

SEX AND BEAUTY: Press Release

Group exhibition featuring the works of Alex Korolkovas, Simone Monte, Achilles, Claudia La Bianca, and Oscar Estruga.

Presented by Espinasse31 Gallery. Curated by Antonio & Thomas Castiglioni.

Exhibited at Viale Carlo Espinasse 31, Milan 20156, Italy.

On show from October 1, 2020 to January 15, 2021. Vernissage on October 2, 18:00-21:00.



Photograph from the series "LA Afternoon", by Alex Korolkovas. On show at Viale Carlo Espinasse 31, Milano.

Espinasse31 Contemporary Gallery is pleased to present *Sex and Beauty*, the group exhibition which inaugurates the opening of Espinasse31's gallery space in Milan, for the first time since March. Works by five internationally-renowned artist will be on show at Viale Carlo Espinasse 31 from October 1 to January 15; a private guided viewing can be booked by contacting the gallery through email at thomas@espinasse31.com .

Sex and Beauty explores feminine and masculine identity through works of photography, illustration, and painting. Each of the artists included in this exhibition reflects a different aspect of the relationship women and men have with their own bodies, and of the way in which they judge and respond to their own sexuality and the attraction between human beings. The recurring themes explored are mainly those of sensuality, eroticism, passion, love and sex.

Gustav Klimt once said: "*All art is erotic*". When we talk about eroticism and sex in art, we touch on **the most original source of artistic inspiration**; ultimately, art seeks to reflect all aspects of the human experience, and some of these aspects occur in a purely physical realm. Although eroticism has been present in all periods of art history, it has become a **leitmotif of modern and contemporary movements**. Iconic artists of the 20th and 21st centuries have provided continuously new perspectives on how desire and emotional connection intersect, with the concepts of sex and beauty being at the core of their works. Far from being uptight about sex, these artists have explored areas of sexual practice with a progressive openness that doesn't shy away from controversy, and with an added layer of meaning that adds a humanistic dimension to their works.

The new exhibition at Espinasse31 reflects this idea, and explores the concepts of sex and beauty through the particular lens of the gallery's mission: to promote the work of emerging contemporary and urban artists of great quality, and provide a **unique visual experience** for its international public.

The exhibition, held at the gallery's main space in Milan, is divided into three parts. The first room is dedicated to the medium of **photography**, presenting the works of Simone Monte and Alex Korolkovas. Both artists originate from Brazil and reflect a natural, fashion-informed and refined approach to nude photography. **Simone Monte** provides her feminine perspective in the way she captures a woman's sexuality and physical beauty, focusing on the female body as a work of art in itself. Monte has often worked with high-fashion magazine editorials and brand campaigns, among others; one of the highlights of her career was winning the National Geographic Photo Competition in 2015 for her photograph "The Game", which captures the candid beauty of bodies in action. On the other hand, **Alex Korolkovas**—based in Miami and NYC—is characterized by his trademark work of sexually provocative photography, especially in connection with fashion. He has won several awards and recognition over the years, having participated in several international art fairs, as well as group and solo exhibitions around the world. One of his most significant projects consists of an adaptation of the 'Valentina' character, made for the 50th anniversary of the iconic Guido Crepax comic; his creations for this series are also on show at the Sex & Beauty exhibition at Espinasse31.

In the second room of the gallery, we enter the world of **street art**. A series of works by **Claudia La Bianca** introduces the themes of female empowerment, self-love, and individuality. La Bianca is a painter, filmmaker and muralist; she grew up in Sicily, but has been based in Miami since 2006, where the city's cultural melting pot and artistic awakening have allowed her work to flourish. The subjects of her works are often confident, voluptuous, and defying women; her portrayal of the female figure defies gender roles in all their aspects. Usually spotted around the Wynwood Arts District, La Bianca's murals serve as a reminder of the power that women hold, in close connection with the themes of sex and beauty. The works of **Achilles** complement this approach by adding a masculine perspective to similar themes. The artist, who is based in Athens, has built his presence in the world of contemporary street art through his provocative and ingenious works, which have gone viral in several occasions. The themes of desire, outspoken sensuality, and visual metaphors are recurrent in his graffiti and illustrations.

The third hall of Sex & Beauty focuses on the media of **serigraphy** and **illustration**. The works of **Oscar Estruga**, a well-established Spanish and sculptor based in Madrid, envelop the entire room. His serigraphy artworks are divided into two separate series and themes: *Erotica* and *Mistica*. They reflect a calligraphic form of his imagination, taking inspiration from the Ancient worlds in his many references to Greek and Cycladic mythology. The imagery of Estruga's illustrations reinvents the way in which Ancient cultures viewed eroticism, and offers an alternative vision of sexual representations in art. The heavy borrowing from such historical periods shines through his 'forbid to forbid' approach. Overall, Estruga's two series presented in this last room vary from figurative to abstract forms, creating multiple perspectives of the physical, metaphysical, and spiritual power of the concepts of sex and beauty.

For more information, images and prices, please contact:

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