

MARTA ROBERTI

EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS PORTFOLIO
2025



In my practice, I combine drawings, installations, hand-drawn animations, video projections, and light. Recently, I have started transforming my drawings into embroideries and tapestries in collaboration with Indian ateliers.

I am interested in the idea that the self has no boundaries and is not only human. Fascinated by plants, animals, and the shared sacredness of life, I explore figures and spaces that Western culture often considers “other”—animals, nature, the exotic, the East, and prehistory—seeking to depict possible identities beyond dominant cultural patterns.

UNAROMA, group show 2025-26
MACRO curated by Cristiana Perrella



SELF-PORTRAIT AS POTNIA THERON WITH PELICAN, 2024
drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese gampi paper

INSTALLATION VIEW, UNAROMA, MACRO, 2025

TRA DUE PENSIERI, solo show 2025

“BETWEEN TWO THOUGHTS”, CARME, BRESCIA, EXHIBITION CURATED BY MELANIA GAZZOTTI



Installation views, CARME, FORMER CHURCH OF SAINTS PHILIP AND JAMES



SELF-PORTRAIT AS A PEACOCK metallic oil pastel on carbon paper, 330x440cm



Installation views, CARME, FORMER CHURCH OF SAINTS PHILIP AND JAMES



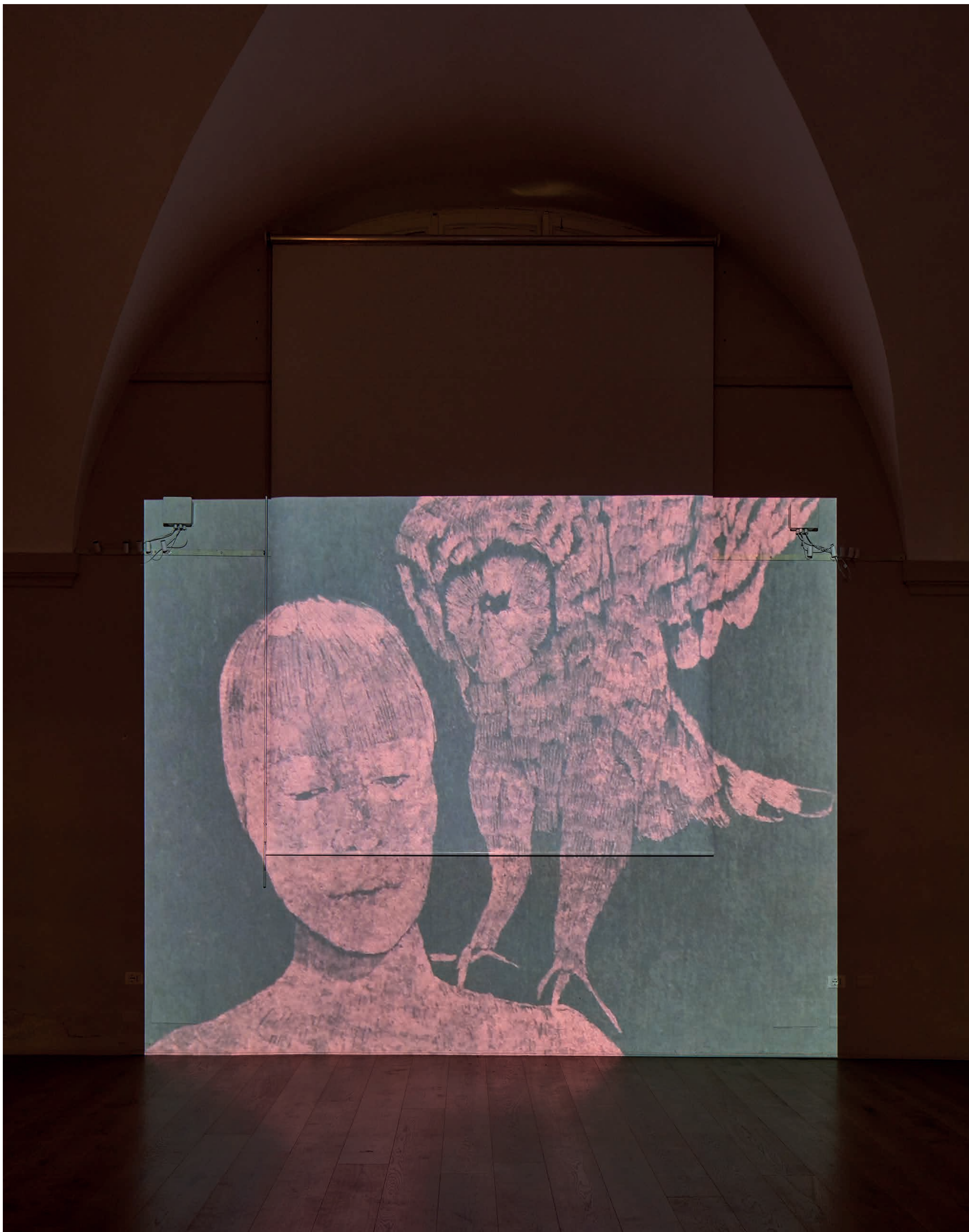
SELF-PORTRAIT AS NIKE PLAYING WITH LIONESS
metallic oil pastel on carbon paper



SELF-PORTRAIT AS DIONYSUS RIDING A LEOPARD
metallic oil pastel on carbon paper, 2025



Installation views, CARME, FORMER CHURCH OF SAINTS PHILIP AND JAMES



“Between Two Thoughts” presented in the spaces of the former Church of Saints Philip and James, home of the C.A.R.M.E. in Brescia explored the deep connection between art, nature, and spirituality. The works on display—large-scale drawings, hand-drawn animated videos, and projections—engage in dialogue with the church’s architecture and the city’s artistic heritage, I explored the self as boundless, intertwined with human, animal, and vegetal realms.

The title *Between Two Thoughts* refers to a suspended, silent state in which insight and inspiration can emerge. The installation opens with a flock of ducks, which I see as emblematic of the mind’s ability to move across worlds and realities. At the heart of the exhibition is my depiction of the Winged Victory from Museo Santa Giulia, transformed into a symbol of vitality, spiritual aspiration, and the balance between lightness and strength, alongside peacocks representing immortality and renewal. The show concludes with an intimate video in a darkened space: *A bee on a crying face*:

The animation is hand-drawn on black carbon paper. Inspiration comes from sayings and proverbs using animal metaphors, and from dreams I and my friends have had, often populated by animals. A Japanese saying inspires a key image: a bee resting on a crying face, something that could sting, settling on pain that already exists. An owl, echoing Hegel’s owl of Minerva, appears as delayed understanding, while black tears transform into the spotted fur of a leopard. These images are woven into the visual language, creating poetic and intuitive references that guide the animation.

