

SERVANE MARY

Defamiliarization / Reactivation

March 25 - May 13, 2017

Apalazzo Gallery, Brescia, Italy

Defamiliarization / Reactivation the second personal exhibition of Servane Mary at APALAZZO GALLERY is an occasion for the artist to present an ensemble of new works part of an ongoing series featuring photographs of women riding motorbikes blown up in size and then printed on metal.

On some of the pieces the images are printed on enamel painted steel cylinders. Through this passage into the three dimensions, they suggest a «reverse-side» of the image, and the possibility to access its other side or depth. The way they change the appearance of the image also suggest some rotary presses, and therefore a device that generated, through the mass diffusion of newspapers and magazines an almost universal grid to look at the world, and staging the self accordingly to this frame of reference. On some other works, the image is printed twice on a folded piece of copper, looking like a folding screen. The screens double as sculpture and functional object; their doubling is literal in terms of the image too, which is doubled girls on motorbikes, with a knowing nod the Rorschach. They function to both separate and delineate the space, and point toward psychological depths and reflective surface all at once. Three pieces lie horizontally on the gallery floor. Referencing their production, they echo the way they were printed, lying horizontally on the printing table.

Generally speaking, Servane Mary works with appropriated press images of women from the '40s, '50s, '60s, and '70s, some of whom are her personal heroes, and some who are seen as anti-heroes, who are often misunderstood, misrepresented or tragic figures. This act of «re-figuration» explores the connections between representation, identity, history and memory, in which she treats photographs as physical entities. They often reveal traces of the passage of time, fading and deterioration, a surface that parallels our own recollection and the human mind. They are carried on various materials and supports that encourage a reevaluation of the subjects, allow for the inclusion of the viewer, and destabilize the idea of a fixed position vis-a-vis our place in the world. The kind of material she used to print her images, apart from metals, are cotton and silk veil, safety blankets, mirrors or paper. She often uses these materials for their cultural associations to the female body – scarves, veils, hosiery, leggings, negligees, and so on. These create a «second skin» for images of the «second sex».

Her frequent use of reflective surfaces returns the image of viewers, drawing them into a piece, while also acknowledging her own questioning and response, how she positions herself in relation to an image and the lens through which it is focused, possibly distorted, or constructed. Servane Mary considers the image to be as material as these supports, and by having images carried in this way she means to raise an engagement that is sculptural, sociological, and political, including the viewer and addressing collective history. The period referred to, from the '40s through the '70s, is particularly charged in relation to a redefining of the role and identity of women in the society, of their self-image, an evolving process which continues to this day.