



Four artists from ground-swell exhibition,
The Milk of Dreams, now showing at the Venice Biennale

GO THEN, AND SPRINKLE THAT DUST TO DUST IN THE GRAND CANAL

Featuring Chiara Enzo, Felipe Baeza, Giulia Cenci, and Sara Enrico

Giraffe-like women. A gust of wind with its mane trailing behind like comet's tail, a horse sat atop. Or perhaps a man named John who has wings for ears? All these figures and more are brought to life in the paintings of surrealist painter and writer Leonora Carrington, and in her children's book, *The Milk of Dreams*. Carrington's stories of fantastical characters are the central informant of the International Art Exhibition at this year's long-delayed, eagerly-anticipated Venice Biennale. Curated by Cecilia Alemani, *The Milk of Dreams* features 213 artists from 58 different countries, spanning over 100 years of art history.

"How is the definition of the human changing?" asks Alemani in her statement on the exhibition. "What constitutes life, and what differentiates plant and animal, human and non-human? What are our responsibilities towards the planet, other people, and other life forms? And what would life look like without us?" She further outlines three guiding themes for the exhibition: "The representation of bodies and their metamorphoses; the relationship between individuals and technologies; the connection between bodies and the Earth."

Of the International Art Exhibition's 213 artists, 180 will be participating in the fabled Biennale for the first time, with 1433 works and objects on display, and 80 new projects specifically made for Venice's major art moment—in fact, the oldest formal art fair in Western history. *Flaunt* sat down with select artists Chiara Enzo, Felipe Baeza, Giulia Cenci, and Sara Enrico to discuss their works at the 59th Venice Biennale.

SARA ENRICO

Written by Constanza Falco Raez

Sara Enrico is an Italian artist who lives and works in Turin. Her art investigates material surface in relation to the body, deconstructing the codes of painting and tailoring while experiencing “tactile proximity.” In 2021, she took part in *Skroderider* at Billytown, The Hague; *Motion into Being* at Austellungsraum der Akademie der bildende Künste, Vienna; and “Streetscapes” at The American Academy, Rome. Additionally, her solo show *The Jumpsuit Theme* was exhibited at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Trento and Rovereto, Rovereto, Italy from July to November 2019, and at the Trade Fair Palace in Prague in late 2019. Mixing analog and digital processes with paint and textiles, Enrico’s abstract shapes connote the haptic and the anthropomorphous.

You’ve spoken about being interested in “evoking rather than representing.” Do you feel your works, and *The Jumpsuit Theme* in particular, evoke the human body/form?

In the idea of evoking something, I see a way to release vitality, to animate an object, a form, with an epidermal or a corporal sensation. Sometimes, this brings memories of bodies, but I would not define which kind of body. Perhaps it’s a suspended and in-between state of being a body, fabrics or clothes to be inhabited, or an abstract form that plays with textural and tactile details.

Clothes are peculiar objects: they are flat until someone wears them. I came across, almost by chance years ago, a template for a jumpsuit, a figural construct that then became an inspiration for the sculptures in *The Jumpsuit Theme*. The T-shaped jumpsuit known as the “Tuta” was designed by the polyhedric artist, Ernesto Thyhat, in 1919—a simple cut, raw material, a universal garment you could do on your own. It’s an iconic object with a huge variety of meanings and social implications, and, for me, being quite abstract in the shape, it works also as a “tool” for making sculptures by modeling a technical fabric as a soft formwork, and then filling it with concrete and pigments for physical consistency. In that, I saw a way to record unintentional choreography through sculpture, to catch minimal gestures in precarious balance between stasis and suggested movements, sometimes intimate postures that a body adopts when it is relaxing, inactive, in a state between wakefulness and sleep...

The concrete casting itself gives a natural shape to the sculpture—the fluidity of the material runs and takes its space in the fabric kind of jumpsuit. It’s a process that cannot be fully controlled and that’s why I like it, as well as you never completely know which form and color you will get until the end. It’s a combination of casual and desired aspects. This transition is characterized by slowness that lends the sculptures different attitudes and moods—slow is the making, slow is the change of the state of the material that slowly begins to take shape.

***The Jumpsuit Theme* is composed of three parts in different figurations. What can you say of the interplay in viewing them together?**

The very first sculptures of the series in *The Jumpsuit Theme* were realized in 2017 as outdoor permanent installations at Parco d’Arte Vivente in Italy, Turin, whereas two parts have been shown in 2019 at Mart Rovereto and the National Gallery Prague. These exhibitions were conceived as two acts—*Intermezzo* and *Camertino*—displayed in these museums almost simultaneously, whose names refer to the title of the works: the prints and the fabric

installation. I feel having brought back a bit of my music background in this idea of the *theme*... I imagined a score activated from the formal qualities of the works, and the mutual relations they make visible or play with. I am very into the idea of creating an interaction among tailoring, architecture, choreography, and sculpture, crossing some painting references, and the space often takes a little role in this. In those exhibitions, the sense of waiting and disguise could allude to some performative attitudes toward the works—energies to be released, but also to the hybridizations of bodies, materials, the exchange of roles, and functions. I like the cohabitation of unrecognizable, ambiguous, deformed presences. Going back to your question, the only works I’ve shown separately, until now, are the concrete sculptures. And in Venice, you will find new pieces of them.

You’ve said you deal with the idea of “transitions” through your handling of materials. How do you feel this plays into the ideas



SARA ENRICO. “THE JUMPSUIT THEME” (2017). PHOTO EMANUELE PENSINVALLE. COURTESY PAV PARCO ARTE VIVENTE, TURIN.

put forth in *The Milk of Dreams* through life/the body/the self constantly shifting?

Materials are important to me, as is the way I use and mix them. They create a combination and contamination of various aspects related to the references and connotations they represent or belong to—the concrete recalls constructions, but my work goes with fabric and tailoring; zippers and seams are parts of clothes, but they are also used for the covering of furniture, just

to give some examples. This is a relevant fact and has to do, as far as I am concerned, with the possibility of forcing determined categories through the reinterpretation of models or canons, the relation with identities and structures. In this sense, not only do the materials have to do with the idea of transition, but also certain formal characteristics of the works, and this idea is reflected also in the setup of them in changing perspectives and sensibilities