

spiaggia libera
56 rue du Vertbois 75003 Paris

ROMANA LONDI
(Italy & Ireland)

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Biography:

Romana Londi has developed unique painting practices which include the recto-verso series Happenstance - painted simultaneously on both sides of unprimed canvas and the colour-changing series, Sentient and Jetlag. For these signature series, Londi invented and developed a photo-chromatic medium which responds to the changing intensity of sunlight and shifting shadows. These sentient (rather than merely representational) works are concerned with the immediacy of life, and absorb and manifest their surroundings as sites for transformation. The resulting paintings, or hybrids, gather and sync conflicting realities.

Romana Londi graduated from Central Saint Martins in 2009. Selected Exhibitions include Planet B, Climate Change and The New Sublime, Venice, IT 'I am the beat, Desire Nights, IMMA Museum, Dublin, IRL Gaia has a Thousand Names, Elgiz Museum, Istanbul, TR Mademoiselle, Centre Regional D'Art Contemporain, Sete, FR.

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Jetlag: Lullaby to the Tick of Two Clocks :

« In 2017, Romana Londi became aware that her house plants were often dying. She then realised that she was placing them where she thought it would be best to place them and not where the light was reaching and touching them. Her work is connected to the living in the literal and physical sense because it is connected to its limits, to what struggles and disappears.

JETLAG is about our bodies and their incredible vulnerability to their environment. The eponymous phenomenon is the meeting of two clocks - an intimate one and a universal one - which, when moving too fast, end up divorcing from each other, creating a rupture of rhythms. This distortion and disorientation phenomenon is at work in Romana's new series of paintings. The photo chromatic medium that she uses in the form of collages in the painting allows for a transformation of the colours in contact with UV and light, but also in contact with the shadows that come closer and lie on them. Just like our bodies, the painting captures and reacts to its immediate context in a performative movement.

In her originally abstract compositions, some figurative elements now stand out, floating and dissociated, a religious and otherworldly symbolism. Bones, heads, stars, drapes and doors, the machinery of the body through the figure of San Bartolomeo - so dear to Romana - flayed alive and carrying his skin on his shoulders, like a burden or a cloak.

Living outside of the body.

A representation of the Saint guards the entrance to the artist's studio in Rome. The collages of chromatic photo plastics are windows that allow life to emerge in a violent and powerful impossibility of containing it. It has gone mad. Monstrous, scattered, pulsating forms invade the canvases.

The head is upside down, the head is down, the head carried to the top, the head is submitted to our feet.

This series of works intervenes precisely within a desire to repair and reconnect with oneself, physically, psychically, and relationally. In these disrupted environments where gravity is reversed, standing up dissolves into lying down and gradually becoming aware of the forms comes down to manifest the power of the living. Determination. Endurance.

Romana's paintings safeguard vitality and death, the beginning and the end. Between the two, ghosts of the past emerge, stirred by the storms of a painting that loses its bearings. Sacha Guedj, who is organising the artist's first solo exhibition in Paris, and I exchanged a lot while writing this text. This resurgence of the past in the dismantled present of the canvas is linked to its immediate environment. It summons the iconography of crosses and gorgons, the treatment of Caravaggio-like chiaroscuro, bursting out of the painting like violent flashes of light personified by the artist's brush. The composition becomes a violent scene of dramatic theatre in which Romana's spectral characters participate, caught up in a movement associated with chiaroscuro that dislocates and shatters forms - aware of Tintoretto's legacy.

The artist's work is therefore made up of times that collide. The agitation at work is as much a refusal to go too fast as it is a refusal of the fixed and the settled, a resistance to

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the linearity of narratives. In some places, the photochromic lenses form planets, suns, clocks or eyes. Windows or eyes on worlds in progress that one must take the time to embrace.