WHY LOOK AT ANIMALS, group show, 2025
EMST, ATHENS, Curated by Katerina Gregos



Installation view, big size drawings with oil pastel on mulberry paper



SELF-PORTRAIT AS SAINT OLIVIA POURING ON JAGUAR, 2024
drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese gampi paper
cm 240 × 190

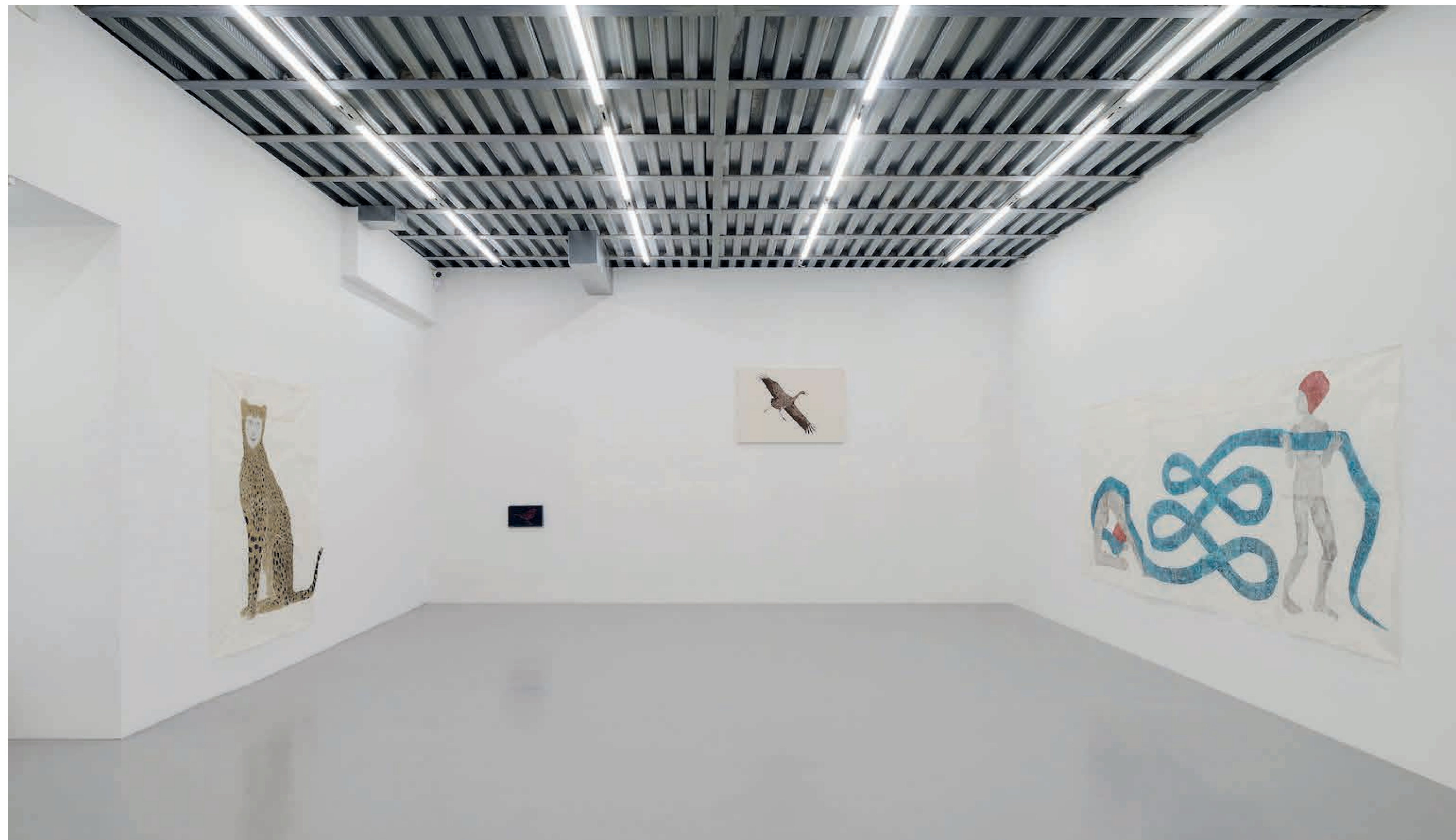
DUE MONDI, E IO VENGO DALL' ALTRO, Solo Show 2025

“BETWEEN TWO THOUGHTS”, Z20 ZARA ZANIN GALLERY, ROMA, EXHIBITION CURATED BY CECILIA CANZIANI,

InstallationView_MartaRoberti_DueMondiEIoVengoDallAltro_2025_z2oSaraZanin_CourtesyTheArtist&z2oSaraZanin_PhRobertoApa_02.jpg



InstallationView_MartaRoberti_DueMondiEIoVengoDallAltro_2025_z2oSaraZanin_







SELF-PORTRAIT IN A FLAMINGO POSE, drawing with graphite and oil pastel from hand mad carbon paper on mulberry paper, cm 140 x 214 ,2023



TWO SISTERS IN CONFRONTATION WITH CHAOS, rawing with graphite and oil pastel from hand made carbon paper on mulberry paper, 150x365cm, 2025





SELF-PORTRAIT AS A CHEETAH SPHINX, 2025, drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese mulberry paper, cm 177x160



MY SISTER ANNA AS CHEETAH SPHINX, 2025 drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese mulberry paper, cm 180x157



