

rosenfeld porcini

press release

nicola samorì

## l'âge mûr

10 october – 20 november 2014

private view : thursday 9 october  
6:30-8:45pm

37 rathbone street london w1t 1nz



June27 (crowned), 2014, oil on copper, 120x100cm

rosenfeld porcini is proud to present *L'Âge Mûr*, a first UK solo exhibition of Italian artist Nicola Samorì, which follows his initial participation in the sculpture exhibition *Memory* and in *The Continuation of Romance*, a group exhibition exploring the renaissance of painting in contemporary art. The gallery will showcase new marble and wax sculptures as well as Samorì's latest series of paintings on canvas, copper, linen and wood.

At its essence, the whole corpus of Nicola Samorì's work is a profound meditation on time and the fragility of existence: His earliest works appeared to be paintings of X-rays of individuals as if seen in a morgue – e.g. *Der Neid*, 2005; other works were constructed as if assembled from archeological remnants – e.g. *Siliqua*, 2007; and more recently, Samorì has turned his attention to re-examining famous artworks from the Western canon, notably the paintings of Spanish seventeenth century master Jusepe Ribera. Although his starting point will be a brilliantly executed copy of the original, his concern is essentially to apply a contemporary painting and sculptural approach to the works as a comment on the original piece. Samorì's reinterpretation of Ribera's *The Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew* (*Ebbro*, 2011) is seen as if in a memory, but instead of the saint's skin being flayed the artist peels back the rich crimson paint from the canvas to give a totally contemporary stance to the work. His pictures oscillate between 'wounds' made on the original painting and the loss of the image. The title *L'Âge Mûr* is inspired by a well-known sculpture by the French artist Camille Claudel. The largest work in the exhibition is a painting on linen where Samorì recreates *L'Âge Mûr* but rewritten as if it was seen through the mediation of a small model made with re-used materials. The sense of movement when we view the picture is evident as one feels the form has stepped back into its larval state. Historically artists created form out of material; Samorì is now involved in reversing this process by creating a form and then partially taking it back to its material state. So, in synthesis, the artist is reversing the traditional historical process.

Nicola Samorì's use of peeling paint takes us to heart of one of his fascinations: Human skin and what lies beneath it. He has used both painting and sculpture to repeatedly explore this concern. He is, in the highest sense, a figurative artist. His work revolves around the figure both from the outside and from the inside, and more specifically on how his chosen mediums can explore this. There are pictures of faces where his painterly interventions are almost abstract sculptural rendering of the skin, bone and muscle being torn away from the surface as if in a dismemberment. Seeing these works inevitably recalls Rembrandt, Soutine and Bacon's paintings of animal carcasses and their obsession with the texture of decaying flesh. Whereas some of his paintings achieve certain physicality, his wax sculptures bear the stamp of a painter as he colours and discolours the medium.

Nicola Samorì is continually experimenting with new materials. His paintings can be on wood, canvas, linen or copper. The last mentioned signals a return to a surface wildly used amongst the Old Masters for its ability to give a sense of preciousness, extraordinarily fine brush strokes and a unique play of light – however, almost always used in small formats to maximize the jewel like quality. Samorì has managed to produce the most remarkable

paintings made on copper, which are as large as a metre eighty by a metre twenty. In sculpture, apart from plaster and wax, which he has embraced for some years now, the artist has recently added onyx and marble. Samori's foraging curiosity causes him to explore how each material responds to his narrative obsession; in fact the marble sculpture in the exhibition actually appears as if he has deconstructed the figure – as if enormous fingers had sculpted an approximate effigy of a 'prima donna'. This represents another radical departure when compared to previous works he has made using the same material. Recently his narrative has taken him down still other new avenues: Large canvases covered with copper where he has cut into the material to create the image. These works, which completely eschew paint are full of mystery, the original figurative image being progressively buried into the surface. Samori has discovered ways of working with copper, which have never previously been seen in *The History of Art*.

This current exhibition will also feature small, mainly grey paintings, which appear to be taken from old documentary photographs. The images are not sharp as if buried in time and allow Samori to further develop his ideas concerning the passing of time and the texture of surface. Another recent departure for the artist has been his butterfly series, which give the impression of a Natural History museum display case. Clearly the first association made is with the butterfly works of Damien Hirst. However Samori's response is that of a painter: Paint is uniquely capable of making the beauty and extreme fragility of a butterfly's existence such a poignant metaphor. Some butterflies are perfectly formed whilst others are in various states of decay and still others are mere coagulated collections of oil paint. Nicola Samori's response to Damien Hirst's collection of dead butterflies recalls Gerhard Richter's retort to the *Urinal* of Marcel Duchamp: An exquisite small canvas of a painted toilet roll. In these works, Samori combines many of his principle preoccupations: Language, be it painting or sculpture, time and the reinventing of art history, in this case, the still life.

Nicola Samori's referencing of the history of art to explore his very particular contemporary voice makes him an emblematic artist for rosenfeld porcini. Yet whilst many artists who have attempted this have fallen on the many shards of glass that lie in wait, Samori has both reaffirmed the continual relevance of our artistic heritage and, contemporaneously, found a unique way of establishing his own voice within the current artistic panorama.

### Notes to the editors

Nicola Samori was born in 1977 in Forli, Italy.

The artist lives and works in Bagnacavallo. He has exhibited widely both internationally and in the UK including solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle, Kiel; the TRAF0 Museum, Szczecin; Museo d'arte contemporanea, Lissone; Palazzo Chiericati, Vicenza; Kunsthalle Tubingen, Germany; and Santa Maria delle Croci, Ravenna. His pieces are in numerous public and private collections internationally. Nicola Samori featured in the Italian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale. rosenfeld porcini has exhibited works of the artist in previous themed group exhibitions including *Memory* (2011) and *The Poetics of Romance* (2012).

### Rosenfeld Porcini Gallery

Founded in June 2011 by Ian Rosenfeld and Dario Porcini, rosenfeld porcini occupies a prime location in the heart of the dynamic gallery district of London's Fitzrovia with 3,000 square feet of gallery space. rosenfeld porcini has a strong international outlook. The gallery values a cross referencing approach both through exhibitions curated around themes in art and a cultural program focusing on unique events involving artists across all disciplines – visual arts, performance and music, which are meant to challenge perceptions.

### Exhibition Schedule

Nov – Jan 2015	WOOD: group exhibition with works by Sebastian Gordin, Roberto Almagno, Leonardo Drew & Herbert Golser
Feb – Mar 2015	Cesare Lucchini: Solo Exhibition
April – May	Group exhibition exploring drawing

Nearest Tube:	Oxford Circus, Tottenham Court Road & Goodge Street
Opening Times:	Tuesday to Friday 11am - 7pm & Saturday 11am - 6pm