

Peter Shire

New Galerie / Paris

Affiliated with both the California ceramicists of the Ferus Gallery and the Memphis Group of Milan, sculptor and designer Peter Shire is renowned for having telescoped the crafty and cosmic tone of the first with the plasticity and causticity of the second.

Shire's exhibition at New Galerie, "Love and P's," is an elliptic retrospective that embraces almost three decades of work, from the mid-1980s to 2015. Curator Julie Boukobza has mixed paths, forms and styles in a pure postmodern tradition. On a table-like platform, in a hullabaloo display, are laid conglomerates of metal and ceramic, pyramids of mugs and bold-colored strips and rod structures. Revisiting both geographically and historically decorative art vocabularies, Shire conjures *Raku* tea ceremonies; Jackson Pollock drip paintings; the modernist geometry of De Stijl or Katarzyna Kobro; and Villa Arpel from Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle* (1958).

Echoing the gigantic Chris Burden installation *Metropolis II* (2010), in which hundreds of small cars slalom in a chaotic ballet, this expanded presentation invokes a sense of the incessant round-trip that nurtured Shire's first loves.

In the gallery's basement, Shire shows drawings of distorted architectural forms and accumulations reminiscent of Alberto Savinio's surrealist paintings and Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans. Italy is indeed often invoked, both through the tradition of metaphysical painting and the 1970s disco-scene experiments led by UFO and Superstudio, among others.

Once someone told me that the biggest masterpiece in Los Angeles was not a house by Frank Lloyd Wright or Eames, nor the Hollywood sign or the Westin Bonaventure hotel celebrated by Fredric Jameson; it was the massive spider-complex of highways devouring its plains. With its interchanges and junctions, crossroads and multiple layers, it composes the most vertiginous formal playground of the city. Shire's art is in that sense quintessentially LA: joyfully cross-referenced, catalyzing high and low, both concrete and derivative.

by Pierre-Alexandre Mateos

Riccardo Paratore

Federico Vavassori / Milan

Riccardo Paratore's first exhibition in a commercial gallery consisted of two inaccessible environments that gave the impression of storefront-window displays. From the street, the viewer could survey rooms lined floor to ceiling with purplish carpeting, furnished with Mies van der Rohe Barcelona chairs and a daybed rendered in a "shabby-chic" finish, and complimented with wall mirrors designed to double as vases containing anthuriums.

If the exhibition's aim was to dislocate a luxury design store — ubiquitous in Milan's city center — to a peripheral, decaying art district, as in the case of Lambrate, Paratore certainly demonstrated his sophisticated taste in this exercise of interior decoration. The artist, born and raised in Eutin, Germany, by Italian parents, seems to nurture an identity politics, in particular, the idea of a *naturally* Italian stylishness. Furthermore, he titles the exhibition "Casa del Fashion," a pun on both the Casa del Fascio, Rationalist architect Giuseppe Terragni's building that once housed the Fascist Party in nearby Como, and on Milan's fashion industry. That Paratore intends to touch upon the challenging question of whether the Italian self-understanding of style is indebted to a troubling heritage of fascist visual culture — that is to say, a normative-stylistic imaginary developed in order to "give distinction" to made-in-Italy productions — may be a rather ambitious interpretation of the exhibition. Rather, the "fashionableness" of the artist's windows refers to style as the ultimate preoccupation of quotidian Milanese life, thereby offering the most stereotypical reading of a system in which aesthetic goals are, in fact, not accomplished *naturally* but continuously conditioned by the dictates of the market and production — what we call industry.

On closer inspection, the viewer can discern tattoo-like drawings and what seems like iPhone messaging transferred onto the leather surfaces of the van der Rohe chairs and daybed. These are narratives that the viewer cannot fully enter into; in her search for further meaning, she's left trapped outside, gazing at the window display as if herself a random fashion victim.

by Michele D'Aurizio

Marieta Chirulescu

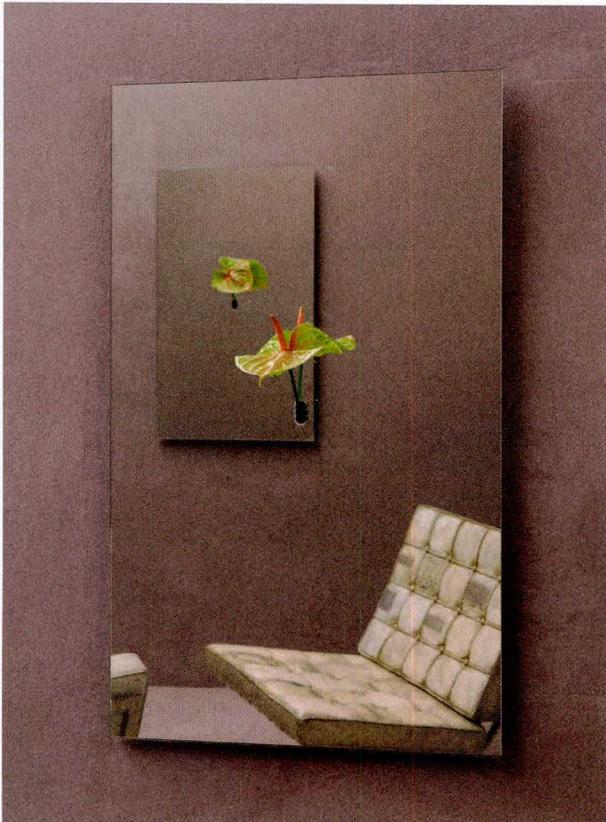
Fonti / Naples

The necessity to demolish the pictorial gesture and create scaffolding that functions as an energetic *Laufstegen* between a work in progress and another to be defined in post-production, represents the new scenario proposed by Marieta Chirulescu in the spaces of Galleria Fonti. After a first exhibition organized in 2012, the artist returns to Naples with an imaginary that, once again, leaps over the boundaries of painting, giving life to an expressive device aimed at the creation of illusions, annexations, intertwinings, connections, links and secret combinations between digital reproduction and the auratic. "I am interested in the intermediate space that is produced between painting and print reproduction," Chirulescu explains, to define a process that integrates structures pertaining to photography and printing with those from a more painterly order. By way of an irreverent action, a change of course wherein colors draw a map capable of expanding into and reinstating the frontality of painting with electronic lighting effects, Chirulescu presents observers with an incandescent world, alarming their gaze and transporting it to a hybrid landscape of vivid surfaces, captivating signs, material grafts and erotic allusions.

Under the title "Cytwombly Cyfonti" — a play on words that combines the name of the famous American artist Cy Twombly, who lived in Rome, with the name of the artist's gallerist in Naples — Chirulescu presents eight significant works (all made between 2015 and 2016) that outline a world exploding with light. The result is an oneiric atmosphere that captures signs and dreams — a cosmos whose forces make the separation of the data deposited on the canvas impossible.

by Antonello Tolve

(Translated from Italian by Vashti Ali)



From top, clockwise:
Riccardo Paratore
"Casa del Fashion,"
installation view at Federico
Vavassori, Milan (2015)
Courtesy of the Artist and
Federico Vavassori, Milan
Photography by
Alessandro Zambianchi

Marieta Chirulescu
Untitled (2015)
Courtesy of the Artist and
Galleria Fonti, Naples

Peter Shire
"Love and P's", installation
view at New Galerie,
Paris (2016)
Courtesy of the Artist
and New Galerie, Paris

