

PRESS RELEASE

OTTONELLA MOCELLIN - NICOLA PELLEGRINI

together forever

**Wednesday 11 May 2005, 7.00 p.m.
Galleria Lia Rumma, Milan**

The Lia Rumma Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of the new work ***Together forever*** by Ottonella Mocellin and Nicola Pellegrini on Wednesday 11 May 2005 at 7.00 p.m.

In the video and the photographs on display, the two artists explore current political and cultural events as well as the conflictual aspects of love relationships through a reinterpretation of the myth of Salome and St John the Baptist.

The act of decapitation, far from being demeaned to the status of a barbaric act, is assimilated in all the wars waged in the name of God. The love story that Ottonella Mocellin and Nicola Pellegrini imagine has taken place between the two characters enables us to view the event from a different perspective. Their antagonistic relationship can be interpreted, albeit on a small scale, as symbolic of the conflict between peoples. John the Baptist is seen as a moraliser who is capable of predicting great tragedies, but he is unable to understand his partner's feelings and to grasp the difference between the universal and the individual. Salome is a sensual woman who dances out of a healthy instinct for frivolity, but she seems incapable of looking at reality in its overall complexity. The choice of subject-matter also gives the artists the opportunity to examine the art of the past since Salomè, who is portrayed in the New Testament exclusively in relation to the death of St John the Baptist, acquires an independence and depth of character through the numerous depictions and interpretations that have been made during various phases of the history of art. In ***together forever***, the duality between joy and tragedy is a constant theme. The dancer holding the head on a dish as she moves on a musical box to the notes of *What a wonderful world* by Louis Armstrong (one of the songs that was banned in the United States after September 11), overturns the stereotype of the classic musical box, transforming it from a toy into something tragic while, in the enticing image of Salomè/Ottonella dancing with her back turned to the observer, the presence of the knife preannounces an act of violence. In another photo, John/Nicola is suspended in the air in the darkness of an urban landscape and looks at the world upside down, forced by his new state to consider other points of view. The search for the right perspective is reinforced by a phrase uttered on the video: "*da questa prospettiva tutto è rovesciato, cioè finalmente nel verso giusto*" (from this perspective, everything is turned upside down, finally in the right way). The idea of overturning things is also central to the photo of the typesetting machine, viewed from above, which shows an extract of a conversation taken from the video, and which is understandable only if read the other way around. The triple projection of the video installation is punctuated by the whispered conversation between the two characters. Both are depicted in contemporary contexts, she at the funfair and he at a market though these places, captured in their nocturnal desolation, contain a dream-like quality that gives space to images evoked by the surrounding sounds of dialogue.

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