

CORVI-MORA

Jem Perucchini

28.04.22 – 04.06.22

Opening: Thursday 28.04.2022 – 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

Tommaso Corvi-Mora is pleased to present new work by Italian artist Jem Perucchini in his first solo exhibition.

The exhibition will include new paintings and sculpture.

Chess has always exerted a magnetic – and at times unsettling – hold on many artists and literary figures. Chess pieces are tools of sorts, used in a game of which they mirror all the dynamics and tensions. And it is this connection with the notion of the game itself that makes the chess board an object brimming with symbolic values. The advancing of the two factions, positioned as they are on the same plane, in tension with each other and at once complementary in the unfolding of the game, has often been used as a metaphor for the dialectic of opposites. White and black, good and evil, the self and the other, are poles which bring together the most ancient Eastern and Western philosophies.

Few other games, like for example *Go*, which originated in China, present such a level of complexity and such a high number of possible outcomes. To this day, it is impossible to date the origin of chess with any certainty: some scholars locate its origin in ancient Persia, others in India, and others, including the writer Jorge Luis Borges, in ancient China.

Moreover, the game of chess also acts symbolically on a further metaphorical plane: through the many possibilities which one has on its board, chess puts to the test one's relationship with choice itself. Are one's decisions due to one's own will? Or is it one's opponent who, through their moves, is also directing one's own game?

On the chessboard the question of free will acquires a significance not only in terms of strategy, but also has an existential dimension. The player waiting for the next move is able to perceive particular moments which ordinarily escape daily existence. These are the moments when things are about to happen, but they have not yet happened. In a few seconds, reality appears to be almost in the making, the future seems to be in a state of formation, and events could still take unexpected turns. The fascinating attraction of these moments lies in their sheer potential, in the fact that they exist before the event itself, anticipating that which will soon be revealed to the world.

What determines the course of events?
What constitutes their phenomenology?

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defined *habitus* as the *forma mentis* acquired by people on the basis of their own experiences. This collection of predispositions of thought, a product of social conditioning, inescapably influences an individual's choices. It is a type of behaviour which is a result of the interaction between the individual and the world, determined by the social structures which regulate it.

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Habitus is thus a factor which is both individual and social, resulting from “structuring” structures, and, at the same time, from those which are “structured” by the social field. Similarly, it also is a product of history that is a producer of history at the same time. Following this reasoning, the plot of a novel might derive from the actions of secondary characters, and the background of a painting might be the most important element of its narrative. That which is assumed to be secondary proves to possess a decisive agency. The works in the exhibition prompt viewers to reflect upon the crisis of authenticity in behaviour, representing what is usually left out of an image: the moment when events are about to take place, choices are being shaped, and possibilities appear more concrete than ever.

For centuries, painting has fixed scenes by representing them, crystallising events in a composition.

An instrument for the technical reproduction of reality, painting has had an active role in the construction of historical fictions long before the advent of photography. The flowing movements of a brush used to fix what was the official narration of events, constructing a memory which did not allow any re-evaluation. The historical painter – from the Latin *historia*, meaning narrative – was thus burdened with the enormous responsibility to formulate images through which their time was to be known and imagined. Their work thus appeared as a necessary chess square to determine the official version of events.

The hierarchy of narratives for centuries has meant that generations of artists have engaged with the representation of the same stories. However, artists have also always retained an awareness that history can always be seen and interpreted from multiple viewpoints.

Jem Perucchini, February 2022

Jem Perucchini (b. 1995, Tekeze, Ethiopia) lives and works in Milan. He graduated from the Accademia di Brera (Milan) in 2021.

The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm.

For further information or photographic documentation please call 020 7840 9111 or email tcm@corvi-mora.com