

Unveiling the Unknown

Lou Jaworski, Theo Viardin

Curated by Domenico de Chirico at TEMPESTA Gallery, Milan

The exhibition *Unveiling the Unknown* seeks to explore and progressively dissolve the boundary between what we know and what eludes our immediate understanding. The works of Lou Jaworski and Théo Viardin invite us to experience a visual and sensory journey that not only stimulates our sight but also engages our sense of touch, guiding us through a path that unveils unknown dimensions, alternative realities, and previously uncharted perspectives.

Humankind is constantly subjected to profound transformations, leading to integration with increasingly complex and unimaginable environments, shedding its skin to merge with a world that is becoming ever more hybrid. This process marks a crucial moment in the evolution of our species, a transition in which the individual, for the sake of continuity, is compelled to renew their relationship with existence. This relationship is continually reinvented and adapted, assigning new meanings to things in an effort to preserve their original essence.

The concept of *unveiling*, which characterizes the exhibition, evokes the allegorical notion of Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, where prisoners, chained inside a cavern, see only shadows projected onto a wall, believing these shadows to be reality. This exhibition identifies with the precise moment when the prisoners step out of the cave and see, for the first time, authentic reality. Similarly, the works of Jaworski and Viardin invite us to liberate our gaze, transcend appearances, and engage with what is, at first glance, invisible, mysterious, or hidden.

In this context, assuming as certain that there is no subordinative relationship between perception and extension—an inescapable condition from the outset—we can affirm that only through an embodied subject can we grasp the world's vibrations beyond its intellectual dimension, in a balanced interplay between transcendence and immanence.

This call to explore new dimensions of reality finds a parallel in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's reflections on bodily perception. Merleau-Ponty explored how perception is not merely a mental act but also a physiological one, emphasizing that our experience of the world is mediated by the body itself. In this perspective, the works of the two artists seem to invite us to rediscover our perception of the world through the body, exploring the countless sensations that inhabit it in order to access meanings that extend beyond a mere, and sometimes bleak, rational observation.

Lou Jaworski, with his extraordinary ability to manipulate materials and forms, disrupts the historically immutable laws of statuary, creating sensory scenarios that challenge the certainties of tangible reality and stimulate deep reflection on visual perception. His works, rooted in a clear post-minimalist matrix, invite not only observation but also a tactile exploration beyond the surface, revealing hidden layers of meaning and opening doors to unknown universes. Through an intimate and

evocative approach, the artist investigates the boundary between the physical and surreal world, bringing forth the collective unconscious and unveiling the *noumenon*—the essence of a reality that, as Kant taught us, eludes direct comprehension. His use of significant materials such as marble, ferrite magnets, graphite, and meteorites imbues his works with a universal and timeless quality, while the integration of server rack hardware as an avant-garde architectural structure contributes to the exploration of material memory and preservation. His monumental, unreal, and evocative sculptural creations amplify the properties of materials, rhythmically functioning as catalysts of thought and energy.

Jaworski's contribution to *Unveiling the Unknown* unfolds in multiple directions: from a site-specific intervention that permeates the gallery walls—an abstract mural created with meteorite dust, its shades reminiscent of silver—to the monolithic sculpture *Gemini*, whose form is generated by the magnetic properties of the material itself. The structure, with its vertical form, evokes the image of a figure that is not stable or fixed but ephemeral, continuously subjected to change. The white arrows that distinguish it, drawn on the ferrite magnets during production, indicate the direction of magnetism. Additionally, there are two wall sculptures, *YYYY* and *EQUALITY*, which symbolize, respectively: the former, the abstraction of a symbol generally used as a placeholder for inserting the year in the digital world, which, moreover, represents all years, the calendar, natural cycles, the alternation of seasons, and, more broadly, the cosmos; the latter sculpture reproduces the familiar "=" symbol, commonly used in mathematics and geometry but also to express concepts of balance, equal opportunity, and, more simply, equality.

Theo Viardin, in turn, challenges visual and conceptual perception, inviting the viewer to go beyond appearances to uncover truths hidden in the indolence of the ordinary. His paintings, rich in tension and suggestion, reveal beauty in imperfections and transitions, exploring the human condition through a visceral and elusive language. With fluid forms and colors oscillating between metallic, livid, sanguine, and incandescent tones, the artist investigates the connection between the human, the creature, and the creator, giving life to a new mythology that delves into the deepest and most unknown existential mysteries. His enigmatic and evocative imagery provokes reflections on otherness and vulnerability, dissolving the boundaries between the visible and the invisible and fostering a more empathetic, corporeal, and immediate perception of reality. His imposing figures, appearing to gently watch over one another, are crafted using a layered approach to oil painting, alternating gestural brushstrokes with ethereal glazes. Moreover, Viardin's work, born from a constant and profound dialogue with philosophy, explores the human condition and its possible evolutions, employing a particularly nihilistic *biopunk* approach as a tool to reflect on the end of humanity as we know it.

In light of all this, we can affirm with certainty that *Unveiling the Unknown* is not merely an exhibition but an invitation to look around and explore the unknown, both within and beyond ourselves. It is an opportunity to immerse oneself in a space of

reflection, mystery, and revelation. The dialogue between the dissimilar yet complementary artistic sensibilities of Jaworski and Viardin stimulates multisensory curiosity, enriching our understanding of reality and challenging the fear that too often surrounds the unknown. Thus, much like Merleau-Ponty, in his attempt to define the self-affective structure of pure feeling, states that *Touching is being touched. The flesh, my body, is the pivot of the world that extends through it*, this exhibition reminds us that art is not just vision but a full-bodied physical and sensory experience, capable of profoundly connecting us with the world around us in its purest and most authentic sense. *Unveiling the Unknown* thus invites us to transcend mere observation—to touch, feel, and live every experience, embracing its most genuine and profound meaning as it leads us into the discovery of the unknown and the opposing forces of attraction that characterize it, a glowing murmur pulsing beneath the surface of reality.

Domenico de Chirico