

An abstract painting featuring two faces in profile, facing each other. The faces are rendered in shades of green, blue, and grey, with thick, expressive brushstrokes. The eyes are large and dark, and the lips are simple, curved lines. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century abstract art.

Roman Road

# LUISA ME THE CRANE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA

Private View: Tuesday 10 May 2022, 6 – 9 PM

Exhibition: Wednesday 11 May – Friday 15 July 2022

Opening Hours: Wednesday – Friday, 10 AM – 6 PM;

Saturday, 12 PM – 5 PM and by appointment

Address: 69 Roman Road, London E2 0QN

For the first show of the year at our headquarters, Roman Road is pleased to present Luisa Me: The Crane at the Bottom of the Sea. In this exhibition, Luisa Me present feelings and findings from their exploration into our ever-expanding cityscapes, supposed urban utopianism and the sun's role as an omnipresent deity that oversees our search for community and human connection.

Both in the way Luisa Me operates, with one singular artistic practice and vision albeit as a duo, and in their artworks, which whilst firmly figurative are employed to address their cross-disciplinary contemplations and considerations, the pair blur the boundaries between conceptual, representational and narrative art. Displaying an equal interest in the histories and hypotheses that underpin each painting as to the aesthetic or materialistic decision making, they support each subsequent body of work with a deep investigation of their shared ideals and ideas, as well as an intellectual examination of eclectic art historical, literary and cinematic references. Repetition remains particularly prevalent, with a reiteration of motifs, repositioning of figures or replication of environments allowing the artists to investigate comprehensively each conceptual concern. By operating as an artistic partnership, Luisa Me embrace ambiguity, avoiding illiberal labelling as they approach their practice with a reserved romanticism and a sceptical spirituality. Poetic and yet politically aware, they comment on, without critique, their contemporary culture and circumstances, all within paintings that are both visually pleasing and entirely thought-provoking.

The reality and impersonality of harsh, hard-edged city living, rat-race paced and subject to unpredictable or unrelenting changeability, is not lost on Luisa Me. The duo met at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Urbino in 2016, immediately forming a close, almost brotherly, bond and, with both planning to move to London, decided to enter into an artistic partnership that could best withstand the capital's infamous and uncompromising lifestyle. Such support, both physical and emotional, is reflected in this exhibition's sole depiction of pairs or couples, where their characters become almost directly representative of the duo and their continued close collaboration. Limbs intertwine, torsos and backs press up against each other and feet grip the sides of the paintings as the figures literally, and we can imagine metaphorically, lean on one another for support and comfort.

In *The Crane at the Bottom of the Sea*, we find such signature characters, evocative of canonical Cycladic sculptures in their stance and stature, enjoying the sight of the midday sun. Note the noontime lack of shadows, reminiscent of the early renaissance painter Piero della Francesca, an indication that the sun is directly overhead, at its highest and its perceived hottest. Below, background bricks and tiles are bathed in sunlight, as the figures wade in ankle-deep water, their skin sun-bleached akin to weathered statues, a texture and colouring achieved through a continuous addition and sanding back of paint, that occasionally even perforates the canvas. The paintings themselves almost appear to radiate sunshine, what with their colour palette of mellow yellows, pastel purples, ultramarine blues and seafoam greens, whilst the sun itself is portrayed through talismanic masks with open ocular orifices. Crafted by collage and embellished with sand, the exhibition's omnipotent deity has been subtly and satirically altered, its outstretched rays substituted for monuments from London's iconic skyline. Of course, where there is sun there is always shade, and this interplay between light and dark, this underlying tension or inherent contradiction, has always been evident in the pairs' practice.

While the sun is shining, spreading that uniquely summertime feeling, a mixture of joy, relaxation and anticipation, the city continues to lurk in the background, an arid reminder of the toil to come. Therefore, whilst displaying an acute awareness of the exhaustion triggered by the unflagging daily grind and the city's constant stifling expansion, Luisa Me also attempt to offer an antidote, promoting a slower pace of life punctuated by periods of calm contemplation, comforting physical intimacy and collective human connection.

*The gallery will be open on Sunday 15 May 2022 to coincide with the London East End Gallery Day.*

**The Crane at the Bottom of the Sea opens on Tuesday 10 May 2022 and will be on display at Roman Road until Friday 15 July 2022.**



Luisa Me, *The crane at the bottom of the sea*, 2022. Acrylic, oil and resin on canvas, 150 x 130 cm, unique. © Deniz Güzel, 2022.



Luisa ME, A balance between the two, 2022. Acrylic, oil and resin on canvas, 130 x 120 cm, unique. © Deniz Güzel, 2022.



Luisa Me studio in South London, 2022. © Deniz Güzel, 2022.