ALMINE RECH

Francesco Vezzoli
DIVA

Mar 30 — Jun 2, 2025 | Modern Art Museum MAM, Shanghai, China

The Modern Art Museum (MAM) Shanghai announces the first-ever museum exhibition in China by Italian artist and filmmaker Francesco Vezzoli. 'Francesco Vezzoli's DIVA,' opening to the public on March 30 – June 2 with a VIP preview on March 29, pays homage to the enduring legacy of European and American cinema and the cultural weight of 20th-century stardom and historical cinematic movements. Through his embroideries of *divas*, Vezzoli disrupts the fantasy of iconic movie stars and opera primadonnas by exposing the delicate reality beneath the surface.

Spanning 25 years of Vezzoli's artistic production, each embroidery work in this show is matched with the poster of a significant film featuring the actor portrayed – such as Anna Magnani, Sophia Loren, and Silvana Mangano – and bridges Vezzoli's deeply personal cinematic history with the collective imagination shaped by film. The pairing of embroidery and poster along two long corridors with theater seats at the center invites viewers to engage with both the historical and emotional dimensions of cinema and offers a layered perspective on the relationship between stardom and artistic interpretation. By blending classic narratives with emotional introspection, the exhibition highlights cinema's enduring influence on Vezzoli's vision and the cultural landscape at large. The exhibition is curated by Nancy Spector and Shai Baitel.

Vezzoli examines the fetishism surrounding the movie industry's star system and cinematic styles such as Italian Neorealism, the French New Wave, and Spanish Surrealism to reveal the malleability of history and performative nature of fame. By inserting his own mark on these recognizable portraits, Vezzoli also pays homage to his personal experience growing up watching these films and how they shaped his own reality and challenges cultural nostalgia that surrounds these icons.

"It is with great enthusiasm that I present Divas at MAM Shanghai," says artist Francesco Vezzoli. "The exhibition unfolds along two interwoven trajectories: a historical narrative and a deeply personal reflection—both aesthetic and emotional—on cinema and its enduring legacies."

Shai Baitel, Artistic Director of MAM Shanghai says, "We are delighted to debut Francesco Vezzoli's work in China with an immersive cinematic experience. In 'Francesco Vezzoli's DIVA', Vezzoli reveals hidden truths within each portrait and invites viewers to question what is real and what is performative for the screen, bringing the power of Vezzoli's mastery of intervention as both a material and philosophical act to the forefront."