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Ambra Castagnetti
The Zone

Opening Thursday 18 May 2023
Until 28 July 2023

Breathe in, breathe out, close your eyes, relax, let yourself go and sink into a meditative state, almost a waking dream.

The practice of hypnosis, which in the 1960s revolutionized and upset psychology, is today a commonly used tool, just as it was a widespread practice among the shamans, witches and priests of the native cultures of America, India and among the Aborigines.

Ambra Castagnetti (Genoa, 1993) ventures to play with the knowledge from her anthropological studies for her first personal exhibition at Francesca Minini. The artist transforms and disguises the gallery space into a magical and insidious land, full of quotations ranging from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to the 2015 *Xenofeminist Manifesto*, and from Cyberpunk to Tarkovsky's Russian filmography from the 70s. The title of the exhibition, *The Zone*, is taken from the director, an explicit reference to the film *Stalker* (1979).

It is here, into the Zone, that the artist leads us, building a path that winds towards the unknown, in the imaginative process of an organism that presents itself as fluid, permeable and permeated by the surrounding environment.

One perceives the urgency and the generational need for anti-species and anti-binary hybridization, in a process of sympoiesis between human, animal, technological and natural elements. The bodies represented act as a declaration for the semantic overturning of what a body really is and how its identity can be identified both with its own shape and with the inner landscape that gives it life and makes it unique. The process occurs through a state of deep meditation, of a waking dream that has nothing to do with the dream journey, but with a precise and calculated direction that points to a non-harmonic synthesis.

This exploration culminates in the immersive installation "Wall City", which follows the Cyberpunk aesthetic from Japanese cinema. Anime such as *Akira* or *Evangelion* are rethought in this place as the climax of the technological-philosophical hybridization of the great Asian metropolises, in which the individual becomes part of the suburban landscape, and indeed must learn to live in it and incorporate it in order not to be submerged by it.

The chasm that opens up from what appears to be a wooded landscape can become a dive into the unconscious, into the depths of the earth, into an inner state. How frightening is it to look straight into the abyss and realize that in that same abyss it is our own image we see reflected?

Ambra Castagnetti was born in Genoa in 1993 and now lives and works in Milan and Paris. Her work features sculpture performative installations.

Select recent shows and projects include: Palazzo Braschi, Rome (2023), Fondazione Pini, Milan (2023), New Galerie, Paris (2023), Francesca Minini, Milan (2022), La Biennale di Venezia, Venice (2022), Manifattura Tabacchi, Florence (2021), Palazzo Monti, Brescia (2021), Mana Contemporary, New York (2020), Art Drive In, Brescia (2020), Casa Testori, Milan (2019), Villa Necchi, Milan (2019). In 2021 and in 2020 she participated in residence programs at the Atelier Modigliani, Paris; at Palazzo Monti, Brescia; and at Manifattura Tabacchi, Florence.