



GIOVANNI OZZOLA

adrift

#giovanniozzola

#adrift

smac

in
association
with

GALLERIACONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

GIOVANNI OZZOLA

adrift

Giovanni Ozzola's solo exhibition *adrift*, at SMAC Gallery in Stellenbosch follows a presentation at the South African District Six Museum Homecoming Centre in Cape Town.

adrift's showing at the District Six Museum Homecoming Centre was Ozzola's debut solo exhibition in Cape Town. This presentation marked the culmination of the artist's six-month interaction with Southern Africa. His experiences and travels in the region informed and augmented the body of work on exhibition.

A well-known space of contention in South African History, District Six embodies, in its continued discourse, the close connection between culture, location and identity. The District Six Museum and Homecoming Centre is a space in which all members of the South African and international community are invited to experience and acknowledge the on-going effects of South Africa's turbulent past.

Giovanni Ozzola is a multidisciplinary artist working primarily in photography, video and sculptural installation. Ozzola's practice demonstrates a deep sensitivity towards the phenomenon of light and its various physical characteristics which, though intangible, exercise a crucial influence on the individual's seeing and perceiving of their environment.

His main thematic interests lie in conceptualising and representing the idea of exploration, navigation and infinitude, both geographical and introspective. Ozzola's images of vast desert landscapes and quiet seascapes are minimalist compositions, relying on a strong horizon line and carefully framed by man-made structures. This juxtaposed view creates interplay between memory and a constructed space, giving his work a meditative and sublime quality.

The artist often expresses a strong desire to investigate the 'unknown' and engage with ideas of the 'outcast', both of which are stages in a journey of consciousness. He speaks about a feeling of connected-ness, despite being physically alone; "the remnants of life before, will always provide a connection to life ahead". He defines the task of the individual as consistently challenging oneself to 'overcome fears'.

By conquering one's fears, the individual is building on a collective human consciousness. "When one is overcome by their fears, the opportunity is lost for all humanity".

An example of this can be seen in the central piece titled **Sharp-Anamnesis** (2016), a brass bell found in Cape Town and stamped with the words "Amers Kerk 1952". Engraved upon the bell are significant words gleaned from local District Six community members' personal accounts of their current fears, dreams and hopes. The combination of past and present within this single object allows for the work to become a symbol of memory and communal consciousness. In addition, the bell, as a functional object, represents a musical note or sound. This sound is often used as a means of announcement or summons, a form of communication to a larger group. The sound produced by a bell, remains the same despite the circumstances, or period, in which it is produced.

The video piece, **Garage: Sometimes You Can See Much More** (2009-2011) encourages the viewer to acknowledge a self-awareness and connection to the landscape. As with many of the artist's photographs, the viewer finds an omnipresent opening, in this case, the garage door, acting as a portal displaying the infinite horizon. Ozzola, akin to historic landscape painters, plays with perception by juxtaposing subject matter in the foreground and background, offering the viewer a delicately constructed simulation of an imagined space, an ephemeral quality usually associated with painting. This video is a perfect example of Ozzola's ability to create work that offers viewers 'an experience of an experience'. Although one is not physically present in front of the horizon, one is confronted by an atmosphere and 'feeling' of connectivity to the terrain, and yet simultaneously, an extreme awareness of the self and the individual's significance within the landscape. While this piece was not created in South Africa, the associations are undeniable, resonating with a contemporary Southern African climate of differentiation between self and other.



About the Sky - Intuition,
2015

Gicleé Print on Epson Hot Press Natural Paper 150 x 216 cm
(1 of 1)

Alight-alone (2016), an installation of found maritime propellers, is representative of the potential for energy and acceleration. A geometrically perfect instrument, the propeller's function is to direct and move the individual, and this potential was created and, remains, controlled by the individual, should one be willing to acknowledge the opportunity, regardless of what lies ahead. The propellers are placed in the formation of the Southern Cross constellation. This formation is imperative to Southern African navigation and references the ancient method of placement and prehistoric desire to fathom one's environment. Knowledge of this method, is passed down through the ages, becoming a collective heritage. Regardless of one's solitary reality, the knowledge of direction will always offer the individual a sense of belonging.

