

To make a prairie...



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Chiara Briganti | Michelle Jarvis | Brigitta Rossetti

Curated by | **Susanna Gualazzini**

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Opening | Wednesday April 24th at 6 p.m.

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*To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,
And revery.
The revery alone will do
If bees are few.*

Emily Dickinson

“To make a prairie...” is a tribute to three artists with strong identities and the ability to evoke, through their passionate research, the concept of nature intended as a space “open to exchange”. Despite being very different one from the other, Brigitta Rossetti, Michelle Jarvis and Chiara Briganti express a mostly secret idea of mental, poetic, spiritual, dreamlike or natural “landscapes” intended as spaces open to query, with a risk and suggestion of actual encounter. The “prairie” evoked by Emily Dickinson is a poetic opportunity to include the three main features of these artists: a clover for the natural lines and forms of Michelle Jarvis, a bee for the inspired industriousness of Brigitta Rossetti and a dream for the dreamlike mises en scène of Chiara Briganti.

Chiara Briganti

After a long and acclaimed professional experience as art expert and Interior Designer, in the Seventies Chiara Briganti takes the brave decision to interrupt a prolific seven-year relationship with Palazzo del Quirinale and after having rearranged, catalogued and restored all its works of art, she retired to “create her boxes”.

Many people have tried to define them: “idiorami” (Mario Praz), “magical gardens” (Mario Farinelli), “theatres”, “dream boxes”, “traps of wood and glass”, “showcases”. They are happy (or unhappy?) reliquaries in which Briganti pours all the elements, often intimate, of a life for sure fortunate but not devoid of troubles, at the same time. That's how she creates an extraordinary range of imagined and imaginary worlds, “individual mythology whose key is apparently in Chiara's mind only” (Mario Praz) in which “everybody can see what they want”.

Briganti researches and gathers everything: pieces of life, objects, memories; she cuts, unglues and pastes, changes and creates incredible poetic microcosms.

She steals from her memories and shows them under a glass, in the enchantment of colored stones, wood splitters, dandelion feathers, threads of ancient wool, outlines carved out of authentic printings, linen bed sheets, Biedermeier dollies. And there are infinite estuaries (literary, dreamlike, psychological) in those little “theatre” boxes; meanings that change according to our personal knowledge, but especially to our nostalgia, passions and obsessions. And the titles-quotations may help just seemingly: actually they remain a fragment of ancient literary wisdom inspiring the artist, who freely combines her experience, imagination and culture. And they bring us away, or rightly there, into those “blessed room of the broom (flying and bewitched)” where you feel like just staying - as Marco Vallora wrote: “greeted and pampered as plump parasite”.

Michelle Jarvis

Blown by the wind to Groppallo (Piacenza), Michelle Jarvis decided to live there after a long period of life and work in Milan. At the same time, making a very precise artistic choice as she went back to the manual expertise of English *art and craft* and chose felt, a special material par excellence, both ductile and harsh, rigid and yet able to smooth and become unpredictably soft. With felt, she creates wide surfaces on which she embroiders (a very precise chain-stitch) and prints, as a sort of “paleographic writing” of nature. Immanence in these works of art is impressive, as the idea of basically “being here” without looking for an “extraordinary elsewhere”, or of creating a sort of “copy” of nature – worthless, since nature is always more beautiful. And this is the nature, chosen both for affection and history: it is

the nature of grey stones shaped by the Nure river (triptych *Rocks Portrait, Waterfall*), the burned leaves of a Gropallo wood (*Perso nel bosco*), the ancient bark of trees from the Preappennini mountains gathered by Jarvis and reshaped into a personal and intimate geography.

Brigitta Rossetti

Steel magnolia, tender and strong at the same time, Brigitta Rossetti combines artistic research with poetry, and with these two tools (that she extraordinarily manages) draws her “landscapes” that possess, above all, an inner dimension. Transcendence in these works of art is astonishing, the expression of a unique sense of sacred that Rossetti has been looking for and has found in nature.

