

RYAN LEE

RYAN LEE GALLERY LLC
515 WEST 26TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
212 397 0742
RYANLEEGALLERY.COM

Angiola Gatti
Momenti di Luce
March 17 – April 30, 2022

RYAN LEE is pleased to announce *Momenti di Luce*, an exhibition of new work by Turin-based artist Angiola Gatti, her third with the gallery. In *Momenti di Luce*, Gatti continues to work in trademark medium of ballpoint pen on canvas, producing works in direct proportion to her own body. Each mark is a translation of her corporeal expression, corresponding to her height and the length of her reach. The resulting compositions reveal changes in the speed, pressure, and gesture of Gatti's hand, generating images that range from spare and ethereal to dense and brooding. Though the artist works on unstretched canvas, the final compositions are presented stretched.

The works in *Momenti di Luce* are influenced by the changing qualities of light in various forms: the shifting light in Gatti's studio, natural light on her many walks through the city, or memories of sublime light experienced during her travels. It also references flashes of light in the creative process, moments in which "something unexpected happens and there is a shift of energy, a change in my mind and hand, a kind of happiness," says Gatti. In one of her works on view, layers of blue ink in varying tones appear pulled to the upper right quadrant of the canvas, like a cloud propelled by the wind. Meticulously placed patches of pink punctuate the composition, and the addition of an explosive smudge of red and green oil stick just left of center enhances a sense of depth.

Gatti's exploration of light extends as well to sparks of emotion between people, such as love, and also reflects a sense of existential clarity. At the same time, it suggests its complement: darkness and the void. Deep pockets of blue-black are carefully interspersed in a sea of blue, indigo, purple, and soft reds, bleeding to the edges of the canvas in *Untitled (Senza titolo)*. This meditative composition insinuates the tensions that underlie Gatti's process, as she negotiates line and color, dynamism and stillness, positive and negative space—blurring the boundary between painting and drawing.

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Angiola Gatti (b. 1960 Turin, Italy) is an artist who pushes the boundary between painting and drawing, suggesting the irrelevance of such distinctions in a contemporary context. Born and raised in the birthplace of Arte Povera, Gatti's use of the everyday ballpoint pen is a nod to the movement's championing of common, accessible tools that she uses in her own style of painting. The ballpoint pen brings her closer to her artwork in a physical way, such that, as she puts it, the "canvas is nearly carved," by the force with which she presses her pen on her work.

Her mark-making, which ranges from tightly controlled to large and gestural, is an intuitive investigation of drawing, line and form. The ultimate images that she designs are formed by thousands of individual marks and motions. Her larger, denser canvases often use up the ink of over 30 to 40 ballpoint pens.

In her compositions, Gatti conceives spatial systems that relate to architecture, rhythm and proportions. During extensive walks throughout the city of Turin and the neighboring mountains of Piedmont, she immerses herself in the region's impressive urban and rural landscapes, which both inform and reflect the multiple vantage points evident throughout her compositions. She is interested in the physical and mental dimensions of space encountered during these walks.

In her more minimal works, Gatti is acutely aware of negative space versus created space, producing meditative voids and unexpected configurations. The changing density and color juxtapositions function to enhance elements of pictorial depth, generating an overall atmospheric, yet structured quality to her work. Interested in philosophy, and most recently in phenomenology, Gatti engages her own history and memory by extracting the essential features of personal experiences and translating them into her art.

Gatti studied at the Academy of Painting from 1979 to 1981 and graduated from the University of Torino with a degree in philosophy in 1985. She lives and works in Turin.

Her work has been published in *Ballpoint Art* by Trent Morse, one of the most definitive books on contemporary artists using ball point pen.

She has exhibited at the Villa Clerci, Galleria D'Arte Sacra dei Contemporanei and Isorropia Homegallery (2021), Emporium Project + Casa Casorati, Turin (2019), Museo Ettore Fico (2018), Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Amburgo (2017), Galleria Photo and Contemporary (2012), Villa Giulia at Centro di Ricerca Arte Attuale (2011), Stuart Shave/Modern Art (2011), Museo Filatoio di Caraglio (2005), Centre Culturel Pomel (2004), Centre d'art contemporain Le Creux de l'enfer (2004), Galerie des Arts Visuels de l'Université Laval (2001) and the Unione Culturale Franco Antonicelli (1987).

Her work is in the permanent collection of the Balbo di Torino, Italy; Bic Collection, France; Chianale di Torino, Italy; Fossati di Como, Italy; Frac Auvergne, France; Isorropia Homegallery, Italy; and the Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN.