

# CASTIGLIONI

## ARTIST'S BIO

Stefano De Paolis, born in 1992, is an artist known for his ability to create imaginary worlds through drawing. His work stands out for its focus on the line, where the pencil tip captures light and ethereal sensations. He transforms drawing into its own genre, bending traditional painting conventions to craft a new universe shaped by his passions and desires.

His artistic practice centers on creating a visual experience that spans across different times and dimensions, with a special emphasis on white as both a boundary and a possibility. De Paolis's drawings resemble pages from a novel he enjoys, filled with enigmas and narrative potential. The pencil tip not only traces the drawing's path but also serves as a tool for filling, with meticulous attention given to every part of the page.

His approach encourages viewers to reflect on their own nature and immerse themselves in a world of suggestions and hidden scenarios.

1992 Bergamo, Italy. Lives and works in Milan.

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024 - 5 o'Clock, Spazio MenoUno, Treviglio, IT  
2022 - Salottino Rendezvous, Castiglioni, Milan, IT

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2024 - Areoport, Castiglioni, São Paulo, BR  
2023 - DESIDERIO 23, Zazà, Naples, IT; La stanza dei figli, Castiglioni, Milan, IT  
2021 - Osservatorio X, Superstudio, Milan, IT; Mon Scale, Arivada, Milan, IT  
2020 - Degree Show at Palazzo Monti, Brescia, IT

PRIZES Premio Città di Treviglio 2023, vincitore premio G.S.I. Security Group

RESIDENCIES Tiac residency, Elephant Lab, London, 2019

# CASTIGLIONI

## STAND'S PROJECT

We are pleased to present Stefano De Paolis's project for Artissima 2024, Drawings section.

This exhibition will focus on showcasing a new series of pencil and silverpoint drawings, continuing the exploration of this technique within the narrative sphere that has characterized Stefano's imagination thus far.

The exhibited works will not be limited solely to paper drawings but will also include some of them combined with paper "bas-reliefs", similar to those displayed during his solo exhibition "Salottino Rendezvous" in the gallery. These works, intimately linked to Stefano's artistic practice, will not only inspire contemplation of a fresh approach to drawing but also emphasize the significance of the traditional medium essential to this technique: paper.

They will also serve as additional narrative elements, tangibly and almost sculpturally shaping scenes directly derived from Stefano's imagination, thus contributing to creating a world in which the viewer not only observes but can become fully immersed.

# CASTIGLIONI

## SALOTTINO RENDEZVOUS 19.11.2022 - 18.02.2023

On the occasion of the second edition of Milano Drawing Week presented by Collezione Ramo, Castiglioni has the pleasure to introduce *Salottino Rendezvous*, the first solo show with the gallery by Stefano De Paolis (b. 1992).

When Stefano De Paolis speaks, he caresses the air, polishes the sphere of discourse, leans a little forward and with outstretched hands delivers karateka blows.

It's impossible for us to talk about the work of a colleague, fellow student and friend without picturing his shirts, his boots, his back hunched over the table, the surgical white ring light reminiscent of those of architects or influencers.

Because the work of De Paolis lies in the creation (thankfully) of an imaginary (thankfully) that rides across multiple times and dimensions. All of his concentration is in the drawing, in the tense nerve that runs through the wood of the pencil. Its point condenses a sensation both light and ethereal.

Whereas in painting we could find its traditional genres, Stefano makes drawing a genre itself.

There is no portrait, still life, landscape, but rather the constant perversion of creating a new world made up of his gentle rules, passions, desires.

When we discuss De Paolis' work, we both perceive the tension of white as a limit and possibility, where things emerge with a feeble voice and with that slightly ancient, yet classic, taste that ghosts have, for example, in cinema.

The image in the exhibition is crossing the wall and its dimension, in constant stress to manifest itself.

It's not by accident (or maybe it is) that one of the characters presented by De Paolis in the exhibition is also called *Fantasma* (*Phantom*), as the title of the latest episode of a saga released in cinemas or the front of a box containing an action figure, of which the label defines the model.

It could be the "Super Saiyan" or "Gear fifth" version, but instead it is "Phantom", as if to prove that the planets shaped by his sensibility are aligned.

Stefano's drawings are the pages of a novel that pleases him (and pleases us). If the pages turn yellow (but Stefano is very well prepared), his imaginative urge, which often leads him to tell us possible scenarios concealed from us, does not age instead.

Let's think, for example, at the control panel: the point of view changes, we become distant observers, the narrative subject becomes his project and De Paolis here is asking us the imaginative effort (thankfully) to enter his world and to reflect on our own nature.

Who am I? We can picture ourselves as the aforementioned Pilot inside of his vehicle.

We now stand in front of the control panel and the artist succeeds in making us make another shift: the control panel once again becomes an evocative subject, like a cinematic aerial scene, this time of an ideal city on a blue planet, perhaps the destination of the journey (the end).

We are sitting in a cinema seat, we are talking about the movie we have just seen, we're out of popcorn, one last sip of Sprite remains and everything seems to fit (well done Stefano).

Our journey is also over. Yes, but the artist is still creating a mechanism of enigmas in which a white rectangle, excluded from the drawing, a rectangle where nothing more is possible (to be accurate, but also mysterious, as we like an artist to be) makes us return to the origin: everything must happen, everything is still potential, the Pilot is now eluded from his process of narrative salvation.

The Phantom is finally able to manifest itself.

Now we realise that Stefano De Paolis' drawing has some interesting peculiarities. It is not the point of the pencil that traces the path (the set of signs), but it's used as a filler medium. We have seen Stefano, on the table, with his lamp, his karateka shirts, getting into the millimetres of the sheet, dissecting it and taking care of each portion.

Like artists in the 16th century used to do, the instrument is engaged one portion at a time, one small square at a time, in the great whole that gets lost in the making, becomes a useless detail only to return back to drawing. Here also lies the artist's perversion of being gentle to everything, to caress, and then gradually disclose (even to himself) the image.

Back home, we continue talking about what we have just seen. We ask ourselves: is it true that reality depends on its observer?

As we sit, we begin to daydream about what lies beyond the closed door of the kitchen.

It gets late, one of us stays over, thoughts are hives in our heads and in the room there is a wooden wardrobe reminiscent of the one Stefano showed us. We are barely used to the darkness, and helped only by some contrasts that define the volumes surface, it slowly emerges in our eyes. One of us gets up and goes to the wardrobe, the other watches him grabbing the handle... he is opening the closet door.

Text by Federico Cantale and Giacomo Montanelli

# CASTIGLIONI

**5 o'clock 11.05.2024 - 12.07.2024**

Curated by Matilde Consoli  
Spazio MenoUno, Italy

In Stefano De Paolis's drawings, a delicate and pale light defines subtly suggested yet highly precise spaces. His practice mainly revolves around drawing, through which he brings to life on paper imagery connected to his personal experiences. Stefano's work is nourished by what he reads, watches, and listens to; the sci-fi culture and the aesthetic of 80s robot anime, where spaceships embark on intergalactic journeys, piloted by sleek commanders in aerodynamic suits.

In his latest series, exhibited at Spazio MenoUno in Treviglio, he continues to explore the idea of the Saturnian artist. He revisits Thonet, the pilot, a subject he has previously explored, now represented on a larger scale and engaged in a different activity. This time, Thonet is at rest, captured in a moment of intimacy. The iconic chair serves as his broad seat, allowing him to adopt an elegant posture. He resembles a rock star gazing into the camera with conflicted and subtly melancholic eyes, suspended in the aftermath of a phone call that has just ended or perhaps never happened.

"5 o'clock" is the piece that, like the title track of an album, gives the exhibition its name. Through a simulation of reflections, the pendulum clock becomes a representational device that projects an imaginary space—the hypothetical room where the pilot is experiencing the phone call moment. The addition of a cherry wood frame acts as a less neutral element compared to paper and aluminum, grounding the work in a more tangible reality.

"Dorothy" presents an outward vision. It depicts a motion outward where the light, originating from a circular form, gradually fades into total darkness. The small-format print, positioned at the end of the exhibition path, reveals the exterior of a house for the first time, offering a complete view. "Dorothy" is an evocative space of tranquility that concludes the narrative.

Text by Matilde Consoli