

**Margherita Manzelli**

*"L'ape e la rosa"*

March 4 – April 30, 2011

Kimmerich gallery is please to present *"L'ape e la rosa" (The Bee and the Rose)*, Ravenna based painter Margherita Manzelli's first solo exhibition in New York. Manzelli's acclaimed oeuvre consists primarily of large-scale paintings and delicate works on paper that depict single figures isolated within abstract dreams-capes. Manzelli often commences her exhibitions with an "action" the night of the opening.

In this exhibition of Manzelli's work, her most recent paintings are displayed. Utilizing traditional oil painting techniques, Manzelli renders alluring depictions of lone figures one gossamer layer at a time. Each possesses wide eyes, a frail frame and a disproportionate head surrounded by fields of densely saturated color. In *"La materia deve essere ovunque"* (2011), a manganese blue unravels beneath a dark forest for a figure to lie upon, while in *"Unità di pressione - le tenebre"* (2011) a figure stands upon a soft white floor.

Arabesque patterns that rise on either side of *"Unità di pressione - le tenebre"* (2011) seem to refer to the artistic motif found in Islamic Art. These geometric forms traditionally mimic patterns found in plants and animals, continuing Manzelli's reference throughout her work to the shapes and forms of flora and fauna, especially flowers and butterflies. Markings that cover a figure's feet in *"Un giorno sulla terra"* (2011) slightly resemble henna painting, a religious ritual that involves painting with a dye derived from a flowering plant. The markings found on a young woman's face in *"La vita é nulla"* (2011) are similar but white, appearing more like a gracious skin infection.

The figures serve as invitations into an experience of gratuitous gazing—a perpetual act of suggestion. Even the lone figure found in *"Un giorno sulla terra"* (2011), with eyes closed still reveals his mid-slumber apprehension by a tilt of his head toward the viewer, that one might gain a better view.

Manzelli's figures are phantoms that slip through the tight grasp of time and space. They are nameless, placeless and indistinct. They have not been painted from life, or from photograph. Instead they each emerge from their own abyss—voids of immense desires.

For the opening of *"L'ape e la rosa"*, Manzelli sat in a room in the rear of Kimmerich Gallery alone singing both the Italian and Tunisian Anthem. The lights of the exhibition gallery were dependent upon Manzelli's voice and remained on only so long as she kept singing.

Margherita Manzelli was born in Ravenna, IT in 1968. Recent solo exhibitions include Collezione Maramotti, The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, The Art Institute of Chicago, IL, Castello di Rivoli, IT, and Museo Nazionale Delle Arti Del XX1 Secolo, Rome, IT.

Selected public collections include The Castello di Rivoli, Torino, IT, Art Institute of Chicago, IL and The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.