

Chiara Fumai: LESS LIGHT

Presenting Fumai's pioneering works that revive historical women and narratives

February 12–May 17, 2019

Opening Reception and
Performance:
February 12, 2019, 6–8pm

Gallery Hours:
Tuesday–Friday
12–6pm



Chiara Fumai, *The Book of Evil Spirits*, still from video, 26:24 min., 2015. Photo by PRed. Photo courtesy of The Church of Chiara Fumai



Chiara Fumai, *Harry Houdini Reads Valerie Solanas*, 2013, C-print, ed. 3, 31 1/2 × 47 in. (80.01 × 119.38 cm). Photo courtesy of The Church of Chiara Fumai

The International Studio & Curatorial Program announces the opening of *LESS LIGHT*, an exhibition by Chiara Fumai (1978–2017), a 2017 ISCP alumna. The artist's first solo exhibition on this continent, *LESS LIGHT* brings together two of Fumai's pioneering works, *The Book of Evil Spirits* (2015) and *Dogaressa Elisabetta Querini, Zalumma Agra, Annie Jones, Dope Head, Harry Houdini, Eusapia Palladino read Valerie Solanas* (2012-13), as well as a reenactment of the performance *The S.C.U.M. Elite* (2014) at the opening reception.

Fumai's hybrid practice was deeply rooted in performance and her interests were far-reaching—encompassing radical feminism, chaos magick, terrorist propaganda and Italian Autonomist Marxism. In her work, she frequently deconstructed ideologies that have impeded women's empowerment. Fumai performed as marginalized historical figures, transmitting occult messages that revived forgotten or discarded narratives.

This is the case in *The Book of Evil Spirits*, an expansive installation reminiscent of a psychic parlor that includes a suite of fifteen automatic drawings and photographs, performance props and a video in which Fumai channeled Eusapia Palladino, a nineteenth century Italian clairvoyant whose séances were attended by the likes of Nicholas II of Russia and Nobel laureates Marie and Pierre Curie. In turn, she conjures the spirits of a powerful group of women who also appeared throughout Fumai's oeuvre since 2010. These women—Zalumma Agra, Ulrike Meinhof, and Annie Jones among them—transcend historical periods and geographies, united by their own desire to revolt against the conditions of oppression. Speaking to each other, they vocalize the veracity of Palladino's séances and recite Carla Lonzi's *Manifesto di Rivolta femminile* (1970) as well as other texts also quoted in Fumai's prior live acts.

In *Dogaressa Elisabetta Querini, Zalumma Agra, Annie Jones, Dope Head, Harry Houdini, Eusapia Palladino read Valerie Solanas*, Fumai embodies the six people named in the work's title in photographs. Some of the characters are shown reading from the *S.C.U.M. Manifesto* and others have it at hand, with a phrase from the manifesto, "A Male Artist is a Contradiction in Terms," appearing on the wall in each image. The manifesto, published in 1967 by Valerie Solanas, ironically calls for a violent overturning of the patriarchy and the establishment of the Society for Cutting Up Men (S.C.U.M.) as the means to do so. The extreme struggles of Solanas, who is perhaps best known today for having shot Andy Warhol in 1968, are reanimated in each of Fumai's photographs.

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A publication will accompany the exhibition, with texts by Stefano Colicelli Cagol and Kari Conte, an interview published in English for the first time between the artist and Francesco Urbano Ragazzi, and a new introduction by the interviewers.

LESS LIGHT is curated by Kari Conte, Director of Programs and Exhibitions at ISCP and Francesco Urbano Ragazzi, directors of the Chiara Fumai archive.

Public Programs:

February 14, 6:30–8pm: Silvia Federici (feminist activist, writer, and teacher) will discuss her research on witch-hunting in Europe and the Americas, with reference to both historical events and the development of a capitalist society. The evening will begin with a brief viewing of the exhibition.

March 12, 6:30–8pm: Micki Pellerano (artist and frequent collaborator of Chiara Fumai) will present a lecture at ISCP on the use of occult symbolism and ritual practice in Fumai's work.

Chiara Fumai's (Rome, 1978–Bari, 2017) work will represent Italy at the Venice Biennale in 2019, along with two other artists. Solo exhibitions include: Rosa Santos, Valencia (2016); Museion, Bolzano (2015); Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice (2013); A Palazzo Gallery, Brescia (2013); Futura – Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague (2013); MACRO Testaccio, Rome (2011); and Careof – DOCVA, Milan (2008). Group exhibitions include: Tatjana Pieters, Gent (2017); David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2015); Contour 7 – A Moving Image Biennale, Mechelen (2015); Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid (2015); Whitechapel Gallery, London; De Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam; Nottingham Contemporary; Fiorucci Art Trust; SongEun Foundation, Seoul (all in 2014); MUSAC Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, León (2013); dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel (2012); and the Nomas Foundation, Rome (2011). She won the Furla Art Award (2013) and the Premio New York (2016). International residencies include: International Studio & Curatorial Program, New York (2017); Art Omi, Ghent, New York (2016) and Wiels, Brussels (2014).

This exhibition is a collaboration with The Church of Chiara Fumai, an organization which preserves the artist's memory, archive and estate.

About ISCP:

Founded in 1994 and celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, ISCP is now the fourth-largest visual arts residency program in the world and a global leader in the field of visual arts residency programs. ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP is New York's most comprehensive international visual arts residency program. ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences.

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