oil pastels on tracing paper
cm 42 x 30

COPPER AND SILVERED BLUE IBIS, oil pastels on tracing paper, 2024



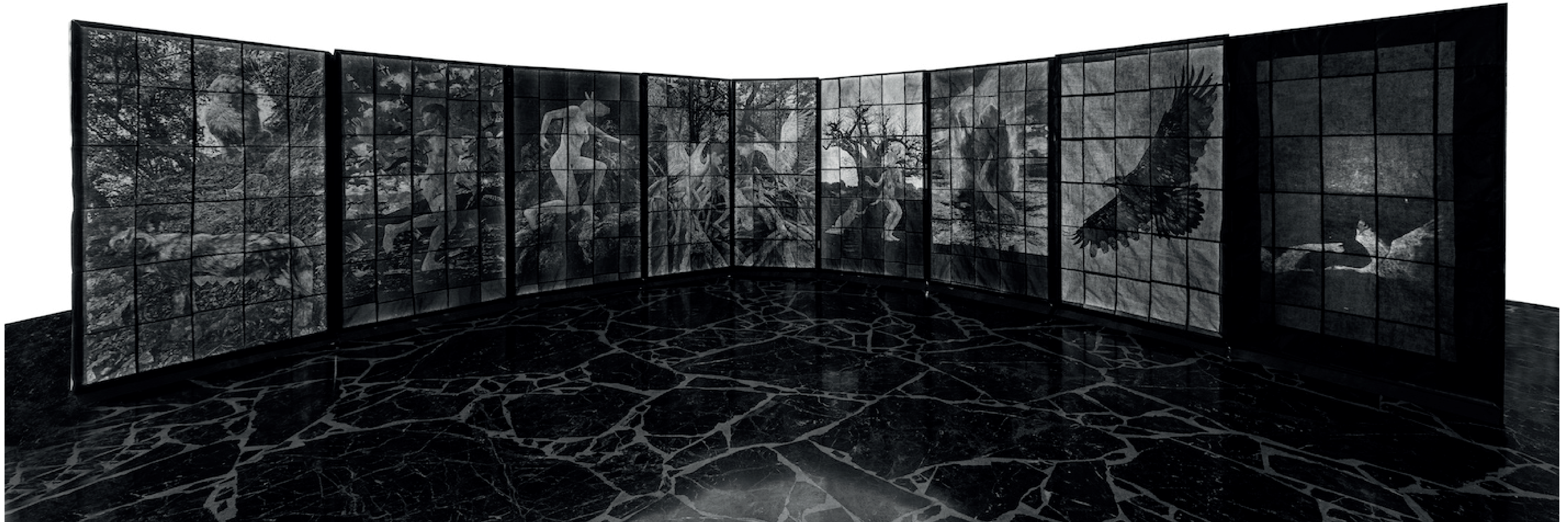
COPPER PELICAN, 2024 oil pastels on tracing paper cm 80.5 x 62cm, 2025

NATURAE. AMBIENTI DI ARTE CONTEMPORANEA, 2025
a cura di Melania Rossi, Museo storico e Parco del Castello di Miramare



STORIES OF HUMANS AND SPRINGBOCKS, 2021–24 engraved drawing on
carbon paper cm 180 × 480

DA PARMIGIANINO A KENTRIDGE, group show 2025
ICG (ISTITUTO CENTRALE PER LA GRAFICA) Roma, a cura di Maura Picciau



Installation view **BESTIARY OF THE OTHER WORLD**, 2020-21
drawing installation with led and iron frame, drawings engraved on graphite carbon paper, 170x 100cm each, iron frames, led,
Istituto Centrale per la grafica, Rome July 2021, Collection Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, Roma

BESTIARY OF THE OTHER WORLD explores life as a process of intraspecific metamorphosis, where human and animal forms constantly transform into one another. I created eight large-format drawings—including a diptych and an animated retro-projected work—displayed as an enormous leporello backlit by LED strips within iron frames. Understanding the metaphysical implications of Darwin's theory of evolution, I consider life as a continuous process of intraspecific metamorphosis, each species emerging as a transformation of the preceding one. Every creature, carrying within itself traces of all others, can be imagined as a kind of mobile zoo. I wondered whether I could find passages in the Divine Comedy where Dante expressed similar ideas, or whether I could propose such a reading myself. Drawing inspiration from the Divine Comedy, the project reflects on the variety of creatures Dante describes, both real and mythological, such as harpies, minotaurs, and centaurs, whose hybrid forms express the fluid boundaries between human and animal. The work was commissioned through Cantica21. Italian Contemporary Art Everywhere and is now part of the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica collection in Rome.



FEMALE MINOTAUR AND HARPIES, 170x 100cm, iron frames, led,

NATURA VATICINANS, group show
MOCA, curated by Volcano, Brescia, 2025



Installation view at Moca, 2025





SELF-PORTRAIT AS ETRUSCAN SPHINX WITH BLUE WING, 2025
drawing on handmade carbon paper with oil pastel on Taiwanese mulberry paper, 140 × 180 cm

L'ANIMALE CHE DUNQUE SONO, FESTIVAL DEL PAESAGGIO, 8th edition, group show 2024
VILLA SAN MICHELE, ANACAPRI , curated by Arianna Rosica and Gianluca Riccio



The Animal that therefore I Am, Installation view, Villa San Michele



SELF PORTRAIT AS AN HARPY, cotton embroidery by Kashmir artisans, 2021,



SELF PORTRAIT AS A THIEF WITH THE SNAKE, cotton embroidery by Kashmir artisans, 184x150cm,2021



SELF PORTRAIT AS A MINOTAUR, cotton embroidery by Kashmir artisans, 190x160cm, 2021



SELF-PORTRAIT AS LUCIFER, cotton embroidery by Kashmir artisans, 138x130, 2021

This project was commissioned by the Italian Cultural Institute in New Delhi on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of Dante Alighieri's death in 2021. *Se io mi intuassi come tu ti inmi* consists of a series of tapestries hand-embroidered by Kashmiri artisans using naturally dyed cotton threads. The title is taken from Dante's *Paradiso* (IX, 81) and can be translated as: "If I could penetrate you, understand you, perceive you with the same empathy that makes you penetrate me..."

The theme of these drawings and the resulting tapestries is closely related to that of the *Bestiary of the Other World*. I was interested in exploring the process of metamorphosis in which human nature merges with animal nature. Using my own female body and face, I attempted to represent these transformations, tracing in the *Divine Comedy* figures and passages that express a state in which human and animal boundaries dissolve. In particular, I drew inspiration from mythological creatures such as the harpy, the minotaur, the centaur, and Lucifer, which embody processes of hybridization between human and animal forms.



Self Portrait as Beatrix and the eagle enlightening Dante as a fish, wool embroidery by Kashmir artisans 170x200cm

**SISTERS, solo show
Art Fiera Bologna 2025**



Installation view ARTEFIERA BOLOGNA 2025



SELF-PORTRAIT AS AN AZTEC STATUE WITH DOG NOSE AND EAGLE HEADPIECE, 2023, drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese Mulberry paper



SELF-PORTRAIT WITH IBIS BEAK AND EAGLE HEADPIECE, 2023 drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese Mulberry paper cm 190 x 121



Installation view ARTEFIERA BOLOGNA 2025



ANNA AND MARTA ON HORSEBACK, 2024
from the series "Sisters", oil pastel on mulberry paper, cm 100 × 153



THE EXCHANGE OF ANIMALS, 2024, from the series "Sisters"
oil pastel on mulberry paper, cm 120 × 112

RIVELAZIONI, solo show 2023
MUSEO DI SANT'ORSOLA, FIRENZE, curated by Morgane Laforgue



installation view, AUREE, Museo Sant'Orsola



installation view, AUREE, Museo Sant'Orsola



installation view, AUREE, Museo Sant'Orsola



BIRDS PLAYING IN FLIGHT, 2024

drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese mulberry paper
cm 116 × 236

AURE

A project conceived to be hosted in the church of the former Sant'Orsola monastery.