Once the work leaves the studio, it remains flexible so that it is always able to respond, transform and actively play with the space in which it is engaged and involved by the experience of that specific environment. Changes in light or temperature and the mood of the viewer are thrown into this experience, each altering the canvas and adding to its malleability. For the canvas to remain in this state of flexibility, it must be constantly engaged in a manner that implies its perpetual painting. The practice allows the work to fluctuate between appearance and disappearance, evolving over time and through an experience that is not only contingent from a visual and cerebral point of view but also from that of the body and the senses. Lullaby, to the tick of two clocks. »

Elisa Rigoulet
Translated by Mathilde Mazau



Asylum Under my Thread, Oil paint, acrylic paint, photochromic film on linen canvas, 78 37/50 x 59 3/50 in., 2022.
Photo Credits. Aurélien Mole.

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**Mimic, Tear, Ashes, Oil paint, spray paint, emulsion, oil pastel, chalk, enamel, photochromic plastic on linen canvas, aluminium frame, 78 37/50 x 78 37/50 in., 2022.
Photo credits. Aurélien Mole.**

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Installation view, « Jetlag: Lullaby to the Tick of Two Clocks », 2023,
'Spiaggia Libera', Paris, France.
Photo Credits. Aurélien Mole.

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Extracts of TEXTS on ROMANA LONDI Photochromic Paintings

« [...] The paintings of Romana Londi describe an individual caught up in a luminous disorientation: by resorting to a technology used for sunglasses, she presents a world cut off from his natural rhythms, in perpetual Jetlag (to cite the title of one of her series)[...] »

Nicolas Bourriaud (Writer - Art Critic), Planet B: Climate Change and The New Sublime.

« Romana Londi's recent series of paintings has involved the development of a unique light-sensitive paint medium (photochromic) that allows the works to embody ongoing environmental change. They are consequently defined by their existence in space and through time. For Londi, "a picture is not simply a dead surface, but can move through external influences and become a performance itself. This process is difficult if not impossible to portray in formal terms, but that is precisely why it is so appealing." The artist, who keeps a studio in London but who has recently completed a residency in Case Wabi, Oaxaca, Mexico, describes herself as a painter who is nonetheless inspired by other forms of expression. Painting, she says, is like alchemy: a sensual experience in which there is an incredibly close relationship between one's own thoughts and the material outer world [...]. »

Alexander Estorick (Writer - Art Critic)

« The colour changing paintings, continue to channel the artist's unapologetic interest in the dynamics of painting in conversation with higher forces at stake, and in this case sunlight: the invisible and all powerful primary condition for life on earth. This multimedia series of paintings further elude the formal constraints of representation and speculation, becoming sentient beings instead, fundamentally shape-shifters, whose patterns are performed by the UV light. In sync to their geographical location, season, and time of day, the artists reflects that these paintings are as nomadic as "the schizophrenic mode that characteristic of our era and the hybrid, sexualised, nomadic subject we have become". Thus, consciously defying fixed identity, politics and narratives, the works usurp process-based linearity and play instead with 'vibrating temporalities' where, quoting Donna Haraway, « situated worldings are ongoing ».»

Tara Londi Boland (Writer - Art Critic)



Installation view, « PLANET B, Climate Change and the New Sublime », 2022, 'Radicants Internationals', curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, Palazzo Bollani, Venice, Italy.
Photo Credits. Andrea Avezzi.



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Photo Credits. Sebastiano Pellion Di Persano.

TALK WITH EMANUELE COCCIA

25.04

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Biography:

Emanuele Coccia is a lecturer at the École des hautes études en sciences sociale (EHESS) in Paris since 2011. His books, translated in numerous languages, include *Sensible Life* (2010), *The life of plants* (2016), *Metamorphoses* (2020) and *Philosophy of the home* (2021). He published a book of phototheory with the photographer Viviane Sassen (*Modern Alchemy*, 2022). He made animation videos as *Quercus* (2019, with Formafantasma), *Heaven in Matter* (2021, with Faye Formisano) and *The Portal of Mysteries* (2022, with Dotdotdot). In 2019, he participated in the exhibition *Nous les arbres*, presented at the Fondation Cartier for contemporary art in Paris. He edited the catalogs of the 23rd Triennale of architecture and design in Milan: *Unknowns Unknowns. An introduction to mysteries*. He now writes a book about the relation between fashion and philosophy with the Gucci creative director, Alessandro Michele.