to present two parallel solo exhibitions, by the painter Merlin James (Cardiff, 1960) and by Marie Cool Fabio Balducci (Valenciennes, 1961 and Ostra, 1964). These two independent shows mark the beginning of collaboration between P420 and these artists.

Installed in the first room of the gallery, the exhibition by Merlin James, Welsh by birth and residing in Scotland, presents a dozen paintings from various stages in his career, offering a glimpse – as Davide Ferri points out in an essay written for the show – of something like series, open, not conclusive, constantly in progress, that are reconfigured and reciprocally revisited, also by means of contrasts and apparent differences. In his works, references to genre painting and erudite citations can meet and overlap, in simple, abandoned figuration, where the contradictions of more ambiguous marks and signs can be incorporated in the image, or escape from it, complicating and opening up the interpretation.

His canvases seem to be coming to grips with something crooked: slightly irregular stretchers, cuts, holes, wounds, stitching, grafts of various materials, chance. But freedom, in art, does not imply doing what you want – to quote Luca Bertolo and Sofia Silva in an essay on Merlin James from 2017 – but discovering that you want exactly what you have done. To make, without knowing precisely what, to take the plunge and then to choose, layer after layer, choice after choice, chance after chance.

In the second room of the gallery, and actually already in the area of the offices, we encounter the works of Marie Cool Fabio Balducci. Marie hails from the north of France and contemporary dance, while Fabio is from the province of Ancona, visual arts and cinema. The two began working together in 1995, developing a body of work that is hard to define or to insert in the classic categories of art.

Composed of actions they do not call performances, objects they do not call sculptures, and works on paper they do not call drawings, the works of Marie Cool Fabio Balducci almost always make use of objects resulting from the bankruptcy of companies, or from layoffs of workers (tables, managerial desks, pencils sold off to the highest bidder, copy machines, etc.), deployed in a series of actions usually carried out by Marie herself. The objects, now removed from the production cycle, liquidated, put aside, reminders of a productivity that once existed, are reactivated by simple, slow, iconic actions that trigger complex political, social and economic reflections of great timeliness.

Merlin James (Cardiff, Wales, 1960) studied in London at the Central School of Art and the Royal College of Art. He currently lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland. James' work has been exhibited widely, including in recent solo shows OCT Boxes Art Museum, Shunde, China (2018) and at CCA Glasgow (2016); Kunstverein Freiburg (2014); Parasol Unit, London; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2013). In 2007 James also represented Wales at the 52nd Venice Biennale.

Marie Cool (Valenciennes, FR, 1961) **Fabio Balducci** (Ostra, Ancona, IT, 1964) lives and works in Paris and Pergola (Marche, IT). Recent exhibitions include: GAK, Bremen; CAPC, Bordeaux (2019); La Verrière/Fondation Hermès, Brussels (2018); participation at Documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel (2017); participation at MoMA, New York (2010); and a solo show at South London Gallery, London (2009). A solo exhibition is scheduled for 2021 at Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, as well as one at DAAD Gallery, Berlin. Their works are in the permanent collections of many institutions in the world, including MoMA, New York, Centre Pompidou, Paris and Mudam, Luxembourg.