

F2T

G A L L E R Y

LA to Milan

Michelle Blade
Aryo Toh Djojo
Elmer Guevara
Matt McCormick
Conrad Ruiz

F2T Gallery | Via Statuto 13, 20121 Milano
Opening June 16th 2021, 6-9pm

June 16th – July 24th, 2021

“I am going to be a different kind of star” (Bret Easton Ellis and Alex Israel, Hotel California, 2016)

On June 16th a new venue opened in Milan. F2T GALLERY is an innovative project conceived and created by the renowned art collectors Francesco Bena and Matteo Novarese, who have increasingly focused their research on a fresh generation of artists from abroad. The gallery was founded with a precise mission: showcasing new and original international emerging artists. The gallery activates a venue that sources its roots from the milanese Brera neighborhood, a historical hub for all those Italian galleries that, between the 50s and 70s, expressed the forceful connection between artists, gallerists, and collectors. F2T GALLERY develops a determined and attentive gaze towards the future. A gaze that aims to trigger new scenarios and energies inside the contemporary art panorama.

LA to Milan invites the public to travel on a journey, by observing a substantial path where five artists have been invited, for the first time in Italy, from Los Angeles, the capital of culture of the west coast. The exhibition aims to reveal a comprehensive narrative of the artists' native country through five tangibly different aesthetics, topics, and points of view about a country which is still anchored to the past, but with a forceful attention to the present.

Michelle Blade (1981, Los Angeles), Conrad Ruíz (1983, Monterey Park), Matt McCormick (1987, San Francisco), Elmer Guevara (1990, Los Angeles) and Aryo Toh Djojo create aesthetics, messages and narrations that result very disparate among each other. In their paintings, a contamination of languages, symbology and stiles are depicted and melted by a meticulous attention to the pictorial gesture and attitude, as to the one of drawing. Both mediums lead to a climax of a personal experimentation that, today, proves to have a strong recognition and impact worldwide. The exhibition in the milanese venue sets up a vision of the California landscape and its inhabitants through different details of that side of

the American coast: vivid pink and red skies from the western sunset; close-ups on faces and careful details, daily facts, cars, or desert streets. All reminders of that unique atmosphere of Los Angeles sky,

the one that recalls a David Lynch film, or a romantic and retro Hollywood that could be seen by night. The same that is tangibly recreated by Matt McCormick who, thanks to his refined and precise painting, represents landscape stratifications, from the mountains to the metropolis. A bright pink melted to an intense orange reveals a precious sunset that twinkles above the boulevards, with a mysterious look.

Aryo Toh Djojo's works deal with landscapes too. The artist, who started to use the airbrush just a year ago, discovered his best way to approach and represent Los Angeles' mood and its details. Toh Djojo special patina points out some narrations and freeze moments, so that the public is required to pause on them with poetry and attention. Small stolen episodes of LA life and reality are painted in various sizes, as to underline where his attention to details rest: a view from a car window; the shape of a palm tree standing out on a grey smoky sky; a sexy silhouette in foreground; a hidden UFO to discover in all his paintings. The transition towards a more excessive aesthetic, and towards a strong social message, is tangible in Conrad Ruíz and Elmer Guevara art pieces. Ruíz, whose use of watercolor lightens up the gravity of the painted scenes, gives back a dense gesture, especially with the "men on fire" series. Here the artist points out the historical dramatic period that involved the global society, by examining the outrageous differences and expressions of a social-political-human decadency. A decadency amplified by the violence that spread up louder in this last year, with a focus on the situation in Chile and in the USA. Guevara, instead, through his expressionist painting, documents his personal and intimate vision of LA, by representing his own world inside the big city. People, objects, symbols and gestures of his community are portrayed to tell their everyday reality. Michelle Blade pictorial fluid gesture and vision are more connected to romantic imagery. The painter shares a colorful and surreal gaze of the west coast where nature is the main frame. Blade's painted stories are completely immersed into flowers and special skies with fantastic colors. Her characters are often alone, wrapped up into an oneiric atmosphere.

"I was shocked by the burgeoning LA art scene" replies Bret Easton Ellis to an interview with Alex Israel on the Billboards projects by Gagosian.

Text by Rossella Farinotti

LA to MILAN, Group Show

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Gallery hours | Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 7pm

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