

Gervasuti Foundation London-Venice and
Metropole Venice present:

COLLECTION

Nancy Fouts, Joseph Kosuth and Gavin Turk

a Bruchium project curated by
Fiona Biggiero and James Putnam
Metropole Hotel Venice, Riva degli Schiavoni, 4149
10 May - 2 July 2017
VIP preview 4pm 9 May 2017

Collection is a play on the entity of 'a collection' where three contemporary artists have been invited to show works within the context of the Metropole's layered history, creating a dialogue with the hotel's own collection and museum-like display of antiques, tapestries and objects. The setting is at once domestic and public, intimate and social, where architecture, decoration, hospitality and art are interwoven, creating new associations and meanings. The Metropole's guest heritage includes intellectual figures such as Thomas Mann, Sigmund Freud and Marcel Proust, as well as housing Antonio Vivaldi's Oratorio, creating a unique ambience to inspire artists. The present selection of works also celebrates the affiliation between the Metropole, the Gervasuti Foundation and the artists who have participated in their innovative collaborative projects since 2007.

In the reception area of the Metropole, Nancy Fouts presents 'Peacock in War Bonnet' together with a series of her customized *Old Masters Paintings*, 'Adam and Adam' and 'Eve and Eve', an ironical twist on the famous 1528 'Adam and Eve' double painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder. Fouts transforms this biblical subject into a contemporary myth of the birth of gender. This work also functions as an ancillary allusion to Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, partly written at the Metropole. In 'Peacock in War Bonnet' the re-elaborated taxidermy captures the fleeting and unsettling moment of visual and conceptual uncertainty, where the rational and irrational seem to converge in perfect and unexpected communion. This exquisite re-composition of layered symbolisms has a trophy-like feel and an indirect implication of both ridicule and conquest of the male ego and super ego.

In the Oriental Bar, Joseph Kosuth presents a neon work from his *Freud Series* titled 'C.S. #41', 1987, as a tribute to Sigmund Freud, one of the Metropole's most illustrious guests. Kosuth has been referencing Sigmund Freud since the 1980s and has appropriated, decontextualized and re-worked a number of Freud's texts in his installations and site-specific works. This special commission is a selected quote from Freud's own writings, specifically related to psychoanalysis, art,

philosophy and religion, represented in a cancelled white neon text, which runs along the perimeter of the bar area. The work underscores – literally cancelling out the possibility of its being read in a straightforward way – the self-reflexive and creative aspect of Freud's contributions, a defining characteristic that both the psychoanalyst and artist share.

Veiled in his signature ambivalent play between concepts of identity and authenticity, Gavin Turk presents a provocative mechanical sculpture of a fortune-telling gypsy, Rosy Lee. This belongs to Turk's investigation of mystic automatons that all bear an uncanny likeness to himself. The work sits in stark contrast to the luxurious context of the Metropole, while at the same time appealing to the traditional and seductive strategy of disguise, a quintessential Venetian trait. Rosy Lee belongs to the margins of society – the circus and the seaside amusement arcade - where she occupies a liminal space that is neither inside nor out. Cockney rhyming slang for a-cup-of-tea, Rosy Lee is also a nod to Turk's interest in tea and its relation to cultural trade, working class Britishness and, of course, the tradition of reading tea leaves. While Rosy Lee is also art rhyming slang for Rose Sélavy, the drag name of Marcel Duchamp's female alter ego – an allusion to art's ability to alter perception and its parallels with the fortune-teller's mysterious powers. So Rosy Lee will tell the fortune of anyone who places a coin in the slot of her booth.

Nancy Fouts 'Adam and Adam' and 'Eve and Eve' 2014, courtesy of the artist

'Peacock in War Bonnet' 2017, courtesy of the artist and Aeroplastics Contemporary, Brussels

Joseph Kosuth is represented in Italy by Lia Rumma Gallery Milan/Naples

Gavin Turk 'Rosy Lee' 2010- 2012, Courtesy of the Ella, Aedan & Darya Collection and Aeroplastics Contemporary, Brussels

METROPOLE

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B R U C H I U M

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