

# Matèria

# Runo B

## SideShow #2

### 17.11.2022

Matèria is pleased to inaugurate its street facing gallery vitrine with the second instalment of SideShow - curated by Ornella Paglialonga - featuring Chinese painter Runo B.

SideShow - a parallel initiative to the exhibition program at the gallery, conceived for Matèria's new external vitrine - places a spotlight on works produced by national / international artists, especially those who have never been exhibited in Rome.

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Runo B's imagery emanates senses and intuitions: it seems to draw you into its vortex, crunching like a trodden leaf, clinking like a shopping trolley full of products. *Play a game* wraps the observer in its licking brushstrokes, smeared with chocolate, fiordilatte and sour cherry flavoured ice cream from cheap brands of the city's worst discount stores. Runo B places the viewer inside an allegorical world, remaining on the plane of literal interpretation with a somewhat naïve comedy moved by his bold pictorial interventions.

If at first *Play a game* maintains an extremely pop and virtuoso reading, at a second, we realise the existence of a particular attention, dear to the artist, towards fools. What does he mean? In particular, those who lead rather habitual lives, characters without serious problems, not really mad, but possible vagabonds, people who decide not to wear a mask, insomniacs, etc.

In Runo B's practice, the most intriguing result is his way of creating sub-layers of meaning: the character depicted clumsily tries to sabotage a system demanded by the global world, but on yet another level, the poor, frustrated person seems to be in it with all his shoes. The fool in Runo B's work is not an actual fool, but a person who sincerely tries not to belong. We can easily liken him to a Fantozzi-like figure, the underdog/outcast protagonist of an iconic Italian comedy from the 70s, fatigued by a system that demands too much of him compared to what it can offer him, and every now and then he rebels.

This is how Runo B shows us figurines eager to escape from those who want to tie them up, ridicule them and punish them for doing something wrong. It is no coincidence that the artist, for this depiction, extrapolated some images from a video found on the web, where members of a small village in China physically punish a man for going to buy cigarettes without a mask.

In the fleeting composition of *Play a game*, it is good to consider the use of technique. Mixing acrylic, oil and collage, Runo B keeps on different fronts and effects to make the canvas vibrate, never leaving anything to chance but, on the contrary, using all the details, even the most trivial, for the understanding of the pictorial choices and the meanings. Having said this, we can note how the collage emphasises, in this case, the 'poor' aspect of the narrative content, enriching it, on the visual level. Moreover, the composition stems from a view that Runo B has carefully studied and observed in Goya's painting, as in the scenes in *The Disasters of War* (c. 1810) of the Spanish persecution by Napoleonic forces during the Spanish War of Independence, where the connection to the 'crucifixion' is visually translates into 'tied to a tree'. In the course of his career, Runo B has laid the foundations for a unique body of work, mixed with an in-depth discussion of the history of painting, society and politics, while always maintaining his own highly original vision.

\*Runo B, *Play a game*, 2022, acrylic oil and collage on linen, 60 x 80 cm

Runo B (Zhang Xiaodong) (1992, China) now living and working in Venice, Italy. He obtains a bachelor's degree of visual Arts at Fine Arts Academy of Venice (2017) and a master's degree of visual Arts at Fine Arts Academy of Bologna (2020). He held his first solo exhibition "ASS OF GOD" at Pata gallery in Shanghai (2021). He also participated in the project "Venice Time Case" of the curator Luca Massimo Barbero, and his work were exhibited at Tommaso Calabro Galleria in Milan and Galerie italienne in Paris during that time (2021-2022). He won the finalist of Premio Francesco Fabbri (2021) and prize Arte Laguna (2017).

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Based in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo in Rome, Matèria opened its doors to the public in 2015. The gallery proposes an exhibition programme that touches upon all aspects of Contemporary Art. Since its founding, Matèria's purpose has been the furthering and development of the work of its selected group of Artists. The gallery programme features four exhibitions per calendar year, conceived and produced directly with its artists and often in dialogue with the space through a site specific approach. Matèria's gallery shows strive to further the research and experimentation aspects of artistic practice, with the results of this approach often showcased in a growing list of Italian and international art fairs.

Matèria represents the work of Fabio Barile, Karen Knorr, Mario Cresci, Xiaoyi Chen, Giuseppe De Mattia, Sunil Gupta, Marta Mancini, Stefano Canto and Eduardo Fonseca e Silva & Francisca Valador.

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Opening  
17.11.2022, 7pm - 8pm

Matèria | Via dei Latini,27 - Roma  
materiagallery.com

Matèria

Hours  
From Tuesday to Saturday  
from 11 am to 7 pm

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