

BANDIT QUEEN

Speech for Phoolan Devi, 2001-2022

by Silvia Morin

16.12.2022–15.01.2023

MAO Museo d'Arte Orientale

For the project t-space X MAO, Silvia Morin creates a new work that investigates the figure of Phoolan Devi (Gurha Ka Purwa, 1963–New Delhi, 2001), a woman whose life was characterized by a series of tragic events: firstly a child bride, then a bandit, she later became a representative member of Parliament and was murdered in 2001 when she was only 37 years old.

Starting from the study of historical documents and of the autobiographical book *Phoolan Devi, My Hundred Lives* (1996), Silvia Morin's work finds expression through a photographic image and a speech that mixes real data with streams of consciousness. The artist identifies herself in the figure of Phoolan Devi through the photographic image and enacts a "third woman", external to the story who opens the exhibition with a live speech.



Silvia Morin turns her own body into the medium through which she stages women's biographies that were interrupted by male violence. Morin's "psychic" photographs are the final outcome of a process of empathic identification with the subject's of the stories she investigates, that goes through a performative phase in which the use of clothes play a peculiar function. The artist does not use costumes, instead she draws from her own everyday: rather than setting up a cosmetic disguise, Morin creates in her images a paradoxical coincidence between her life and the life of those women by triggering an emotional and temporal confusion. Far from being real self-portrait or simple representation, Morin's women are additional characters, not yet realised, that appear to be coming back for necessity, to affirm a pacification.

Text by Claudia Petraroli

BANDIT QUEEN Speech for Phoolan Devi, 2001-2022
2022
Site-specific installation

Fine art inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond, 150x95 cm
sand, pulpit
Opening 16 December: live speech

Courtesy of the artist and t-space

Silvia Morin (Corato, 1988) lives and works in Milan. Her work has been exhibited at Casa Flash Art in Milan in 2021, in 2019 within VIR Viafarini, Milan, in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Corato and at the Pinacoteca di Arte Contemporanea in Ruvo di Puglia.

In 2017 she obtained a Master's Degree in Photography at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts while she took her Bachelor's Degree in Set Design at the Bari Academy of Fine Arts. In 2020 she attended the Arts Course within the Master of Gender Studies and Politics of the Roma Tre University.

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t-space x MAO

MAO recently inaugurated a new phase, #MAOTempoPresente. This marks the opening of the Museum to artistic and creative activities through a structured program of artistic and curatorial residencies. Performers, artists, curators and scholars will be invited to inhabit the collections and exhibition spaces, performing and “staging” the Museum. The brand-new project is based in the renovated t-space and is the result of a collaboration with the eponymous art space founded by Giulia Spreafico and Rui Wu in Milan in 2016.

t-space.it/about

The t-space in Milan was originally conceived as an independent art space capable of making artistic activity sustainable; over the years it has increasingly turned into a place for project and discussion promoting exchange between artists and the public. The t-space at MAO is conceived also as a venue for welcoming and sharing: visitors can take a break, drink tea, meet artists and performers, and join the events scheduled from October 2022 to June 2023.

t-space.it/t-spacexmao



Un tè da t-space

A “t-space tea” is a series of videos in which artists are invited to have tea and present their work inside MAO. The conversations are available on the museum’s YouTube channel.



t-dispenser

2022 / by t-space

Site-specific installation

Hot water dispenser
Gasbeton
Pure tea bags
Paper cups

Conceived as a hot water “fountain” where visitors can drink tea within the space, the installation changes as the exhibitions and installations evolve. An ever-moving sculpture in which the gasbeton bricks become a frame for the dispenser and a device available for the invited artists: support, seat, lectern, display and matter on which to act with signs and gestures. The installation relates to the *Buddha*¹⁰ exhibition and is freely inspired by the Chinese Shíkū 石窟, complexes of caves and caverns carved into the rock containing statues of the Buddha.

Huang Cha – Kekecha

A traditional Chinese specialty, yellow tea has a very limited production and is typical of Hunan province, where the yellowing of the leaves dates back to remote techniques and craftsmanship. The second area involved is the Guangdong mountains, where a more modern technique is used to produce the kekecha, a partial oxidation tea. During its production, the skilled tea master relies on instinct to modulate the heat and stop the yellowing and oxidation process at the right time.

Due to its stimulating effect and many pleasurable qualities, consumption of this tea has long remained a privilege of Buddhist monks. The quality offered is elongated leaf, multi-colored with bronze hues. In the cup, the taste is mild with a slight vegetable and exotic fruit note similar to papaya.

Claudia Carità
—tea selector for The Tea Torino
thetea.it