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Lanfranco Quadrio: *The Agony of Actaeon* at Rosenfeld Porcini Gallery

If you like your art visceral, unsparingly detailed and technically accomplished, then pop along to Rosenfeld Porcini Gallery in Fitzrovia, where you can view *The Agony of Actaeon* by Italian artist Lanfranco Quadrio in all its eloquently grizzly glory.

Christine Holley 30th September 2013



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In a sparing palette of greys and warm reds, *The Agony of Actaeon* features mixed-media works on large-scale canvases and smaller works on paper, all executed in a frenetic mix of oil, pastel, pen and pencil on uniform neutral backgrounds. [Original listing details](#)

You will find yourself gazing at powerful, graphic images executed with great elegance of line, across the gallery's two floors. This is art that works when viewed from a distance, but step up closer – take time to scrutinise – and you'll be rewarded with the detailed mark-making that gives insight into an artist's mind.

Quadrio's work is carnage, writ large – here a deer's carcass; there a circling hound; a twisted human form; and everywhere, swirls of moving, seething, violent action, as it happens, before your eyes. What you're witnessing is the imagined instant when Actaeon is attacked and devoured, for the myth tells the story of the hunter Actaeon who, having been turned into a stag by the goddess Diana for spying on her bathing, is then attacked and devoured by his own hounds.

The artist, Lanfranco Quadrio, lives in Palermo, Sicily where tales of Greek mythology resonate strongly. The story of Actaeon is close to his heart, as is the second theme of the exhibition: the myth of the sea monster Scylla who was said to live in the straits of Messina in Sicily. As Odysseus's boat draws near, the beast Scylla captures and devours six of his crew. They can be seen in Lanfranco's images of men falling headfirst to certain death.

Quadrio teaches Decorative Arts at the National Institute of Art in Palermo, and graduated from the Palermo Academy of Fine Arts with a specialisation in artistic anatomy, explaining his ability to draw with such liberty yet accuracy, and his evident obsession with anatomical detail.

The "Death of Actaeon" myth has inspired many creative responses across the arts over the centuries – for example, in the visual arts, painters such as 16th-century Italian artists Correggio and Parmigianino, and of course Titian, whose painting on the myth is held in London's National Gallery. These paintings took a pastoral approach, whereas Lanfranco's interpretation, as gallery director Ian Rosenfeld explains, is all about immediacy and a very contemporary 21st-century view: "Lanfranco captures that explosive moment; the raw violence and moment of impact. We think we are in control of our lives but in reality, the possibility of mayhem is never far away."

And if this parallel doesn't resonate with you, consider the apocalyptic nature of the 21st century; the urban threat just under the surface of our everyday lives. Think of images in the news of sudden attack, here in London; the bombings of 9/11 and 7/7; and most recently, the carnage of shootings in Nairobi.

The works in this exhibition read like an artist's preparatory sketch book, which is not surprising, as Lanfranco comments: "I don't sketch first. I go straight to the canvas working in the moment to create the images. Here you can see my thinking." And this is the most exciting aspect of this artist's work because, just as in the drawings of Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo, you can see the enquiring and inquisitive mind of the artist, working from imagination and masterly drawing skills, to create these images.

This exhibition fuses the traditional skills of the Italian Old Masters and tales of Greek mythology to present a highly-personalised contemporary vision. So if you appreciate the subtlety and sincerity of the drawing process, with the attention to flesh in turmoil often portrayed by Francis Bacon, you'll love this. *Grazie mille* to artist Lanfranco Quadrio and to directors Ian Rosenfeld and Dario Porcini for reminding us of the potency and power of drawing skills.

Update!

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