

## Press Release

### Diego Marcon: *The Parents' Room* Madre Museum, Naples

16 September - 8 November 2021

Curated by Eva Fabbris and Andrea Viliiani

# madre

fondazione donnaregina  
per le arti contemporanee

madre · museo d'arte  
contemporanea  
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Diego Marcon, *The Parents' Room*, 2021. Backstage image. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Lilia Strojec

Madre Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina in Naples presents a solo exhibition of new work by Diego Marcon (b. 1985, Busto Arsizio, Italy), curated by Eva Fabbris and Andrea Viliiani. The exhibition features a major new film, *The Parents' Room* (2021), that premiered in July at the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes Film Festival. The work also enters the permanent collection of the Madre museum.

*The Parents' Room* is a dark recital of tragedy and ambivalence. The narrative follows the operatic account of a man, perched on the edge of an unmade bed, who sings of the murders of his wife and two small children, and his own suicide. The scene is peaceful; snow drifts past the open window and a blackbird's song provides the melody for the father's account. The juxtaposition of the domestic setting with the characters' misfigured forms and the unfolding account of their twisted fate elicits feelings of confusion and revulsion. The employment of CGI

effects and prosthetics gives rise to an uncanny, cartoonish characterization. The hyper-realistic masks lend them a puppet-like form, rendering their movements reminiscent of stop-motion animation and further cultivating a distortion of reality that is characteristic of Marcon's work.

The event evoked in *The Parents' Room* is, therefore, a manifest *mise en scene*. The less equivocal element in it is the realism of the environment. In the exhibition design, conceived by the artist for the presentation at Madre, the standard bedroom where the action takes place thinly expands, proposing an architectural continuation between the film's domestic interior and the exhibition venue, and suggesting to visitors that they are passing through an uncannily similar space to that wherein the events of the drama took place. This element of engagement is further strengthened by the structure of the film as a loop, so that the vivacity of the story alternates with a phase of prolonged silence and an almost sculptural stillness. In the endless and ambiguous succession of these two moments, the mystery of what really happened to the family featured in this artwork is never solved.

*The Parents' Room* is part of Marcon's ongoing investigation into representations of reality through the destructuring of cinematic language. Exquisitely shot on 35 mm film and soundtracked with an original musical score, composed by Federico Chiari and recorded at London's Trinity School of Music, the film is a structuralist pastiche which eerily evokes the Golden Age of musical cinema and subverts codified genres like horror, slapstick comedy, musicals, and cartoons. As in Marcon's previous works, most notably *Monelle* (2017) and *Ludwig* (2018), his interest in the more sombre realms of the human psyche is represented by the recurrent motif of childhood to evoke a primary, vulnerable and potent human condition.

The world premiere of *The Parents' Room* was at Cannes Film Festival's Directors' Fortnight, the section dedicated to the most experimental and visionary practices in contemporary cinema. Subsequently, the work featured in the 32nd edition of FIDMarseille International Film Festival. Following the exhibition at the Madre museum in Naples, from 4-10 October, INCURVA will stage a screening, artist talk, and programme of educational activities for kids, in Trapani, Sicily, where Marcon undertook a residency during 2018 as part of the *Curva Blu* programme. In November, the work will be shown at the opening of the new Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Co-produced by INCURVA (Trapani) and Fondazione Donnaregina per le arti contemporanee - Museo Madre (Naples), the project is supported by the Italian Council (7th Edition, 2019), a programme by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Italian Ministry of Culture that promotes Italian contemporary art in the world. The film is produced in partnership with Primitive Film and FIDLab International co-production platform. The artist, the curators, INCURVA, and Madre would like to extend special further thanks to ERMES ERMES, Rome-Vienna; Fondazione In Between Art Film, Rome; Fondazione Memmo, Rome; and Gasworks, London.

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**Diego Marcon** (b. 1985, Busto Arsizio, Italy, based in Milan) works in drawing, film, video, and installation. Marcon's work bridges experimental structuralist cinema and popular genre cinema. His research focuses on the relationship between reality and representation, investigating the ontology of the moving image and the possibility for it to be a tool for the investigation of reality through the phantasmagorical sphere. Recent exhibitions include Fondazione Prada, Milan; Quadriennale d'arte 2020 FUORI, Rome; MACRO Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome; Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore; La Triennale di Milano; Museo MAXXI, Rome; Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan; Matadero, Madrid; OCAT, Shanghai; Artspace, Auckland; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris. His films have been screened in film festivals including Directors' Fortnight, Cannes Film Festival, Cannes; International Film Festival Rotterdam, Rotterdam; Cinéma du Réel, Paris; Courtisane, Gent; BFI, London; and doclisboa, Lisbon. In 2018, Marcon won the Henraux Foundation Sculpture Award and the MAXXI Bulgari Prize.

**The Fondazione Donnaregina per le arti contemporanee (Donnaregina Contemporary Art Foundation)** was established in 2004 by the Campania Regional Government with the mission to institute, promote and manage art museum structures for the Campania region. The Madre · museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina opened the following year in a historical building renovated by Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza Vieira in collaboration with Studio DAZ-Dumontet Antonini Zasca Architeti Associati, Naples. In-depth retrospective solo exhibitions constituted the larger part of the Madre museum's cultural offer in its first 15 years of activity. During the same period, significant work was also undertaken to bring the art of the city of Naples and the Campania region into dialogue with other artistic geographies. Between 2018 and 2020, the year in which Kathryn Weir succeeded Andrea Viliani as Madre's artistic director, the programmes increasingly opened up to multidisciplinary practices and to the museum's social role in the Neapolitan urban context.

**INCURVA** is a non-profit cultural association established in Trapani (Italy) in 2016, and it is a promoter of contemporary art in Sicily. INCURVA initiates projects that promote artistic research and production, and aims to reactivate the use of public spaces and encourage the participation of the local community. INCURVA's main activity is an international artist residency program called Curva Blu. Taking place annually, the curated program offers four artists a residency on the island of Favignana, and culminates in a public showcase and series of talks and events prepared by the artists. Past participants include Trisha Baga (USA), Lydia Ourahmane (DZ), Megan Rooney (CA), and many others. INCURVA, in collaboration with a network of publishing, production and exhibition partners also supports special production projects, the most recent being Diego Marcon's film *The Parents' Room* (2021).

**Italian Council** is the program promoted by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Italian Ministry of Culture, founded in 2017 with the aim of supporting Italian contemporary art within the framework of a broader international promotion.

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Progetto realizzato con fondi POC  
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