

Published on the occasion of the exhibition
Conscious Intuition: Eugene Carchesio and Diena Georgetti
Margaret Lawrence Gallery 6 September – 5 October 2019
Melbourne Australia
Designed by Sean Hogan
Printed in Melbourne
Edition 100
ISBN: 978-0-6485586-2-0

Works by Eugene Carchesio
courtesy the Artist and
Sutton Gallery Melbourne,
Milani Gallery Brisbane

Works by Diena Georgetti
courtesy the Artist and
The Commercial, Sydney

Photography: Christo Crocker

C O N S C I O U S
E U G E N E
C A R C H E S I O
G E O R G E T T I
D I E N A
I N T U I T I O N



Since they emerged in the 1980s, both Eugene Carchesio and Diena Georgetti have continued to make work that profoundly connects contemporary art, art history and human experience. Often creating imagery within the formalist context of geometry and colour, intuition – the ability to understand something instinctively – plays a large part in each of their working processes. An interest in ontology seems to have persisted through their careers. The how and why of being an artist can be understood as a recurring theme through which Carchesio and Georgetti articulate their roles as part of something bigger than themselves.



Both artists' practices can be located in the blurry zone between individuality and anonymity. Whilst their iconography has connections with modernist painting, sculpture, architecture and decorative arts, Carchesio and Georgetti each have an idiosyncratic approach through which their respective practices have resonance with but are not always attuned with other visual languages and codes. The generation of titles is an important aspect of each of their practices. By naming a work – bringing it into existence through words – Carchesio and Georgetti provide a significant entry point. The resulting works are often elusive and enigmatic, allowing the viewer an expansive and contemplative space within the realm of their ideas and thought processes.

Carchesio's works in *Conscious Intuition* have a literal quality that exemplifies his preference for radically simplified forms. There is nothing mysterious about their construction – what you see is what you get. Composed of modest materials – matchboxes, balsa wood, paper and glue, these works address enduring themes. The delicate terrain between the banality of his materials and the profundity of his ideas has been fertile ground for him and nothingness, temporality and the generation of meaning are ideas that he has explored for several decades. The matchbox works in particular suggest that he is not necessarily bringing anything new into the world but rather transforming what already exists. Abounding with multiple meanings, Carchesio's titles e.g. *Time takes everything everything takes time* often allude to the cyclical nature of this transformation. In *Light towards Night*, matchboxes are used as frames or containers that house colour. The sequence from yellow to black signals a shift from the known – that which has been illuminated, to the unknown – that which remains in darkness.

Carchesio's apparent simplicity of technique is contrasted (or perhaps undermined) by a range of formal systematic strategies including the use of repetition and grids. In other sculptural works, paper cones – a recurring motif in Carchesio's work, are arranged in diamond like patterns. Symbolic of energy being both distilled (through the cone vertex) and augmented (through the cone opening), cones

can be understood as representing human experience. The yellow cones in *The Brutalist* are applied directly to the wall, allowing the gallery's physical and atmospheric features including lighting and the myriad of shadows to be understood as part of the work of art. In *Cosmos (for Dale Harding)*, black cones are applied to a black ground. The resulting monochromatic sculptural collage has a subtle but rich velvety quality that suggests depth, order and endlessness.

Georgetti's paintings, *SECURITY, FORT, BARBICAN, TRIUMPH* and *LEGACY* rely on the notion of familiarity and her patterns, colours and arrangements of form are sourced from a variety of modernist arts practices. However, to only view these works as a mashup of 20th century visual culture would be to miss Georgetti's poetic understandings of the complexities associated with art and the experience of being an artist. Whilst following a similar compositional format, each work has its own 'mood' or 'feeling' that renders concepts of the historic and the contemporary as indistinct. Through the layering and collaging of references each painting conveys a sense of continuity – of everything happening all at once – now.

The importance of multiple references in the process of communicating a view of art that is not linear nor bound by traditional understandings of history cannot be underestimated in these works. Georgetti's references can be observed as providing context for one another – her quotes sit alongside, above, below, within and amongst each other. Her meticulous composition suggests that her work as an artist is not the product of any one single influence but rather that her voice reverberates with the echoes of a range of pasts.

By demonstrating little or no difference between personal and universal concerns, Georgetti's works explore the possibilities of painting – what it is and what it can be. The delineation of a perimeter is an important strategy used to draw the viewer simultaneously in and out of these possibilities. Georgetti's gilt frames are the outermost in a

sequence of borders that enclose her precise arrangements. Unlike the standard minimalist framing used for most contemporary art, Georgetti's customised frames are an elaborate and intrinsic aspect of the current work. Theatrically positioning the painted content as art, the frames raise questions about the nature of taste and tradition, not only in reference to her work, but to art in general.

There is a timeless quality about the work of Carchesio and Georgetti. In the 1980s, a decade associated with excess, their works could be understood as an antidote to the 'bigger is better' approach to contemporary art. Thematic rather than narrative, their works encouraged an exploration of reality via

intuition and meaning. This exploration is possibly even more relevant in 2019. Amidst contested issues around fake news, climate change, ownership and the glamorous hierarchies of biennales, their works point to an understanding of monumentality that is not connected with physical scale but rather, with breadth and depth of ideas, association and mystery.

Dr David Sequeira
Director Margaret Lawrence Gallery