I imagined being invited by the Ursuline nuns to fresco the church walls, and through large-scale drawings I depicted scenes of saints whose lives included moments of friendship with animals, even wild or fierce ones. I portrayed Saint Olivia, condemned to live in the desert where it was believed she would be devoured by wild beasts, yet instead found playing with the animals she had tamed.

Saint Francis speaking to the birds and Saint Anthony speaking to the fish are also part of the project. As in my previous series, I reinterpret the figures I represent through self-portraiture and my own nudity. I used postures closer to yoga than to traditional saint iconography, because yoga poses imitate the animal in order to reach sanctity.



SELF-PORTRAIT AS SAINT FRANCIS SPEAKING TO THE BIRDS WITH IBIS ON HIS CHEST, 2024 drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese mulberry paper, cm 235 × 151



SELF-PORTRAIT AS SAINT OLIVIA WRAPPED IN A SERPENT, 2024 drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese mulberry paper, cm 241 × 203



SELF-PORTRAIT AS SAINT ANTHONY SPEAKING TO THE FISH, 2024, drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese mulberry paper
cm 195 × 316



SELF-PORTRAIT AS SAINT OLIVIA CALLING THE EAGLE, 2024, drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese mulberry paper
cm 189 × 170

HOVERING, group show, 2024
curated by Manuela Lietti, **Capsule Shangai in Venice**



SELF-PORTRAIT AS JAGUAR WARRIOR, drawing with oil pastel on Taiwanese mulberry paper, 95x141cm, 2024



SELF-PORTRAIT AS ISIS, 2024
embroidery with silk, cotton, and metallic threads

ANCESTORS OF A TIME TO COME, DIOR Haute Couture 2023
Rodin Museum, , curated by P. Ugolini and M. Alicata,



ANCESTORS OF A TIME TO COME is a project I created for the Dior Haute Couture Autumn-Winter 2023–2024 show, presented at the Rodin Museum in Paris. In this work, I imagine myself as an “ancestor of a time to come,” connecting with a forgotten, ancestral past.

I have been exploring the various incarnations of the goddess in the cultures of the Mediterranean, Asia, and Central America. The “returns” Aby Warburg speaks of do not occur only in time, but also across space. I studied the iconography of these goddesses, who are almost always associated with animals, and began reproducing their postures in a performative way—copying their poses and movements with my body, embodying their strangeness until I could make them my own.

I created large drawings, which were then embroidered on expansive fabrics by the Chanakya ateliers in Mumbai. In these works, I represent myself as various “archaic goddesses,” blending animals, self-portraits, and fragments of wild landscapes. Animals are essential companions in my compositions, sometimes fused with goddesses in hybrid forms, reflecting coexistence, spiritual guidance, and a shared life on Earth. I also include self-portraits performing yoga asanas, embodying my desire to reconstruct a lost past and repair the present.

This installation is my tribute to these divine matriarchal forces, presenting a vision of art and life centered on care, coexistence, and the cultivation of both material and spiritual well-being.













AGUA QUE QUEMA,
MUSEO ANAHUACALLY, group show, Mexico City, curated by Karla Niño de Rivera



SELF-PORTRAIT AS A CHACMOOL WITH PALM GROWING IN THE BELLY, 222x285.
drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese
Mulberry paper



SELF PORTRAIT AS MAYA MOON GODDESS WITH RABBIT AND BLUE FISH HEADPIECE, drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from handmade carbon paper on Taiwanese Mulberry paper, 118x130cm, 2023



SELF PORTRAIT AS AZTEC GOD WITH EAGLE HEADPIECE, drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from hand made carbon paper, on Taiwanese gampi paper, 103x130cm, 2023



SELFPORTRAIT AS MAYA MOON GODDESS WITH HARE, drawing and collage with graphite and oil pastel from hand made carbon paper, on Taiwa- nese gampi paper, 115x130cm, 2023.

THINGS THAT NEVER HAPPENED BUT THAT ALWAYS ARE, solo show, MUSEO COMUNALE DI VILLA PACCHIANI,
curated by Ilaria Mariotti, 2022



Installation view, SELF PORTRAIT AS POTNIA THERON WITH DEERS, 2022







Installation view, SELF PORTRAIT AS SNAKE GODDESS 30x210cm, drawing with oil pastel from hand made carbon paper on Yunnan paper,2022.



SELF PORTRAIT AS ISHTAR, THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT, drawing with oil pastel from hand made carbon paper on Yunnan paper ,190x200cm, 2022





THINGS THAT NEVER HAPPENED BUT ALWAYS ARE

When it came to choosing the title of the exhibition, Marta proposed Things That Never Happen But Always Are never happen but which always are taken from the beautiful definition of the myth that Salustius, politician and neo-Platonic philosopher who in the 4th century A.D. gives in his operetta The Gods and the World, written during the empire of Julian, the last pagan emperor and friend of Salustius. The whole, intense and poetic sentence goes like this: ‘And these things never happened, but are always: the intelligence sees them all at once in an instant, the word runs through them and expounds them in succession’ 1 . “The intelligence sees them all at once” is a phrase that refers to vision, to images and not only to the word that lines things up and ‘exposes’ them. The Goddess cycle that opens this exhibition represents the artist’s most recent production and dialogues, along the way, with numerous other female figures, self-portraits, which tell a visionary story, a continuous questioning of one’s own position in the world and which, through myth, bring into myth, bring into focus anxieties, certainties, desires and autobiographical utopias. The visions of Marta Roberti look out over a vast and complex world, in a historical perspective that questions our present and future, which feeds on philosophy and great narratives, starts from a personal dimension that then becomes a collective breath. One step after the other, the drawings are articulated on sheets of precious Yunnan paper, fragile and elastic at the same time and unfold, requiring continuous additions: a wing, a paw that the inner sheet cannot contain. A thought evolves into another thought, it needs space, of further additions. Figures are never alone. Goddesses need their own court, a people of animals that they seduce or rule or seize to bend them to their will. They exercise a generative power that multiplies the sheet, they expand by asserting their own position in the world, they relate to other living beings, they combine from time to time according to the narrative structure that the space suggests. The paper itself breathes, expands, joins with other figures, now condensed into small scenes, now squared off as in a sort of parade of individual mythological figures. Marta always draws: drawing is a necessity from which she cannot escape. To draw is to breathe, it is thinking. The hand treats materials according to rituals that generate figures. Their sacredness is equal to the amazement at seeing them arrive in the world. The material is not touched directly, as in the most sacred rites. Marta seems to work with veiled hands: the strokes of graphite transferred from copying papers, the textures transferred from surfaces prepared with oily pigments, the scratched copying papers and the drawing brought to life through the action of levare: what we see and perceive as a stroke is a lack that we are allowed to see through a light source or just a sort of memory of a stronger, denser pigment. It is always a point of view, that of Marta drawing, which has to imagine the holding of the drawing upside down, or a surface realised through an operation of contact, of subtraction, of transfer where the gesture is either tender, of care or violent, reminiscent of that which the Goddesses exert on their court of animals. From these continuous practices, which produce an innumerable number of drawn sheets, emerge human figures, women, all nude self-portraits: the artist reveals herself in numerous forms, all delicate and affirmative at the same time. Throughout the exhibition we find Marta presenting herself to us as the Lady of the Animals, the Potnia theròn - Mediterranean goddess since the Bronze Age, wild and primordial. In the first room the goddess is surrounded by deer: she seems to chase them, moving dance steps, grabbing them by the antlers, overseeing fights and mating, transforming herself into them, taking on their bodies and movements, hybridising with them.

