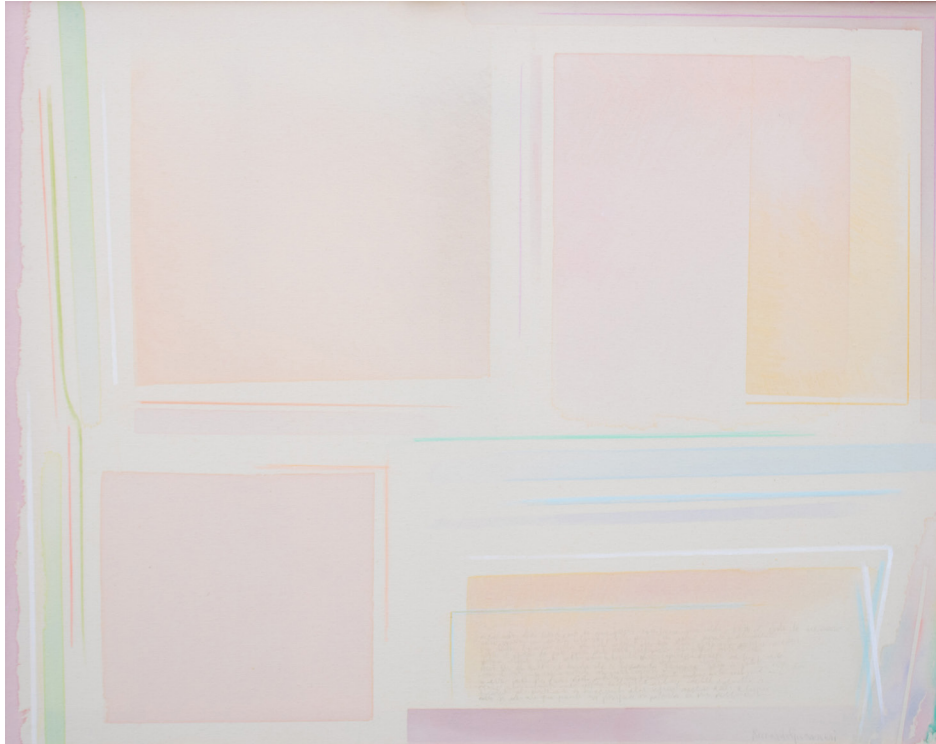


# RICCARDO GUARNERI, MARIANNA GIOKA, MIN WOO NAM

## WITHIN AND BEYOND - LOOKING INTO THE INFINITE



Riccardo Guarneri, 'Una rivisitazione in rosa', 2022. 95x120cm.

*'Within and Beyond - Looking into the Infinite'*  
15 December 2023 - 16 February 2024

Opening reception: Thursday 14 December 2023  
6.30-8.30pm

gallery rosenfeld is delighted to present the exhibition 'Within and Beyond - Looking into the Infinite', which will feature the works of Riccardo Guarneri, Marianna Gioka and Min Woo Nam.

Each of these three artists are very different, both in the language they use in their art and in their very different ages, yet all share similar preoccupations. None of them are making any political, economic, or social declarations but rather they are united in a metaphysical search for meaning both deep within us and beyond us in the unfathomable universe.

The eldest of the three is the artist Riccardo Guarneri. His finely wrought and refined artworks are realised with the simplest of materials; pencils, coloured crayons, rulers, rubbers etc. Essentially no different from those that young children utilise when they take their first steps into art. The titles are a literal description of the apparent contents of the works. However, the apparent prosaicness of the titles is a very powerful spiritual force. The works exude a sense of tranquillity and peacefulness and are an invitation for us to reflect on our inner being but also the wider universe beyond our world. Last year, Guarneri suffered a serious health problem which, thankfully, he has fully overcome, yet this led to a change in his latest works where there is a palpable sense of things disappearing into pure empty space. However, there is no drama, merely a reinforced sense of gradual peace. In a very different language, fifty years earlier, the Italian painter Giorgio Morandi created a similar effect in the mind of the viewer. Both artists' works share an apparent simplicity and purity which invite us to a profound meditation.

Marianna Gioka's works are, in contrast, extraordinarily complex, full of minute marks made with a bewildering array of pens. One would imagine that an artist working in such minute and painstaking detail would realise only very small works but, in reality, Gioka's works are large; each being a prolonged labour of love. Before the artist begins with the mark making, she paints a background of creamy or dark colour depending on the atmosphere she wishes to create with the finished work. This increases the composition's richness. As viewers, we gaze and get lost in this most elaborate of spider webs of marks, the richness of the finished picture reveals itself gradually as we progressively get lost in this universe so redolent with mystery.

