

CESARE LUCCHINI

PIETÀ



La caduta, 2018

Pietà

12 April 2019 – 1 June 2019

Private view: Thursday 11 April 2019

6.30–8.30pm

'La Pietà', the iconic image of Christ's inert body being supported by the Virgin Mary is one of the most emotionally charged images in all Western Art and also one of the most moving testimonies to human compassion. 'Compassion' is not a word one would associate with Cesare Lucchini's paintings, yet, for their apparent cry of desperation, they also represent a cry for kindness. The overriding theme of his works is to pose, in a highly emotional way, the question, 'why'? Why are these people alone and abandoned?

rosenfeld porcini is delighted to announce the third solo exhibition of the Swiss/Italian artist in the gallery.

In a western world dominated by an alarming shift to the political right where any form of moderation is immediately shouted down; where episodes of racism are on the rise, Cesare Lucchini addresses the ultimate solitude inherent in the human condition and the cruelty of man's behaviour to his fellow human being.

Having visited the detention centre for immigrants on the Italian island of Lampedusa, it is no surprise that it became a focus for a series of works. Concentrating as he has often done in the past on what 'remains' after a tragedy, the paintings contain footprints and what appear to be pieces of discarded belongings, whilst in another area of the canvas, a lone silhouetted figure surrounded by barbed wire, looks on. A boat covered in barbed wire with a solitary human being standing in the distance as a majestic looking mountain and a terse blue sky look on is another reference to the almost daily tragedy taking place on the sea just beyond the island.

The use of barbed wire is a recurrent theme in the paintings, yet although on occasions it can stand for the traditional idea of forced enclosure, more frequently it becomes a metaphor for the inevitable solitude of human beings both psychologically and physically. Emerging or standing alongside some vague form of wreckage, his subjects appear as silent observers to the tragedy. Although silhouetted, they have something of the Holocaust survivors, alive but almost shades, forever marked by what they have witnessed.

Other canvases depict large figures lying sprawled on the ground dominating the landscape or smaller figures laying contorted over large cube-like forms much like an improvised altar. In both it's clear that Lucchini has taken on the lesson of 'Cubism' which deconstructed the figure, making them appear more of an 'assemblage'.



Dove vanno?, 2018

The artist's daily routine has remained the same during his long career. Never one for a preparatory drawing, he simply stands in front of the blank canvas and begins to paint. Any problems which emerge as he works are resolved through painting. Emerging from the era of 'abstract expressionism' with his repeated layering of paint and attention on the force of the gesture, each finished work is the result of many, many hours in the studio. The richness of the paintings' surfaces reveal themselves little by little. As can be seen in the exhibition, his methodology is to work on a series of works simultaneously, all of which feature the same narrative. Only the painting creates the difference between the individual works.

Although his narrative can appear bleak, what saves the paintings from a black pessimism is the richness of his palette. His colours are those of the Mediterranean and they work in total contrast to the starkness of his subject matter creating an extraordinarily powerful dynamic. Lucchini does not want us to wallow in desperation but rather desires to produce in us a cathartic charge through the 'beauty' of the 'painting' to make us believe that only 'we' can ultimately be the agents of change.

A book will be published during the duration of the show to document these and other works he has made in the last few years.

Cesare Lucchini was born in 1941 in Bellinzona, Switzerland, and currently lives and works in Lugano, Switzerland. Lucchini works with galleries in Germany and Switzerland and has had many exhibitions in museums, including solo shows at the Mendrisio Palazzo Pollini, Ferrara; Pallazzo dei Diamanti; Locarno Pinacoteca Casa Rusca; Neuchatel Museum of Art and History, Switzerland and the Kunst Museum in Berne.