curatorial text by Ilaria Mariotti

ALTER EVA, group show
STROZZINA,(Fi), curated by IED, 2021

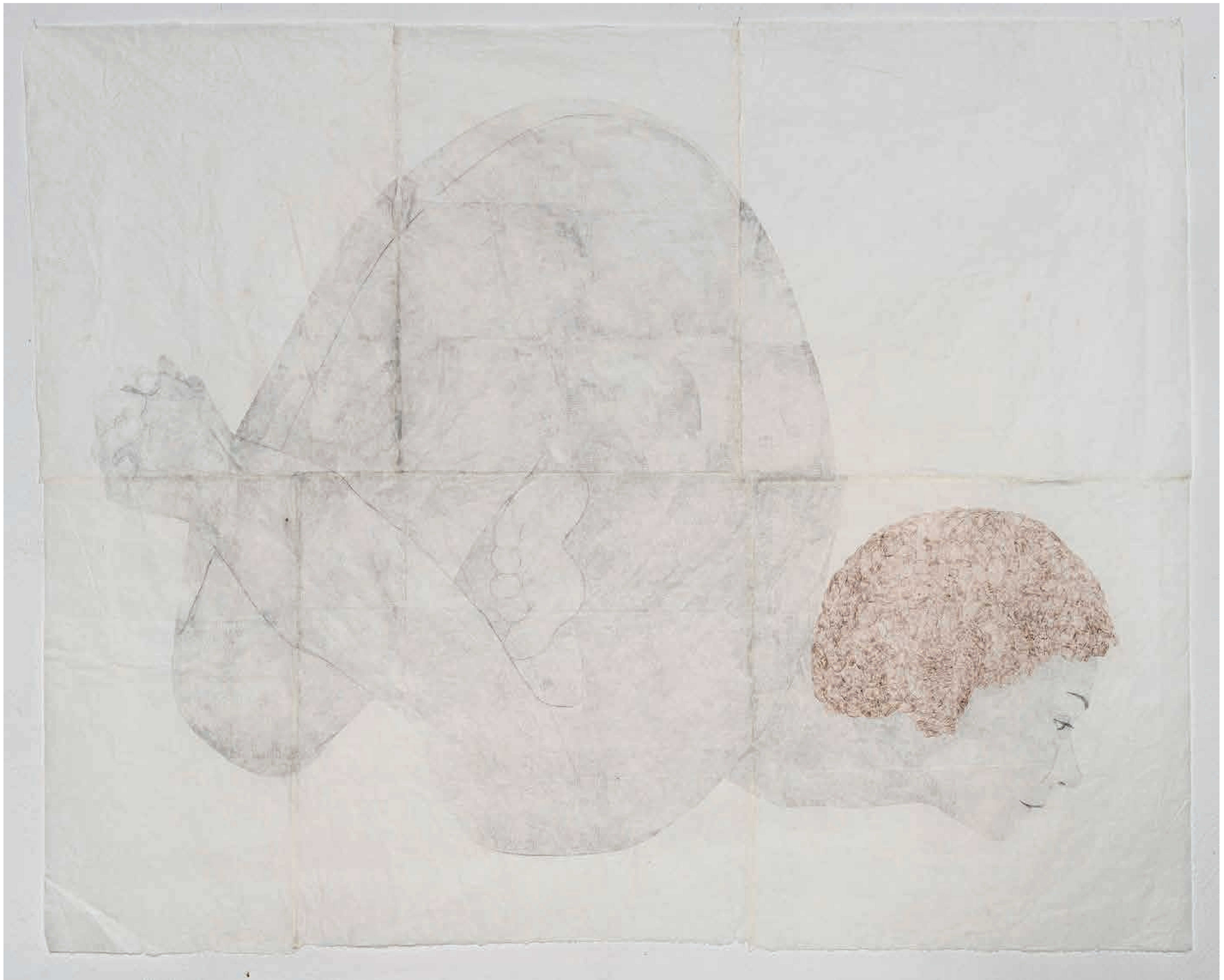


WHAT THE WORLD IS, THIS IS OUTSIDE THE WORLD, Installation view,
engraved drawings on carbon paper, led lights, and iron frames

