ALMINE RECH

Gioele Amaro
Missing Figures

Apr 11 — May 18, 2024 | London

Almine Rech London is pleased to present *Missing Figures*, Gioele Amaro's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from April 11 to May 18, 2024.

Missing Figures is an exhibition to which you will always arrive too late. As we stand, catching our breath before the first of the works, we are met by the radiating aura of a figure just gone. Throughout the show, Amaro teases us with perpetual almost-meetings. Domed structures that call to mind Byzantine iconography glow suggestively, as if the missing subjects might return any second. For now, their auras come to the forefront of the images, gradients of luminous hues emanating from the canvases — perhaps we were always missing the most vital aspects of these religious scenes. We pass the time absorbed by the images. We approach the canvases to examine their surfaces, we read the accompanying text, and, slowly, the aesthetics of absence emerges as a metaphor for another absence altogether, the absence of a painter.

In place of oil paints and brushes, Gioele Amaro uses digital softwares, sty-lus pens and artificial intelligence. In collaboration with these technologies, he renders images so like oil and watercolor paintings that it is sometimes impossible to discern their origins through looking alone. Their ambiguity is central to the project. In Waiting , a distinctly digital halo sits at the centre of a vacated iconographic dome. Making no attempt to disguise the medium, the halo floats like a loading icon over the painting as we wait for the religious figure — be it human, nonhuman, artistic or digital — to reappear. In mischievous ways, Amaro's work questions the viewer. In an increasingly technological world, what makes everyday life real and these digitally made paintings unreal? As we examine our own expectations of art, Amaro's work deconstructs the fetishization of the artist, their tools and processes. By drawing parallels between religious and artistic fetishization, Amaro reevaluates the role of the artist in contemporary society. The figure is absent for a moment, not out of fear or avoidance, but in order to reflect and reconsider their place in a changing world.

Many of the works on show contain a strangely organic quality. In the digital watercolor paintings, ink appears to melt into the roughly cut paper and, in collaboration with artificial intelligence, Amaro conjures patterns that diffuse and set like real paint. Still, small signs of the work's digital origins wink at us from the gallery walls. In Vaping , the collaboration ventures off course. Droplets of digital paint splatter and drip down the canvas as Amaro's artificial intelligence collaborator misinterprets his instructions to make the image more paint-like. The piece contains a mysterious ambiguity, although in a different way from the others on show, and demonstrates how artificial intelligence can expand an artist's visual lexicon. In Amaro's work, we find that the uncertainty that exists in the act of holding paintbrush to canvas can exist here too. Further, this new species of faults might more closely resemble the randomness of contemporary digital life. With this in mind, Amaro carves out his place as an artist in a changing world, creatively responding to errors and envisioning how the spontaneity that ultimately makes art and art making exciting might exist in the digital realm.

— Sophie Naufal, arts and culture journalist