

Do you want to be my faded copy?

Domenico Mangano & Marieke van Rooy

27 March – 18 May 2024

Opening 27 March 2024 | 6.30 – 8.30 pm

Do you want to be my faded copy? is an invitation to get lost in an artificial world, in a domestic space that slides towards an underground universe, made of distortions, holes, tunnels and disturbing scenarios. Starting from the maze-like conformations typical of the catacombs, Domenico Mangano & Marieke van Rooy question the concept of the sacred in relation to copies and reproductions of reality. In this new animated sculptural installation, inspired by an underground and imaginary world, archaic and modern concepts coincide. Utopian models of cerebral architecture are fused with organic forms and confronted with domestic spaces, as a metaphor for the inevitable intertwining of the arts with the social, political and natural biotopes. The exhibition, presented at Magazzino, consists of a series of ceramic works, wall drawing, painted photographs, bronze sculptures, video installation and live performance. The project began in 2019 during a one-year Residency at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht but, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, was completed only later. Moreover, the most recent bronze sculptures have been realized at the Fonderia Artistica Battaglia in Milan. What is real and what is sacred? What is pleasure and what is death? What is fake and what is true?

These are the questions that act as the start of Mangano & Van Rooy's artistic research. Drawing their inspiration from a surreal museum built in the early 20th Century in a marl cave in the Netherlands, the Museum Romeinse Katakomben near Maastricht, which replicates a complex of Roman catacombs as if they were authentic, their investigation moves onto the decline of the famous Dutch welfare state system, endangered by several recent political scandals which are increasingly disrupting people's perception of safety inside their own living environment. The sacred concept of the welfare state, in place since the Second World War worldwide, is under pressure almost everywhere at the moment and replaced by fake realities, which, in turn, replace what exactly?

It is on the basis of these assumptions that such dichotomies recur and are still fascinating and relevant after many centuries, although now, because of the advent of social networks and Artificial Intelligence, they need a new interpretation: hence, which is the meaning of true and false, of reality and fiction, of copy and original, of immanence in antithesis to transcendence? Moreover, which is the value given to sacredness when we are in the presence of copies of Roman catacombs? And finally, why are our domestic spaces, in which we spend the majority of our time, not entitled to a spiritual dimension? Would you feel at ease in a fake catacomb? Would you feel comfortable in your elegant and refined homes when others in the world could only dream of having to choose among a variety of copies? But most importantly, how can you live in a world of copies, of fake realities?

The artists would like to thank the Mondriaan Fund and the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts for the financial support in the creation of some of the works in the show. The duo Mangano & Van Rooy creates uncanny realities, with a touch of poetry, consisting of sculptural installations in combination with film and performances. Their work has been shown in places including the Bonnefanten Museum (Maastricht), Whitechapel Gallery (London), Kunstinstituut Melly (Rotterdam), Galleria Nazionale (Roma), De Kunsthal (Rotterdam), Casco/Fotodok (Utrecht), Futura (Prague), 2ND Athens Biennale: Heaven (Athens), Nomas Foundation (Rome), Museo Riso (Palermo), MCA (Chicago), Palazzo Grassi (Venice), Onomatopee (Eindhoven), PAKT (Amsterdam), Prague Biennale, Fondazione Re Rebaudengo (Turin), The Margulies Collection at the WAREHOUSE (Miami), ISCP (New York).