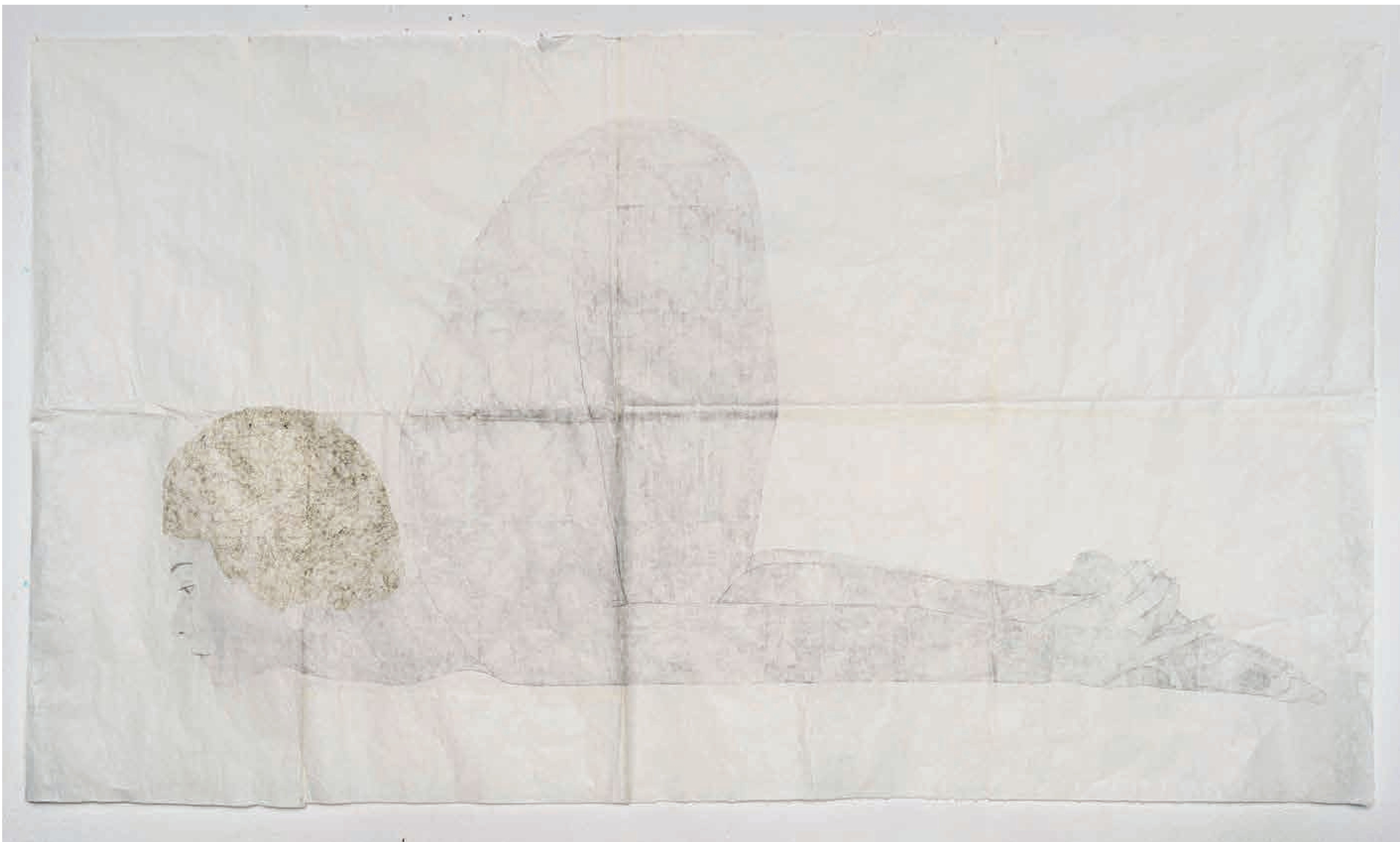
I SAY I,
GALLERIA NAZIONALE DI ARTE MODERNA, GALLERIA NAZIONALE DI ARTE MODERNA, 2021



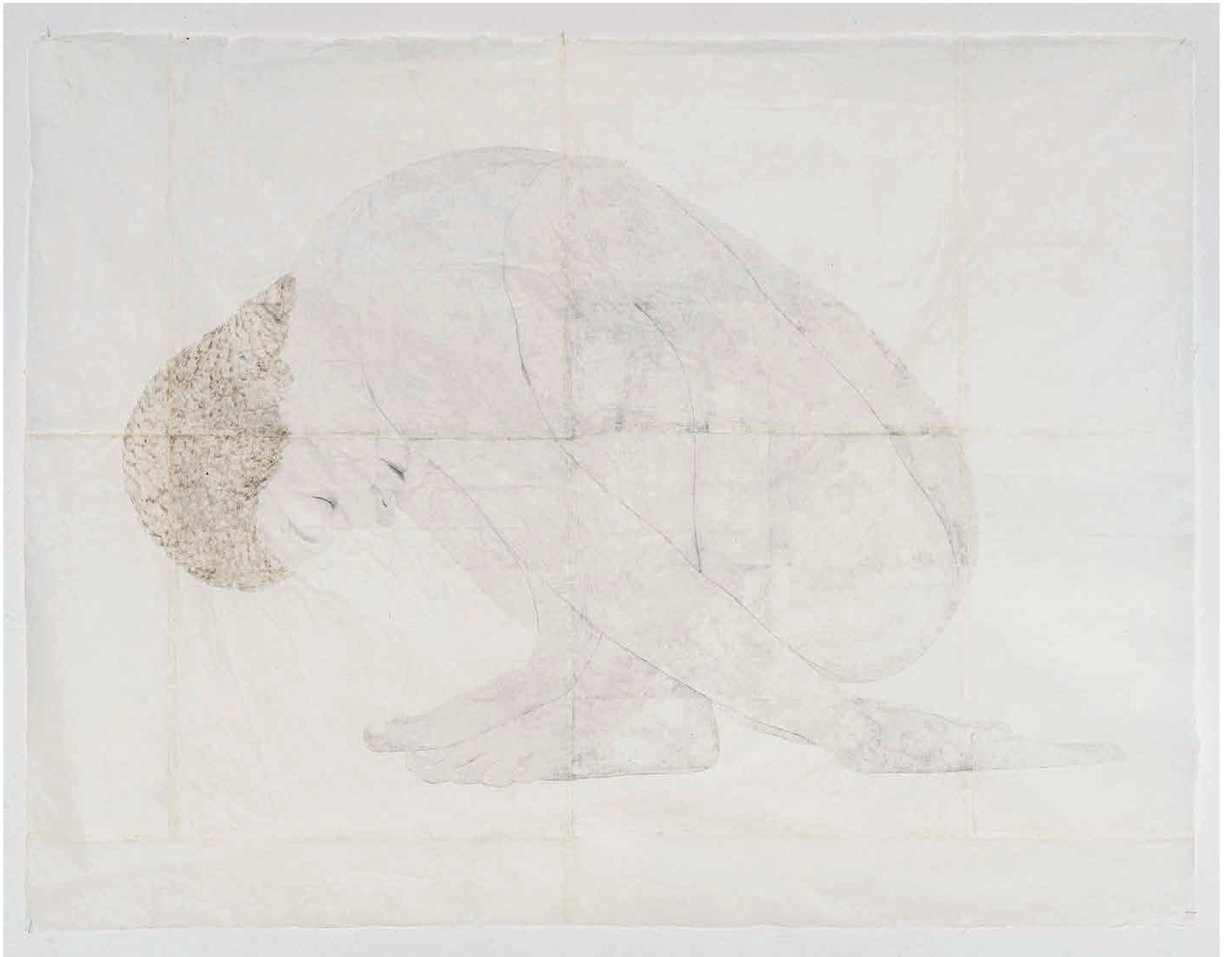
Installation view



SELF PORTRAIT AS A SNAIL WITH PANGOLIN HAIR CUT n.2, graphite and oil pastel on Yunnan hand made paper, 137x188cm, 2020