The paintings of the Korean artist Min Woo Nam take us immediately into a metaphysical landscape. The works have a hypnotic quality where the elements of light, darkness and colour are the absolute protagonists. The mystical light which is so fundamental to Nam's vision appears not to be a light of this world but something more far-reaching and profound, making our journey a spiritual one into life's eternal questions. Although the mystery and wonder of light has been a constant exploration over the centuries, there is a quality to Nam's painting which feels very original. It's interesting to compare his paintings to Hiroshi Sugimoto's photographic seascapes which, wonderful as they are, can never give us the emotional richness of paint.



Min Woo Nam, 'Horizon III', 2023. 150x180cm.



Marianna Gioka, 'Untitled', 2021. 185x185cm.

All three artists open a window for us to meditate on our own deepest feelings and impulses in the same way that a Mark Rothko painting or a work by Pierre Soulages with its unfathomable blackness, result in us embarking on an emotional dialogue with ourselves about the great metaphysical questions of life. Although, in our contemporary art world, we appear fixated on art as a vehicle to talk about political and social questions of the day, this places a great limitation and barrier of what art can communicate. Does a great work have to be about something politically or socially relevant? All three artists in different ways present us with a window into infinity: Riccardo Guarneri with his pure, empty space, Marianna Gioka with her extraordinarily complex intricate marks which, as we stare within, presents us with a window into infinity and finally Min Woo Nam's hazy divisions between light and darkness, land and sky or sea and sky. The miracle which great art can trigger within us has surely no limitations and artists such as Riccardo Guarneri, Marianna Gioka and Min Woo Nam exert in their more distilled and mysteriously powerful way other, profound opportunities for reflection-on our lives on this planet.

**Riccardo Guarneri (b.1933, Florence)** has been acquired by several international collections such as The Guggenheim Museum, The Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, The Israel Museum, Ottawa National Gallery, Stedelijk Museum and the Museo del Novecento in Milan. The artist was invited to contribute to the 57th Biennale Internazionale d'Arte di Venezia "Viva arte Viva", curated by Christine Macel. Riccardo Guarneri's works have also been shown in the solo exhibition "Pittura Pittura" at the Museo Novecento in Florence. A selection of his works from the 57th Venice Biennale was shown in the exhibition "Variazioni del sentire" at Palazzo Sarcinelli in Conegliano. Guarneri's works were included in "Mostra Antologica" in Palazzo Pitti in Florence. Guarneri has also presented his works at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome alongside Rodolfo Arico and Giuseppe Uncini. Guarneri participated in a group exhibition at the Quadriennale in Rome with Alighiero Boetti, Enrico Castellani, Domenico Gnoli, Jannis Kounellis, Piero Manzoni and several other major artists. The artist's first retrospective show took place at Westfälischer Kunstverein in Munster. Guarneri has participated in numerous art fairs. He was invited to the 33rd Venice Biennale where his works were presented in dialogue with Agostino Bonalumi and Paolo Scheggi. They were also featured in "Weiss auf Weiss" curated by Udo Kultermann at Kunsthalle Bern. He has taught painting in Carrara, Bari, Florence and the Venice Academy of Art.

**Marianna Gioka (b.1980, Greece)** attended the Pratt Institute, NYC (2006), the School of Fine Arts at Madrid (2002-2003) and the School of Fine Arts at Athens (2000-2005). The artist currently lives and works in Athens. Gioka had numerous solo and group exhibitions in Greece and her works have been shown at international art fairs. Her paintings are regularly acquired for private and public collections including: Eurobank; Marfin Bank, Benaki Museum, Vore Museum, the National Theatre of Greece and private collections in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, USA, France, Italy and Greece.

**Min Woo Nam (b.1994, Korea)** currently lives and works in London. Min Woo graduated from the London School of Economics in 2016. After graduation, he was conscripted into the Korean army and served for two years. During his service, he was stationed in South Sudan as part of the UN peacekeeping force. The unfamiliar environment there inspired him to embark on a personal exploration of the nature of existence and the notion of 'Self'. Min Woo's work has been exhibited internationally, including at the RA Summer Exhibition in 2022.