

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

ARTFORUM

Francesco Vezzoli

Eugenio Viola



View of "Francesco Vezzoli," 2013.

MAXXI - MUSEO NAZIONALE DELLE ARTI DEL XXI SECOLO

Via Guido Reni 4A

May 29–November 24

Francesco Vezzoli as Christological triune: Indeed, there are three museums (MAXXI in Rome, MoMA PS1 in New York, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles) that will host the artist's complex project, "The Trinity," over the next year. For his first retrospective in the eternal city, the eccentric and renowned artist has created his own personal museum, which fully conveys his ironically self-referential *modus operandi* that is suspended between allusions of auteur cinema and art history, the defunctionalizing of pop icons and the updating of over-the-hill celebrities, beauty and decadence, and celebrations of the persona that redefine the territory of kitsch and a pitiless scrutiny of the mechanisms of media appropriation.

The exhibition proceeds by way of immersion, navigating the viewer through works that present this perpetual confusion of veracity and mendacity within Vezzoli's oeuvre. The short circuit generated by the installation of galleries, which are reconsidered in nineteenth-century style, is surprising and unleashes what appears to be a monumental single work that is punctuated by red damasks, boiserie, and stuccowork. One roams dazed amid very familiar embroideries like *Gloria!*, 1997, tapestries such as those in the massive installation of *Le 120 sedute di sodoma*, 2004, and a series of classical sculptures (more like technological caryatids of some sort) that support monitors showing the artist's most famous videos like *A Love Trilogy*, *Self-Portrait with*

Marisa Berenson and Edith Piaf, 1999. There is also a gallery of self-portraits where the artist crowns himself in a slyly sarcastic synthesis of art and life.

The result is a complex and polysemous path, where the parody of a traditional painting collection invites reflection on the function of art, the artist, and above all the museum today—thus the name of the exhibition, “Galleria Vezzoli.” The museum is an institution perennially poised between two antithetical but at this point complementary functions: as temple and as disposable in an era of global hyperconsumption.

Translation from Italian by Marguerite Shore