SELF PORTRAIT AS A SNAIL WITH PANGOLINE HAIR CUT, graphite and oil pastel on Yunnan hand made paper, 137x240cm, 2020



SELF PORTRAIT IN GARLAND POSE N.2, 2020 , graphite and oil pastel on Yunnan hand made paper, 110x145cm

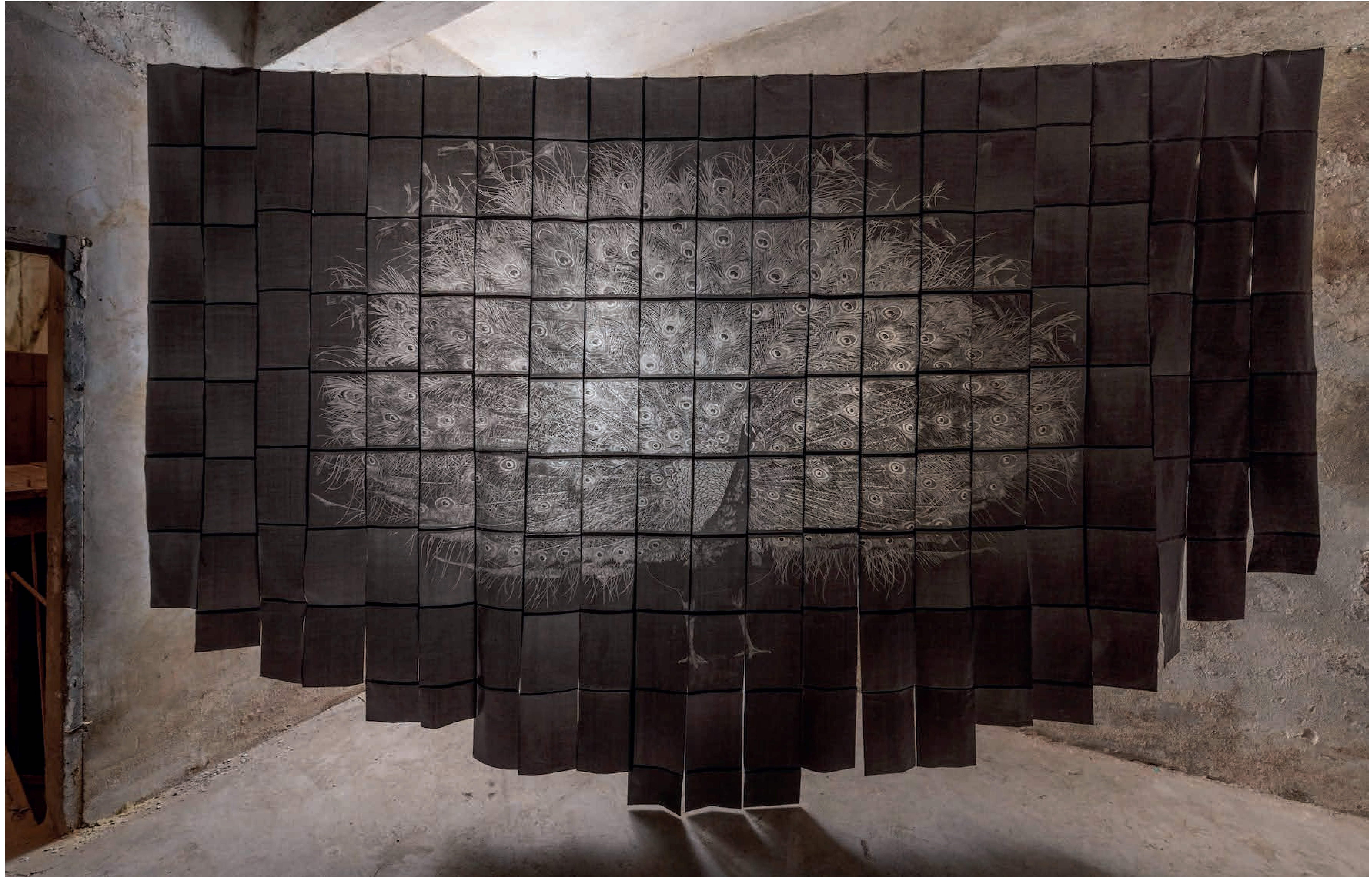


SELFPORTRAIT HUGGIN MYSELF, 2020, graphite and oil pastel on Yunnan hand made paper, 200x135cm



SELFPORTRAIT IN SCORPION POSE, 2020, graphite and oil pastel on Yunnan hand made paper, 186x137cm

THERE IS AN ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM, solo show,
PASTIFICIO CERERE, curated by Manueal Pacella, 2020





THERE IS AN ELEPHANTH IN THE ROOM, Installation view, Laughing Hyena Mating.



THERE IS AN ELEPHANTH IN THE ROOM, Installation view, Bushbaby



THERE IS AN ELEPHANTH IN THE ROOM, Installation view, Lycaon

APPARITIONS

by Felice Cimatti

These lines are written on Sunday, March 8, 2020, just a few hours after the government declared that the entire region of Lombardy and other provinces in northern Italy would, as of today, become “red zones”—areas that cannot be entered or left. The epidemic caused by the virus known as Covid-19 is gradually spreading, and humans are left with no choice but to shut themselves indoors in an attempt to halt its expansion. The human is the living being of cages and borders; the animal, by contrast, is animal precisely because it knows no borders or boundaries. In this sense, *There Is an Elephant in the Room* reveals what lies before our eyes and that no one dares to see: animals are there, they do what they want, and when they move, the world trembles.

In fact, all the pervasive and cloying love for animals misses the essential point: animals—even industrial animals and those in scientific laboratories—have no use for our love. The animal is never a victim. The animal is terrible.

The fact that at the origin of all this there is a virus—an entity that even biologists do not know whether to define as alive or not (without it therefore being dead either)—offers us a way to approach Marta Roberti’s “animal” works. If there is something Roberti shows us, it is precisely the animal as pure, unsettling apparition. The animal is what appears, when it decides, in the way it decides. Just as Covid-19 did: the virus (from the Latin virus, “poison”; the animal is always poisonous simply because it is animal, that is, inhuman) appeared—perhaps, though it hardly matters where—in a fish market in a vast, remote Chinese city. The animal appears. The animal is that entity which appears, that shows itself, without having been invited. In this sense, the animal is by definition the unexpected.

