

THE YEARNING FOR THE IRRATIONAL
Group show of contemporary art
curated by L. Mikelle Standbridge

Casa Regis - Center for culture and contemporary art
Frazione Marchetto, 18
Valdilana (BI), Italy

August 22 - October 10, 2021

Guided tours at 4 and 5PM every Sunday (limited to 6 people per visit). Reserve an appointment for other times and days.

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The group exhibit ***The Yearning For The Irrational*** invites the viewer to let down, just for a moment, their vigilance to responsibility. Artists are often called upon to engage their art to further justice, peace, equality, or the planet's well-being, and many dedicated activist artists have responded with great art, for which we are all hugely grateful. However, in light of the one most outstanding characteristic of Art - that it still holds the freest mental terrain that each individual has a constant right to access - this show would like to also highlight the personal, the idiosyncratic, or the positively impractical side of art.

The artists for this show were chosen because their work falls somewhere within the arena of either the unattainable, the irrational, the hypothetical, the paradoxical, the ironic, the visionary or the humorous.

Italian ceramicist **Barbara Matilde Aloisio**, using the technique of Naked raku, makes shoes that bypass any practical use because they are sustained by elevated poles, rendering balance impossible. In this same series, "Prendo le misure del mio passo" (Measuring My Steps), she mounts scissors to the front of the shoes that attempt to cut through space with each step.

Italian fiber artist **Michela Cavagna**, in her "The Impossible Tea Party" display of tantalizingly lovely tea cups, whisks away the chance of enjoying the fine porcelain for its designed purpose as the cups not only have holes but are traversed with tangled colourful thread.

Triggered from a year of lockdown, English conceptual artist, **Alice Sheppard Fidler**, produced a series of black and white photographs that in a deadpan, documentary style bring humour and irony to the two meter social distancing rule, justly titled, "The Rule". Also generated by the lockdown, the artist's "Movement Recycled" video loop and related stills are a dry, witty investigation of re-used and re-played spaces within one's confined household parameter.

Pushed to reconnect from a distance with her loved ones in 2020, Italian fiber artist **Lisa Fontana** represents each of her family members (based on a literary metaphor of Virginia Woolf) in the form of a leaf encased in felt in her "Time and Distance" installation.

A humorous work made in partnership with the public is Italian mixed media artist **Eleanora Gugliotta's** piece "Non si accettano caramelle dagli sconosciuti" (Never Accept Candy From

Strangers). People were given gum to chew and then asked to stick it to the bottom of the chair, like in grade school. A happy array of sticky smiley faces and abstract art is the result.

Born in China but long time resident in Italy, mixed media artist **Chen Li** through the Chinese language is able to access a concept not present in English, "Jia 家", also the title of her piece, which means both home and family in one ideogram. Her sculpture is made of white clay eggs which represent the family and they live in a Plexiglas futuristic house, transparent, so the world can see in and the family can see out.

"Oculo Magico", (Magic Eye) by Italian photography-based conceptual artist **Sara Munari**, is about the re-writing of history, inventing rigorously detailed bogus documents that are "proof" that Leonardo Da Vinci was the true inventor of Photography.

Greg Smith, American designer/artist, transports family heirlooms into the arena of contemporary art via re-contextualization, transforming his great grandmother's attaché case.

Often working with wax, cloth, and paper, Italian mixed media artist **Giulia Spernazza** creates subtle, soft-spoken metaphors of unattainability, by not aligning her materials with their predestined purpose. For example, "Tessuti inglobati" (Engulfed Cloth) is a micro installation of cloth and thread embedded in wax, thereby removing their utilitarian nature.

Originally from Japan but having adopted Italy as her home because she was "Italian in her previous life", mixed media artist **Yukoh Tsukamoto** still carries with her the influences of Shintoism where wispy, benign, energetic presences populate the landscape and direct her delicate *maniera nera* print series, "Gli Spiriti Della Foresta" (The Spirits Of The Forest).

The show develops throughout the two floors of the 18th C. building, integrating the contemporary installations with the historic terracotta floors, frescoed ceilings and old walls. Every visitor is accompanied on a guided tour by the curator, who also encourages reserving visits outside the regular hours.

On a digital platform, the exhibit also includes artists Elvezia Allari, Guido Nosari, and Sophia Ruffini for their performative artistic research.