

Diego Marcon. *La Gola*
4.10.2024–2.2.2025

Diego Marcon's work draws upon different cinematic vocabularies from diverse genres including musicals, melodrama, horror and slapstick comedy. His uncanny, singular imagery employs various technical devices such as robotics, prosthetics and CGI. Words, sounds and gestures contribute to the troubling uncertainty or ambiguity that underpins Marcon's work. Specially-commissioned soundtracks or scripted dialogue are fundamental to his films, developed with careful attention to language and its mutability. Exhibition spaces are also treated as dramaturgical elements, the film 'occupying the space like an object, or a body', presented here in the centre of a dark, red, cinematic space.

La Gola (2024) is structured by a series of letters between two correspondents, Gianni and Rossana. Over the course of eight letters, Gianni describes the successive courses of an exquisite banquet, while Rossana gives an account of the progressive decline of her mother's health. The two characters are played by hyperrealistic mannequins, that appear motionless with their eyes modelled and animated in CGI. Their voices are accompanied by an original score composed by Federico Chiari. The music was performed on a Pietro Corna organ and recorded at the Cattedrale di Sant'Alessandro Martire in Bergamo. Drawing upon themes familiar from art history, Marcon playfully combines graphic accounts of cuisine and disease against an elaborate and energetic score, using language, voices and music to create dramatic tension.

'Rossana and Gianni send letters back and forth, but they don't communicate. What we get instead... is a dislocated, heartbroken couple voicing two monologues: Rossana chronicles her mother's awful physical decline; meanwhile, all Gianni can talk about is food, glorious food. We hear about the mother's dementia, her confusion—it's a mixture of feast and funeral, exquisite dishes and decaying flesh, ripe with decay.'

— Charlie Fox, 'Ripe with Decay' published in Diego Marcon: *La Gola* (Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève / Kunsthalle Wien / Kunstverein in Hamburg, 2024)

Marcon's recent works have explored 'ambiguity as a political weapon of defiance.' In *La Gola* Gianni and Rossana's narratives run in parallel alternating between moments of poetry, seduction, sadness and abjection. The characters are full of sensory impressions yet dead to each other, so absorbed in their own drama that they fail to listen to one another.

'I don't know when or where we're supposed to be, which is fitting, since we're deep in grief. Why is Gianni sad? He's been feasting like a prince in a fairytale. Maybe we're in the haunted aftermath of a funeral. Like a lot of Marcon's films... we're trapped in a meditation on grief, death and dying, a kind of body horror that never explodes into anything unspeakably grotesque... but remains deeply melancholy. And, of course, the nature of the installation, the video looping over and over like a bad dream while you try and get comfortable in that plush red chair, traps us inside the horror of grief, too: it never stops...'

— *Ibid*

Marcon's uncanny characters, their theatrical setting and their troubling lack of empathy are instrumental to ambiguity in *La Gola*. He uses the apparatus of film to create an ambivalence around the humanity of his subjects and their apparent lack of feeling for one another. The intentional ambivalence around empathy in this film can be seen to critically reflect upon the deployment of ambiguity in global politics (referred to as 'deliberate ambiguity' or 'strategic uncertainty') thus pointing to a broader crisis in humanity.

Information on the programme:



Exhibition publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a new book, published by Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Kunsthalle Wien and Kunstverein in Hamburg with essays by Charlie Fox, Gianni Revello and Sofia Silva.

Limited edition

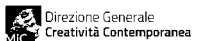
A limited edition 12" red vinyl record of the film score from *La Gola* (2024) is available from Kunsthalle Wien's shop. All proceeds support Kunsthalle Wien's programme.

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