

ADRIAN PACI

The Encounter

November 11th to December 23rd, 2011

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to present the fourth solo exhibition of the artist Adrian Paci. Adrian Paci was born in Shkoder, Albania, in 1969, and he immigrated to Italy in 1997. Since then he has been living and working in Milan. Apart from the new video work *The Encounter* Adrian Paci will be showing a freestanding mosaic piece, new paintings, works on paper and photographs.

The video work *The Encounter* (2011) shows a man as taking a seat in the middle of a public square. Gradually, several hundred protagonists enter the square and consecutively approach the man, who stands up to shake their hands. The simple and habitual gesture of the handshake is repeated so often that it transforms itself into a meaningful ritual. While the reason for the ceremonious meeting remains unknown, the encounter between the participants becomes charged with tension. A moment of connection occurs, not only between the participants, but also between the persons and the square, which is transformed into a stage. The video work was produced in the town of Scicli on Sicily.

With the 12-part series *Passages* from 2010 (acrylic on wood) the artist also questions traditional rituals. Here, the gesture of the handshake as the visualization of fleeting everyday encounters is again a central theme. Persons come and go, greet each other and say goodbye, and at times touch the shoulder of the person opposite. In contradiction to the video piece the twelve small-format works are a collection of single moments and thus framed by the choice of the moment, the angle, the color and the painting technique. The confrontation between painting and video questions the supposedly objective camera eye. The works are true "snap-shots", capturing the fleeting encounter between two people, who have a reaction towards each other and then depart again, without knowing where the other is going, or what will happen in their own future.

What can we decipher in a face of a person about his history, his wishes and relationships? Similar to the works *The Encounter* and *Passages* the new mosaic piece *The Brothers* (2011) centers on the interpersonal. Here, the viewer is drawn in; he peers into faces which he can never comprehend entirely, and that compel her to fill the empty spaces in the mosaic with her own thoughts and fictions.

Adrian Paci highlights existential themes as well as mundane topics, which he combines to archive intriguing results. In his well-known work *Centro di Permanenza temporanea* (2007) he had two dozens people walk up a plane ramp leading nowhere, and in his video work *Vajtoica* (2002) he re-enacted a death ritual. In Adrian Paci's artistic practice there is always a noticeable tension between the ordinary and the exceptional, the real and the fictional. His works are formed by an emotional sympathy for individual fates, while his story telling is compelling in its simplicity.

Adrian Paci's works have been presented in numerous exhibitions and publications, such as the exhibition *Electric Blue* in Kunsthaus Zurich in 2010, for which an exhibition catalog was published. In early 2012 Adrian Paci's works will be shown in an exhibition in MAXXI ((Museo nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo) in Rome. Other future projects include shows for the art space *Jeu de Paume* in Paris and the La Conservera in Murcia, Spain. Further publications worthy of notice include *Adrian Paci* by Kunstverein Hannover (2008) and another publication by the same title from the Galleria Civica di Modena (2006). All catalogs are available through the gallery.