

HIDDEN FLOWERS

by **Jacopo Miliani**
12.05 - 25.06.2023

MAO Museo d'Arte Orientale



HIDDEN FLOWERS by Jacopo Miliani
site-specific installation

Series of 11 c-prints, black and white, 10x15 cm
Series of A3 prints, black and white
Books and Magazines
Video, 10'30"

Jacopo Miliani is a visual artist whose practice addresses performance as an expanded methodology to explore the connections between language and body. He is the founder of an independent publishing project focused on sexuality and language: *Self Pleasure Publishing*. His work has been presented in solo and group exhibitions at GAMeC, Bergamo; Pecci Centre, Prato; Galeria Rosa Santos, Valencia; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon;

For the fifth appointment of t-space X MAO Jacopo Miliani presents the site-specific installation *Hidden Flowers*. The project presents the development of a research conducted by the artist together with the semiologist and curator Sara Giannini in Tokyo in 2017. The stories of some homoerotic magazines intended for the Japanese gay community of the 70s, 80s and 90s are at the core of this investigation

The research, mostly conducted in the bars of Shinjuku-ni-chome district, Tokyo, led to the production of the publication *Whispering Catastrophe* in which the theme of the visual censorship of the male genital organs - currently existing in Japan - opens up to a personal anti-identitarian debate looking at another culture to deconstruct that of belonging. This practice finds an inverted equivalent in the works of authors such as Yukio Mishima or translator/editor Tastuhiko Shibusawa who look at Italy, Greece and France to recontextualize some imaginaries of Western homosexual culture in Japan.

Whispering Catastrophe presents a collection of photographs from magazines intended for men who love men. On the pages of these magazines the superimposition of images - necessary to respect the censorship of the Japanese moral and legal code - leads to the construction of a complex visual language with which Miliani and Giannini interact, undermining their own cultural identity and trying to interpret a code that does not belong to them.

The exhibition evokes the dark spaces of Tokyo bars that were the main research locations for the editorial project. The stories and images on display are proposed as residues, fragments and whispered voices to lead the viewer into a foreign and hidden place that - like the censored images - offers a mysterious seduction, necessary to stimulate an interpretation that can be as fallacious as it is creative.

Starting from the visual censorship in Japan that, by covering and masking the male body, induces a deviation of the observer's gaze, the *Hidden Flowers* project considers this restriction as a possibility to investigate sexuality in continuous transformation.

The project includes a talk with Sara Giannini, Jacopo Miliani and Asuka Ozumi, teacher and expert on Japanese culture that will take place at Edicola 51 (Piazzetta Madonna degli Angeli 2, Torino) on Friday May 19th at 7.00 pm. The talk is organized in collaboration with ADD Editore as part of the outdoor programme of Turin Book Fair.

Special thanks to: ADD Editore, Asuka Ozumi, Sara Giannini, Ramona Ponzini, OuUnPo.

ICA study, London; Studio Dabbeni, Lugano; Mother Museum, Naples. In 2021 he realised the film *La disco*, a project curated by NOSproduction, winner of the Italian Council (VIII edition, 2020).

www.jacopomiliani.info
IG: @milianijacopo

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.



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t-dispenser

2022 / by t-space

Site-specific installation

Hot water dispenser
Gasbeton®
Tea bags
Paper cups

Conceived as a hot water ‘fountain’ where visitors can get a cup of tea, this installation transforms with each new exhibition and set up. A sculpture-in-progress in which the Gasbeton® bricks are a frame for the dispenser and device for the use of the invited artists: support, seat, bookrest, display and material for manipulating or marking.

The installation was conceived in connection with the exhibition Buddha10 and is freely inspired by the Shíkū 石窟, in China, cave complexes carved into the rock that house Buddha statues.

GENMAICHA

A taste of ancient Japan

According to one legend, Genmaicha originated in fifteenth-century Japan, when a servant accidentally dropped a few grains of rice he had hidden in his sleeve. The rice fell into his master’s cup, into which he was pouring a very costly tea.

Genmaicha, or ‘brown rice tea’, is made with green tea and toasted rice. It is also known colloquially as the ‘people’s tea’, since rice was a filler and lowered the price of the tea, making it historically more within reach of the poorest Japanese.

Drunk as a beverage during periods of fasting, religious and otherwise, it was made with equal parts tea and rice. Today, genmaicha is enjoyed by all segments of society, in Japan and beyond, and its success is also partly thanks to the creativity of producers who modulate the aromatic complexity of the infusion choosing the best quality tea and rice or adding macca or matcha for a liquid hit of umami.

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

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