

VALENTINA BONOMO ROMA

“AMERICAN DREAM”

Margherita Artoni, curator

Inauguration: 22 March 18.30 at Valentina Bonomo Roma

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Artists: Chris Dorland, Farhad Moshiri, Jagannath Panda, Rona Pondick, Jonathan Seliger

Press release

*Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.
And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow,
I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American Dream.
(Martin Luther King, August 28, 1963)*

The American Dream has its historical roots in the colonization of the lands on the new continent by the first European settlers. They believed that dedication to work and a strong entrepreneurial capacity would help them to attain a more satisfying life, and so they left their homeland to escape its old world cultural, political, and economic models that allowed very little social mobility. Confidence in the possibility of social affirmation based on equal opportunity became the emblem of a spreading optimism.

The American Dream has always been characterized by the belief that the life of the next generation would improve both pragmatically and spiritually, an idea of progress that sometimes proved to be an abstraction without any real correspondence to reality.

If, at first, the concept of the self made man was based on the idea of a shared prosperity, according to which the American Dream would become the dream of all humanity, the term gradually assumed a different meaning linked to personal economic and material success.

Between hopes for a better future and a hunger for success to the detriment of those less capable or less motivated, the American Dream reached the top of its interpretative ambiguity in the twentieth century, and gave rise to criticism and observations from writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Steinbeck, E. Albee, Orson Welles and Brian de Palma. This ambiguity is what makes the subject so interesting.

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From the 1950s on, American culture spread rapidly throughout the world and its values were channelled through musical, cinematal and televised productions. With the advent of the Internet, the phenomenon was amplified: globalization mixed with the concept of the digital network, and content produced in the Big Apple found a new and powerful medium for its diffusion. Currently, cities in the east and west are both colonies and rivals born out of the United States, from which they have inherited some of their main cultural characteristics, and with these, the great Dream.

What is, then, the American Dream in the new millennium? The *American Dream* project proposes to explore the contemporary dimensions of the phenomenon using the language of contemporary art as an interpretive key.

Galleria Valentina Bonomo Roma, beginning March 22nd, will host in its rooms five cosmopolitan artists of international fame who will compare ideas and sensations while expressing their personal, more or less problematic, vision of the American Dream through different media.

The works of Chris Dorland, Farhad Moshiri, Jagannath Panda, Rona Pondick and Jonathan Seliger, therefore, are current testimonials of a pressing aesthetic need that has been, until now, mostly unexplored.

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Chris Dorland

1978 Canada, lives and works in New York.

Photographic collages, paintings on canvas and aluminium panels are only some of the expressive means chosen by Chris Dorland to compose his creative universe. In his works, futuristic intuitions and a Warholian reminiscence interpret contemporary reality through the digital imprint of a unique neorealism.

Selected exhibitions: Rhona Hoffman, Chicago; Marc Selwyn Fine Art Gallery, Los Angeles; The Neuberger Museum in Purchase, New York; Sikkema Jenkins, New York; Wendy Cooper, Chicago; Gasser Grunert Gallery, New York; Suburban Gallery, Oak Park, Illinois.

Farhad Moshiri

1963 Iran, lives and works in Iran.

Founder of a paradigm which is both ironic and kitsch, Farhad Moshiri explores the dialect between history and future, focusing with fine eclecticism on the postmodern condition of Iranian people. East and west, the protagonists of his artistic production combine in the aesthetics of *cut-and-paste* to explore the dynamics of their hybridisation without restraints.

Selected exhibitions: Chelsea Art Museum, New York; Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg; Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris; The Third Line Gallery, Dubai; The Counter Gallery, London; Kashya Hildebrand Gallery, New York; Leighton House Museum, London; Daneyal Mahmood Gallery, Chelsea; British Museum at DIFC, Dubai; Kunstraum Deutsch Bank, Salzburg.

Jagannath Panda

1970 Bhubaneswar, lives and works in Delhi.

The works of Jagannath Panda speak to contemporary metropolitan people. Refined paintings and watercolours, often enriched by elegant brocades, scan the incoherencies of urban India, denouncing its subservience to the logic of progress.

Selected exhibitions: Nature Morte, New Delhi; Moca Foundation Gallery, Tokyo; Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata; Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Essl Museum, Vienna; Contemporary Art Museum, Seoul; Alexia Goethe Gallery, London; Studio La Città, Verona; Chemould Gallery, Mumbai; Inside India, Turin.

Rona Pondick

Brooklyn 1952, lives and works in New York.

The sculptural works of Rona Pondick emphasize the Kafkian appeal of material illusion and the great human contradiction. Immersed in the morphing dimension of existence, animated and unanimated entities reflect each other becoming symbolic of their form and playing with the experience of the "other-than-self".

Selected exhibitions: Sonnabend Gallery, New York; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Galleria d'Arte Moderna Bologna, Italy; Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris; DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Groninger; Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn; Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille, France.

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Jonathan Seliger

New York, 1955, lives and works in New York.

With his pop-parodies, Jonathan Seliger interprets everyday items and mass society *idolons*. Through his use of acrylic paint, wax and plasticine, he creates a charismatic compromise between the rigours of canvas and sculptural plasticity.

Selected exhibitions: Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; Palazzo Re Enzo, Bologna; Aldridge Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield; Studio la Città, Verona; Nassau County Museum of Art, New York; Chelsea Art Museum, New York; Acme Gallery, Los Angeles; Aldridge Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield; Lucca Center for Contemporary Art, Lucca; Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase, NY.