Before the animal we are always lacking, precisely because we never know anything about the animal, even when we believe we know everything. *Homo sapiens* is the living being that believes it knows everything about other animals and about the rest of the world. In truth, it knows many things about animals, but not the essential one: that the animal—like the African wild dog that watches us, impenetrable and distant—is the miracle of the world. Here “miracle” should be understood as Wittgenstein suggests: not as something exceptional and incomprehensible, but rather as what occurs when the world is allowed to show itself in its absolute and unbearable presence. The animal, the wild dog as much as the peacock, shows nothing other than its miraculous presence.

Think of the peacock’s tail, of the many explanations we have heard repeated about why this extraordinary animal displays such an excessive and cumbersome tail—explanations that are certainly true and correct, yet divert attention from the disconcerting fact of this pure visual event, this presence that leaves us speechless. Marta Roberti brings us back to the miracle of this apparition. She does not wish to add yet another explanation; she has nothing to tell us. She places us before the event of animality.

In truth, the peacock with its thousand eyes gazing at us mysteriously is no longer the animal whose name we know—the “peacock.” The most interesting aspect of Marta Rober-

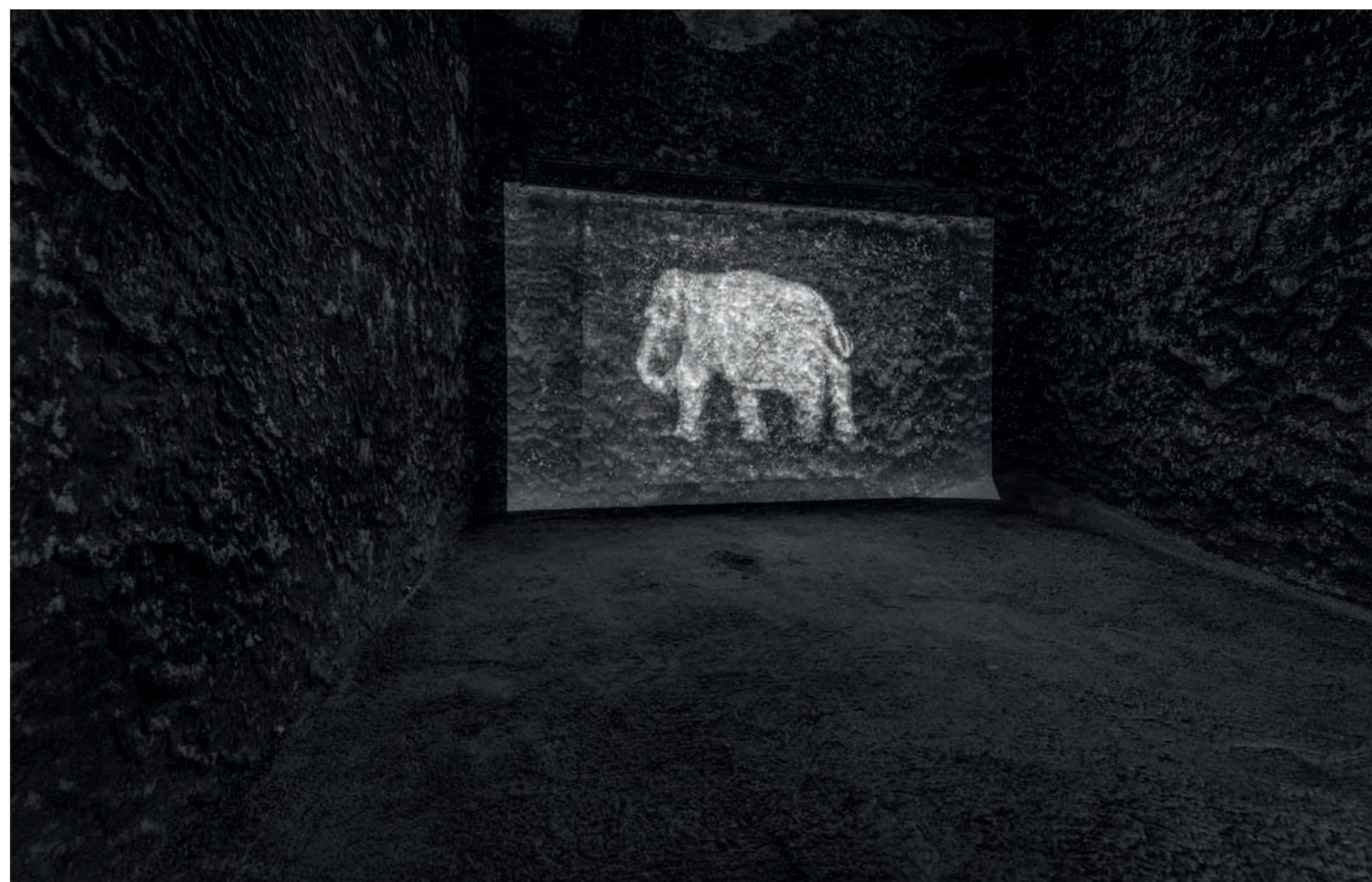
ti’s work lies precisely here: she shows us an animal, but in a way that forces us to forget its name. Or rather, we still remember the name, but it is clear that it no longer adheres to the living being to which it was assigned. The animal—through Marta Roberti’s distinctive graphic technique—has become diaphanous and elusive, ungraspable precisely because it is too light. Roberti’s animals thus reveal the crisis of our language, its inability to delimit the world, to assign to the entities it names a place and a function.

And so we return to Covid-19, to its brutal and ruthless simplicity, which is in fact the pure simplicity of the animal. Like that of the elephant we see in the short clip *There Is an Elephant in the Room*, which gives the exhibition its title. It is an elephant, clearly recognizable, and yet it is not properly an elephant. The clip shows an animal that is at once almost motionless (only the tail and the trunk move) and yet shaken by a threatening tremor—a tremor that seems almost to make it dissolve. The animal is this continuous oscillation between movement and stillness, always on the verge of moving even when it is still, always ready to stop when it moves. The animal is this unpredictability.

In this sense, there is an elephant in our room—the room we want to be safe and impenetrable—yet the elephant was already there, already inside. The elephant has been in the room long before us. We are that room, that boundary, and that fear. The elephant, like Covid-19, does not know what a room is: to be an animal ultimately means that rooms—enclosures and cages—do not exist.

The apparitions of Marta Roberti force us to open doors and windows. There is the wild dog, there is the peacock, there is the elephant. There is Covid-19. There is the world—the miracle of the world:

“In the courtyard the autumn moon shines white.
From the edge of the roof fantastic shadows fall.
Silence dwells in empty windows;
and softly, rats emerge.”



THERE IS AN ELEPHANTH IN THE ROOM, Installation view, video projection on wall