

Galerie XII
Los Angeles

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PAOLO VENTURA **THE MAN WHO COULD** **WALK** **THROUGH WALLS**

OPENING DAY : Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024
Frieze week, Feb. 29 - March 3, 2024
Exhibition: Feb. 24 - May 4, 2024

For his new solo exhibition in Los Angeles, the Milanese artist imagined an original project freely inspired by the Parisian writer **Marcel Aymé's short story, Le Passe-Muraille** **The Man Who Could Walk Through Walls** which is located in the Paris of the 1940s.



Paolo Ventura (Italy, 1968) is a multidisciplinary artist who uses different techniques (photography, collages, painting, sculpture drawing, scenography) to tell visual stories. For the past twenty years, **Paolo Ventura** has been pursuing a profoundly original work, crossed by a *disturbing sensation of timelessness*. Built around images of surreal "**invented worlds**" or "**unrealities**" in which the story unfolds like

a dream, somewhere between imagination and memory *War Souvenir* (USA, 2005) evoked the atmosphere of the First World War in the form of clay puppets and painted cardboard decorations. ***On his return to Italy, the characters of his Shorts Stories are embodied by himself and some members of his family (his wife, their son, his brother), dressed up as magicians, jugglers, harlequins, in front of scenery also painted by himself. All his work is inhabited by the notion of double, staging and illusion.***

The Passe-Muraille tells the story of a very ordinary man, a modest employee living in Montmartre, who holds an extraordinary gift: he can cross the walls. By using this gift, he embarks on many adventures but he will eventually lose his gift and find himself trapped forever by a wall. Using this tale as a pretext, Ventura imagines scenes of Parisian life, a romantic and violent story that crosses eras in the form of transversal works including drawings, photographs, paintings, models and paper sculptures. The exhibition will be accompanied by an original artist's book.

Biography

The son of an illustrator, the childhood of **Paolo Ventura** (born 1968 in Milan) was rocked by the sketches and stories of his father. This wonder and this childhood passion always permeate his work of narrative staging where we regularly find images of street artists, theatres and cinemas, which are not without evoking certain compositions of Toulouse-Lautrec's paintings. **Paolo Ventura's scenes are tinged with nostalgia but have an element of the realm of the strange or the fantastic that echo his childhood: an overflowing imagination for those who think that the real world always seems a little too gray.** After studying painting in Milan, Ventura devoted himself to photography and moved to New York where he collaborated with fashion magazines, bringing from that time a very personal look in this formatted media. At the same time, he began working on personal projects that led to a first commission from the Washington War Museum. *War Souvenir* marks the launch of Paolo Ventura's artistic career with exhibitions in major capitals, from Moscow to Milan, from Paris to New York. Since then, he has benefited from thirty solo exhibitions in institutions and galleries, and participated in as many group exhibitions. In 2020, on the occasion of an important retrospective at the Centro Italiano per la Fotografia in Turin, Silvana published a catalogue raisonné of his work.

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