

Tonino Mattu

Biography & artist resume

Biography

Born in 1979 in Nuoro, Sardinia, Italy
Resides and works in Oristano, Sardinia, Italy

Tonino Mattu is known for his characteristic oil paintings of figures hovering between reality and fiction, effectuated by using a warm palette dominated by raw or burnt umber and sienna. The Italian artist continuously examines the human figure from a pictorial and socio-historical point of view. Marked by a strong affinity for history, Mattu takes on socio-political issues from the 20th century up to today in the tradition of a wider movement of *New European Painting*, such as the lingering effects and the collective trauma of the Second World War or our recent colonial history. The source material for Mattu's works is diverse. Often, the artist takes on archival photographic images and reworks them by removing them from their original context, erasing, fading, or altering certain elements.

As a result, a unique tension emerges between abstraction and figuration, using the boundaries and composition lines of the original image as a guideline from which he artistically deviates. In 2005, his immersive research of the human figure takes place in the United Kingdom before moving to Berlin, where he lived between 2009 and 2010. At this point, the socio-historical emphasis in his artistic process led to a series of works titled *La Grande Guerra* (The Great War), occupying the artist until roughly 2014. In 2010, Mattu's intensive work and research is received by a first museum show at the Quartissimo Museum in Quartu Sant'Elena, Italy, and a solo show at Sottopiano Gallery in Cagliari, Italy. In the same year, his works received further national recognition, being selected as a finalist for the prestigious Sulmona Prize.

In 2011, Mattu participated in the 54th Venice Biennale at the Italian Pavilion, followed by a second museum show in his birth town Nuoro, Sardinia, Italy. During the coming years, the Italian artist is selected for several important art awards. For instance, in 2013, Mattu was selected as a finalist for the Carlo Bonatto Minella Award. In 2014, he is yet again selected as a finalist, this time for the Pio Alferano Award. The following year, Mattu achieved first place, winning the Marchioni Award, and in 2016, he achieved international recognition by being selected as a finalist for the Wells Art Contemporary (WAC) Awards in the United Kingdom. In 2017, Mattu left Sardinia for the Romanian capital, Bucharest, working on a solo show for the renowned Italian Institute of Culture before returning to Oristano, Sardinia, where the artist currently resides and continues to work. From this point on, the international art scene embraces the works by Tonino Mattu, resulting in exhibitions in Neuhausen am Rheinfall, Switzerland, and München, Germany. As a result, Mattu's works are collected by prestigious private and public collections, including Fondazione Sardegna, Cagliari, Italy; Banca di Sassari, Sassari, Italy; Man Museum, Nuoro, Italy; Vittorio Sgarbi Collection, Italy and Fondazione Pio Alferano, Rome, Italy.

Selected solo exhibitions

- 2021 *The Golden Days*, CAI Gallery, Kortrijk, BE
- Angeli*, Hotel Mistral Oristano, IT
- 2017 *Warm up*, Italian Institute of Culture, Bucharest, RO
- 2015 *Fragmenta*, Sant'Apollonia, Salerno, IT
- 2014 *La Grande Notte*, Murats Museum, Samugheo, IT
- 2013 *Time*, Fondazione Bartoli-Felter, Cagliari, IT
- 2010 *Magnifiche sorti e progressive*, Sottopiano Gallery, Cagliari, IT

Selected group exhibitions

- 2022 *Half a Pound of Art*, Størpunkt Gallery, Munich, DE
- 2020 *Uncurated*, Størpunkt Gallery, Munich, DE
- Presagi*, Licanias Festival (curated by Anna Rita Punzo), Neoneli, IT
- The New Portrait*, Størpunkt Gallery, Munich, DE
- 2018 *Aquadrom*, Reinart Gallery, Neuhausen am Rheinfall, CH
- Contemporary. Le nuove frontiere dell'arte in Sardegna*, Antonio Ortiz Echagüe Museum, Atzara, IT
- 2017 *La Costante Resistenziale*, Man Museum, Nuoro, IT
- The Brig*, Pinacoteca Carlo Contini, Oristano, IT
- 2016 *In hoc signo*, Fondazione Sardegna, Cagliari, IT
- 2012 *Caratteri ereditari e mutazioni genetiche*, Man Museum, Nuoro, IT
- 2011 *54th Venice Biennial: Italian Pavilion*, Venice, IT
- Io so*, Project Space Askosarte, Solarussa, IT
- 2010 *Autoritratto contemporaneo*, Quartissimo Museum, Quartu Sant'Elena, IT

Collections

Banca di Sassari, Sassari, IT
CAI Collection, Kortrijk, BE
Fondazione Sardegna, Cagliari, IT
Fondazione Pio Alferano, Rome, IT
Man Museum, Nuoro, IT
Vittoria Sgarbi Collection, IT

Awards

2016	Finalist Wells Contemporary Art
2015	Winner Marchionni Award
2014	Finalist Pio Alferano Award
2013	Finalist Carlo Bonatto Minella Award
2010	Finalist Sulmona Award

Awards

2020	<i>"Tonino Mattu" in Contemporary Art Issue</i>
2017	<i>"Arte Contemporanea in Sardegna 1957–2017" by Magonza</i>
2011	<i>"Terra, XXIV Time" in Jazz</i>
2011	<i>Lo stato dell'arte, 54th Venice Biennale, Italian Pavillion. Milan: Skira.</i>

