

Art in America

OCTOBER 2008

ROME

"Beware of the Wolf" The American Academy

In an interesting change for one of Rome's august foreign institutes, a three-stage exhibition organized by curators Lorenzo Benedetti and Lexi Eberspacher successfully integrated emerging Italian artists with winners of the coveted Rome Prize. The exhibition, titled "Beware of the Wolf" (after the legendary she-wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus), was a wake-up call more than a warning, its aim to signal art action in the Eternal City. Each of the three parts took place in both rooms of the Academy's gallery and was on view for two weeks.

The first installment dealt with the "narrative process of storytelling," according to material released by the curators. It featured the works of Tim Davis, Marco Raparelli, Federico Pietrella, Andrea Salvino and Calveh Zahedi. Davis, a fellow at the Academy, exhibited photographs of political posters from his series "Politicians in Cyan." The colors of these works were a faded pale blue, symbolizing "the way politics swallows ideas, rendering idealistic positions battered, but beautiful," according to a statement by the artist. Less literal was an installation by Pietrella titled *20.03.08* (which was the opening date of "Beware of the Wolf"). Flashlights laid in a row on the floor beamed small nimbuses of light onto two walls. The lamps were each different

Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo; *Adoration Turning Yellow*, 2008, mixed mediums; at the American Academy.



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in brand and design, and the cumulative effect of their various orbs—dozens of humble, Robert Irwin-like light sculptures—was hauntingly poetic. The piece had a "performance" aspect: the flashlights' batteries gradually drained over the course of the show, dimming the lamps.

The theme of the second part was nature, though this construct seemed forced in some cases. In a technically mesmerizing work, *Moments Forming a Memory* (2008), Academy fellow Adam Chapman presented computer-animated drawings whose components continuously reassemble into constellations of abstract and figurative forms. Lisa Switkin showed *Soil Core* (2008), a tall cylinder of soil samplings that she had collected from ancient Roman circuses. Flavio De Marco exhibited the abstract painting *Paesaggio* (2007), which looked like overlapping pastel-colored computer windows but also brought to mind works by Richard Diebenkorn.

The final section of "Beware of the Wolf" focused on the nature of the exhibition space. Its high point was Alessandro Pianciamore's *The place where I usually spend more time in space, the place where I would like to spend more time in space* (2008). According to the artist, the places referred to in the title are his motor scooter and outer space. The work consisted of a pine table on which rested a framed panel, juxtaposing photographs of outer space and a cave with bats. Propped on the corner of the table was a resin cast of the artist's *motorino* seat, its central crevice filled with water, as if after a rain. Stanislao di Giugno showed a work about measurement, where the distance between New York and Rome was represented by black thread on large spools. In *Exchange*, Marco Fedele di Catrano used the familiar tactic of removing plaster from the wall, in this case to form the stars of the European Union flag. Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo created a simulated window within the gallery space, backlit as if light were shining through. "Rays" of yellow yarn spilled out onto the floor.

The charming aspect of Benedetti and Eberspacher's tripartite exhibition was that it made no claims to be historical or definitive. National divisions were irrelevant, and a very unacademic vibration was set in motion. The wolf raised its head and sniffed the fresh air.

—Cornelia Lauf

BEIJING

Zhao Liang Three Shadows

Zhao Liang was the first artist featured in the 2008 series of one-person shows at Three Shadows Art Center, a leading venue for photography in Beijing (founded in 2007 by the well-known husband-and-wife team Rong Rong and Inri, and designed by artist-architect Ai Weiwei).