

DAVID KIM WHITTAKER

A Portrait for Human Presence

curated by Joseph Clarke

Opening:

Tuesday 6th June,
6.30 p.m.



“From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that we are here for the sake of each other - above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellow men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received”.

Albert Einstein

La Fondazione Mudima is pleased to present Whittaker's first major exhibition in Italy for over 15 years.

David Kim Whittaker was born in Cornwall, England, in 1964. Most of Whittaker's paintings are based around an interpretation of the human head and its metaphysical core. Whittaker's portraits are ambiguous and appear non-specific, with an aim of representing the universal alongside the personal. The works often juggle dual states of inner and outer calm and conflict – offering a glimpse of strength and fragility, the conscious and subconscious, the masculine and the feminine.

They are essentially 21st century human portraits - and could be read as utopian and / or dystopian. These universal states of conflict clearly identifiable in the works are arguably reinforced by Whittaker's gender dysphoria, an intense experience where one's physical body does not match his or her deep identity, and the personal struggle with a condition that he / she has learned to live with through the endeavour of expressing something bigger than oneself through painting. Something bigger where the smallness of oneself remains far from insignificant.

“This turmoil”, as the critic David Rosenberg has written in his essay “might have brought extreme psychological tension or inner conflict, but inside David Kim, there is enough empathy, enough acceptance and space for contradictions to express and resolve themselves. Perhaps this is because: ‘I’ is a landscape”.

‘Portrait for Human Presence’ is an exhibition of new works. It offers an overview of a number of key themes that feature in the artist's pantheon of imagery. *‘Journeys of Hope and Despair’* illustrates an exodus, where hope is sustained and salvation is sought on the journey from Damascus. The monumental *‘Perpetual Sin’* triptychs illustrate mankind in conflict, our primal urge to tear apart and destroy, where power and greed cast long shadows, the sacred is sacrificed and divinity is lost. And finally *‘The Feminine Oppressed’*, a small series of works where we are urged to contemplate that boys and girls are not always born equal depending on where in the world they originate.

7 June – 6 July 2017

Fondazione Mudima
Via Tadino 26, Milano
Orario: dal lunedì al venerdì
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