These works combine the idea of nature to be saved (a recurring feeling, deeply heartfelt by the artist) and the essence of her endless inner pressure to which she always manages to give the enchant of inspiration, in its most antique meaning.

Rossetti is an inspired artist, we could say “burnt” by her own inspiration, and able to measure up with several languages. The artistic outcomes of this research are many and different, and honored by this exhibition: they go from installations (the series of *Children’s Garden* and *Passi Verdi*), to the big introspective panels (*Aquae aureae*); it is a language that constantly swings between informal and figurative art and where nature, with its most precious and known shapes, seems to pass and flow away (series of *Lost Spring*), leaving behind heart rending sinopias.

Several of Brigitta Rossetti works are marked by silence, they recall open spaces, perhaps those of the poetic countryside of the Po valley, where Brigitta was born and grew up. And where she, a part from brief metropolitan stay, still tempers and sharpens her concerns.

Critics say:

“I’m not interested in the origins of Chiara’s works of art. I let the others pronounce and evaluate the names of Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Joseph Cornell and speak about Surrealism, dreamlike fantasy and so on. For me, and is enough, all these thin, unpredictable creations are the starting point for a novel (that I’ll never write), for a tale (that will remain in its initial phase) and for a long series of questions. Questions without reply. I have an obligation with Chiara’s boxes for one of the most effective push (a bad but necessary word) since it helps me escaping from humdrum and boring life.” **Federico Zeri**

“Michelle Jarvis is a woman who “enters” nature. And her approach is not a dialogue, but a combat with its shapes. She changes them, moves their colors and reshapes them but in the end you get the impression of a stronger and stronger nature. She’s looking for a primordial shape, crystallized in felt forever.” **Agnese Klein**

“Everyone’s story lays in the works by Brigitta Rossetti: the sense of time, an indefinite and suspended time, an imaginary space, inner and spiritual space; there’s a defeat of man and world, a concern for separation and lost of Eden. Brigitta Rossetti bring us up to a sort of ancient ladder, in search of ourselves, of our story, of our future, to penetrate a lush idyllic wood, towards a new world made of respect and freedom where body and soul can find their original fusion again.” **Guido Folco**

Biography

Chiara Briganti (Montpellier, 1921) was born in France but has always lived in Italy where she dedicated her life to history of art, painting restoration, interior design and architecture. She arranged the reconstruction of the artistic heritage and décor of Palazzo del Quirinale and in 1978 she created the first *mise-en-boîtes*, enchanted boxes exhibited in many solo and collective exhibitions both in Italy and abroad, in museums and private collections.

Since 1989 she is *Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*.*

Michelle Jarvis (Sheffield, 1959) studied Fashion and Textiles at London’s St.Martins’ School of Art and after a lot of working experience in New York, she went to Milan where she has been working for several years in the field of fashion and design. In the 90ies she started her own artistic research and

experimented felt, wool, silk and created her own language. Her works of art have been exhibited in many art galleries in Milan and London.

Brigitta Rossetti (Piacenza, 1975), graduated in Modern Literature and majoring in Multimedia Communication and Digital Graphics, but she is a poet at first. And she combines poetry, painting and installations in an original research. She took part to several international workshops; among the most important ones for her career, there were *Painting is Liberty* with the Chinese Zhou Brothers, *Medien Arbeiten* with the Polish video artist Anna Konik and *Skulptur Warum*, with the German sculptor and performer Asta Gröting, all of them at the Internazionale Akademie für bildende Kunst di Salisburgo. She developed four solo catalogues and her works are exhibited in many Museums and Art Galleries. Now she's working between Milan and Chicago where she has her own studio and is among the 50 resident artists of the *Zhou Brothers Art Center*. Since 2012 she is in the team of Sergio Gomez, superintendent of the 33 Contemporary Art Gallery in Chicago.

*Chiara Briganti works of art are given with the courtesy of Galleria Ceribelli of Bergamo.

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TUE/ SAT 10:30 – 12:30 a.m./ 4:00 – 7:30 p.m.

SUN 4:00 – 7:30 p.m.



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