**GALLERIA POGGIALI**

**MILAN**

presents

**Kennedy Yanko**

***Because it’s in my blood***

24.09 - 20.11.2020

**Opening** Thursday 24.09.2020 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Galleria Poggiali Milan

Foro Bonaparte 52 – 20121 Milan

A collection of subversive copper and monochromatic paint skin sculptures: from 24 September to 20 November 2020, the Poggiali Gallery presents, *Because it’s in my blood*, New York artist Kennedy Yanko’s first solo show in Milan.

*Because it’s in my blood* is a tribute to Betty Davis and the prowess she embodied. The title, selected from *F.U.N.K,* a track featured in Betty Davis’ 1975 album *Nasty Gal,* alludes to Davis’ determination to be who she is, and her unwillingness to be otherwise. Through her music she refused rules imposed by a society based on unjust principles, and insisted upon seeing the world as she saw it--not how others thought she should see it. This freedom to express oneself without censure is more relevant than ever. Censuring experience because we don’t understand it means depriving ourselves both individually and collectively the opportunity for growth, expansion and understanding.

Eicht new works --the outcome of Yanko’s years-long investigation into found metal and paint skin-- are now on view in the gallery. Smaller works, like *Space* and *Jimmie*, are freestanding sculptures that allow for a birds-eye view, while Yanko’s largest work, *Crow*, demands an entire wall. Each work’s title draws upon words from Davis’ vernacular, personifying elements of the singer’s life and furthering the relationship among the pieces. While these abstract forms may not immediately recall images of the FUNK era, their ambiguity in the context of Betty Davis allows viewers to explore thoughts that arise in thinking about this underappreciated female icon and metal and paint skin works.

Yanko recognizes that metal often summons thoughts of industry, but for her, it’s simply a material derived from nature. It’s made from atoms like the rest of matter, and has the ability to shift, morph, and change existences; the paint skins that she incorporates in her practice tease out this malleability from the metal, and add to the scope and sensitivity of each work. The works of *Because it’s in my blood* harness this subversive spirit, inviting the observer to question what they immediately see. True to Betty Davis, and a Surrealist influence, the sculptures offer an unresolvable ambiguity that requires viewers to create new schemas for what they see through the sensations they receive from the work.

The show will be accompanied by a catalogue published by Galleria Poggiali complete with a critical essay by New York-based writer and curator, Cristian Viveros-Fauné. Viveros-Fauné works with important international journals such as *Art in America*, *artnet*, *Artnews*, *ArtNexus*, *Frieze*, *The New Yorker* and *The New York Press*. He has also written essays for highly successful exhibitions, including *Authentic/Ex-centric: Conceptualism in Contemporary African Art* (49th Venice Biennale), *Beuys and Beyond* (Deutsche Bank Collection travelling exhibition) and *Ahmed Alsoudani* (Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, USA).

**Kennedy Yanko** (St. Louis, 1988; lives and works in Brooklyn) is a visual artist who works mostly with scrap metal and paint latex. She trained at the San Francisco Art Institute. Her research focuses on the ambiguity of perception and the importance of abstraction as a means to knowledge.

Since the debut of her first sculptures ‘Elements and Skin’ in the group show curated by Derrick Adams *Hidden in Plain Sight* at the Jenkins Johnson Project Space, Brooklyn, NY, (2017), Yanko has exhibited regularly in galleries and at national and international art fairs.

Her recent shows include: *Highly Worked*, at the Denny Dimin Gallery in New York; *Hannah* at Kavi Gupta in Chicago and *Before Words* at the UICA in Grand Rapids, (2019). Contemporaneously with *Because it’s in my blood*, Yanko is presenting *SALIENT QUEEN* at the VIELMETTER LOS ANGELES gallery.

She exhibited in the group show *Cry of Victory and Short Walks to Freedom* as part of Hank Willis Thomas’s For Freedoms project (2018), and she was invited to participate in *Parallels and* Peripheries at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit (2019).

Her works are found in the JP Morgan Chase Collection, and in the collections of Beth Rudin deWood and Helyn Goldenberg. In 2018 she was nominated ‘Artist of the week’ by the magazine *Milk* during Armory Week.

**INFORMATION**  
Galleria Poggiali Milan  
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Tuesday – Saturday: 11 AM – 7 PM

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