Cicatrici- Verso se Stessi (2015), broadly translated into English; "Scars- Toward Ourselves" comprises of lines carved in smooth aluminum plates and filled with copper or bronze.

The precious metal lines on these wall sculptures, retrace and entwine the journeys of past explorers as scars on the skin of human discourse, allowing future generations a route forward and serving as an example of a collective human identity. Ozzola exhibits a resonating emotional connection between past and present, spanning diverse narratives of location and humankind.

This exhibition is presented against a backdrop of South Africa's complex history of land and the dislocation of communities. Discovery and exploration are themes that thread themselves intricately throughout Ozzola's oeuvre, primarily conceptually, and later materialising as symbols and commemorations of historical expeditions. These ideas are inseparable from South Africa's heritage, hence Ozzola's presentation in Cape Town and Stellenbosch.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Giovanni Ozzola was born in 1982 in Florence, Italy and currently lives and works in Tenerife, Canary Islands. Starting his career in 2001 as part of the group show; *Happiness: A Survival Guide for Art and Life*, curated by David Elliott and Pier Luigi Tazzi at the Mori Art Museum of Tokyo, Japan, Ozzola has since exhibited world-wide, with extensive solo presentations as well as participation in numerous group shows.

His latest solo exhibitions include *Cercando Nella Notte Persa* at Spazio9 in Bologna, Italy and *adrift* at the District Six Museum Homecoming Centre in Cape Town, South Africa, both in 2016. Ozzola also recently showed in *Earth and Ever After*, a group exhibition for the 21,39 Jeddah Art event in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and his work is currently on view in 'YOU + ME = US' at Galleria Continua in Havana, Cuba as well as *Sistemi di Visione/Sistemi de Realtà* at the Centro Espositivo per le Arti Contemporanee SMS, San Michele Degli Scalzi in Pisa, Italy.

Previous solo exhibitions include *Naufragio*, curated by Ludovico Pratesi at the Centro Arti Visive Pescheria in Pesaro, Italy in 2011; *Routes and Stars* at Galleria Continua in San Gimignano, Italy and *Castaway Depot: 41° 7' 31" N 16° 52' 0" E – In a Sentimental Mood* at Doppelganger in Bari, Italy in 2012 and *La Théorie des Comètes* at Galleria Continua in Beijing in 2013.

Notable group exhibitions include; *On Another Scale*, curated by Ricardo Sardenberg at Galleria Continua in San Gimignano, Italy in 2014 and the international touring exhibition *LANDSEASKY: Revisiting Spatiality* in Video, curated by Kim Manchan and presented at Artsonje Center in Seoul, Korea; OCT Contemporary Art Terminal in Shanghai, China; Guangdong Museum of Art Guangzhou, China; Griffith University Art Gallery and MAAP SPACE in Brisbane, Australia during 2014 – 2015.

In 2015, Ozzola presented his first solo exhibition in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Dove Nasce Il Vento* was first shown at Gazelli Art House in London earlier in 2015 and included his world toured video work *Garage – Sometimes You Can See Much More* (2009-2011). He also exhibited in *More Spaces* at the Palazzo Pigorini in Palma, Italy; *Tu Dois Changer Ta Vie*, curated by Fabrice Bousteau at LILLE 3000 in Lille, France, and formed part of *Follia Continua!*, under direction of José-Manuel Gonçalves, at Le Cénquatre–Paris, in Paris, France.

Among Ozzola's awards are the Premio Cairo (2011), Premio Terna (2008) and Seat Pagine Gialle (2007).

Giovanni Ozzola

About the Sky - Intuition

2015

Gicleé Print on Epson Hot Press Natural Paper

150 x 216 cm

Ed. of 1

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Sharp-Anamnesis

2016

Found bell, shipping rope

40 cm diameter, length of rope variable

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Ghost Town with Dreams

2015

Giclee print on hot press natural paper

150 x 216 cm

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Wrecks, Hope and Pathos

2016

Found maritime chart, gold paint

82 x 102.5 cm

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Alight-alone
2016
Found propellers
Dimensions variable

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Sand, Warmth and Light

2015

Giclee print on epson hot press natural paper

150 x 216 cm

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Garage: sometimes you can see much more
2009-2011
Audio/Video, Full HD Blu-Ray, Colour
500 x 250 cm
2:39 min loop

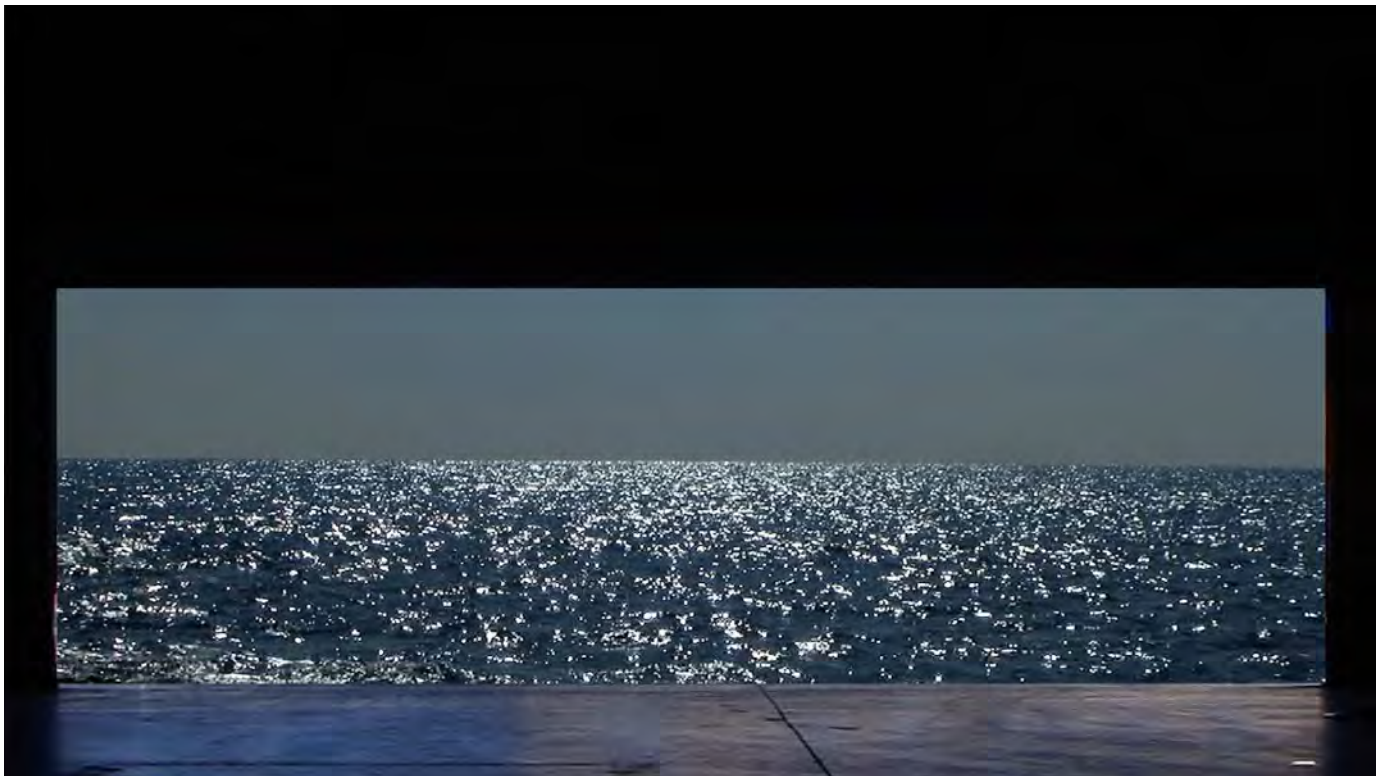
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Cicatrici-verso se stessi

2015

Aluminium, copper and bronze

21 x 17 cm each (Installation of 8)

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Cicatrici-verso se stessi
2015
Aluminium, Copper and Bronze
21 x 17 cm

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Wrecks, Hope and Pathos II
2016
Found maritime chart, gold paint
100 x 66 cm

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2016

Installation View

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2016
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