

# CHANGE WITH THE RHYTHM

An exhibition of artworks

by

Endri Kosturi

*13th July – 11th August 2013*

*Oaktree & Tiger Gallery*



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An exhibition of works by Endri Kosturi  
Exhibition from 14th July – 11th August 2013 at  
the Oaktree & Tiger Gallery

"Kosturi's multi-faceted and introspective canvases delicately blend recognizable figurative elements such as the sea with an abstract sensibility that is unique to the artist."

- Nico Epstein

"I want to bring to the viewer the performance aspect of my paintings - their own musicality to be precise. While each painting was created, I was hearing a specific tune; at times music helps me to elevate my creativity. I want the viewer to experience the original musical moment of creation (the beginning) of each painting, yet also to experience the final finished work visually (the end)"

- Endri Kosturi

For more details, email us at [info@oaktreeandtiger.com](mailto:info@oaktreeandtiger.com)  
A selection of paintings, and more, may be viewed on the website  
[www.oaktreeandtiger.com](http://www.oaktreeandtiger.com)

Continuing in its trajectory of offering intimate, approachable and philosophical exhibitions, Oaktree & Tiger is pleased to present the *Seelight* suite of canvases as part of the exhibition, *Change with the Rhythm*, by the multidisciplinary London based painter and poet, Endri Kosturi.

Kosturi's multi-faceted and introspective canvases delicately blend recognizable figurative elements such as the sea with an abstract sensibility that is unique to the artist. Each of the large sized canvases treat the viewer with a brightened set of tonalities; indeed they are imbued with natural luminescence stemming from a purposefully delicate use of yellow found in various forms throughout each of the images. Collectively, the works interact together to light up the gallery space.

Brightness is coupled with the process of layering and philosophical inquiry. It represents a means of illumination rather than a descriptive mechanism. What does this journey through light stand for? Where should we place our emphasis, to please a sensorial perspective – our vision of light – or to uncover what light does to us?

Nevertheless, the dynamic interplay of Kosturi's brush strokes and scrawls is not to be taken lightly. The raw abandonment of the painter's scribbling recalls those of another modernist master, Cy Twombly who, like Kosturi, spent a long portion of his life in Italy. Take, for example, the poetic and synaesthetic formants of *Green Ray*. The work's title refers the optical phenomenon that occurs every day for a second at dawn and sunset, where the observer witnesses a single green flicker. This in turn is presented through the calligraphic scratches across the work's surface which reveal lemon green hues of light.

Concurrently, there is a musicality that surrounds the artist's practice. Each work is evocative of an operatic movement wherein the artist choses a time of day for an individual sonata. Beyond the significance of light, music is an all-encompassing presence in the life of the artist. Kosturi listens to music as he paints, from dusk to dawn. Thus, beyond the physicality of the presented material, Kosturi's engagement with music is not to be overlooked.

As a painter, he enjoys listening to a wide array of compositions while he works. Reciprocally, each of the abstracts can be, and indeed the artist encourages them to be, enjoyed in tandem with song. Erik Satie provides perhaps the most prominent musical inspiration for Kosturi's work. Erik Satie's music, like the painter's practice, has refused to be pigeonholed by allying itself to one aesthetic and often presents a deceptively pared down minimalism that is paradoxically both layered and complex.

Ultimately beyond its inspirations and subject matter, *Change with the Rhythm* reflects the free-spirited acumen of the artist himself in its depth, power and personality. The exhibition is a presentation of works developed from the artist's inner eye: figments of his consciousness and expressions of his imagination.

Endri Kosturi (b.1980) is an Albanian born painter and poet. He has exhibited internationally with previous solo and group exhibitions in London, Paris, Triest Rome and Milan. His work is also held in private collections in Austria, Germany, Russia and Hong Kong.

**Nico Epstein,**  
*Art Journalist*



**Untitled**

140cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

2012



**Imagine**

140cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

*2012*



**Rainbow of Hope**

140cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

*2012*



**Rainbow**

140cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

*2012*



**Untitled**

140cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

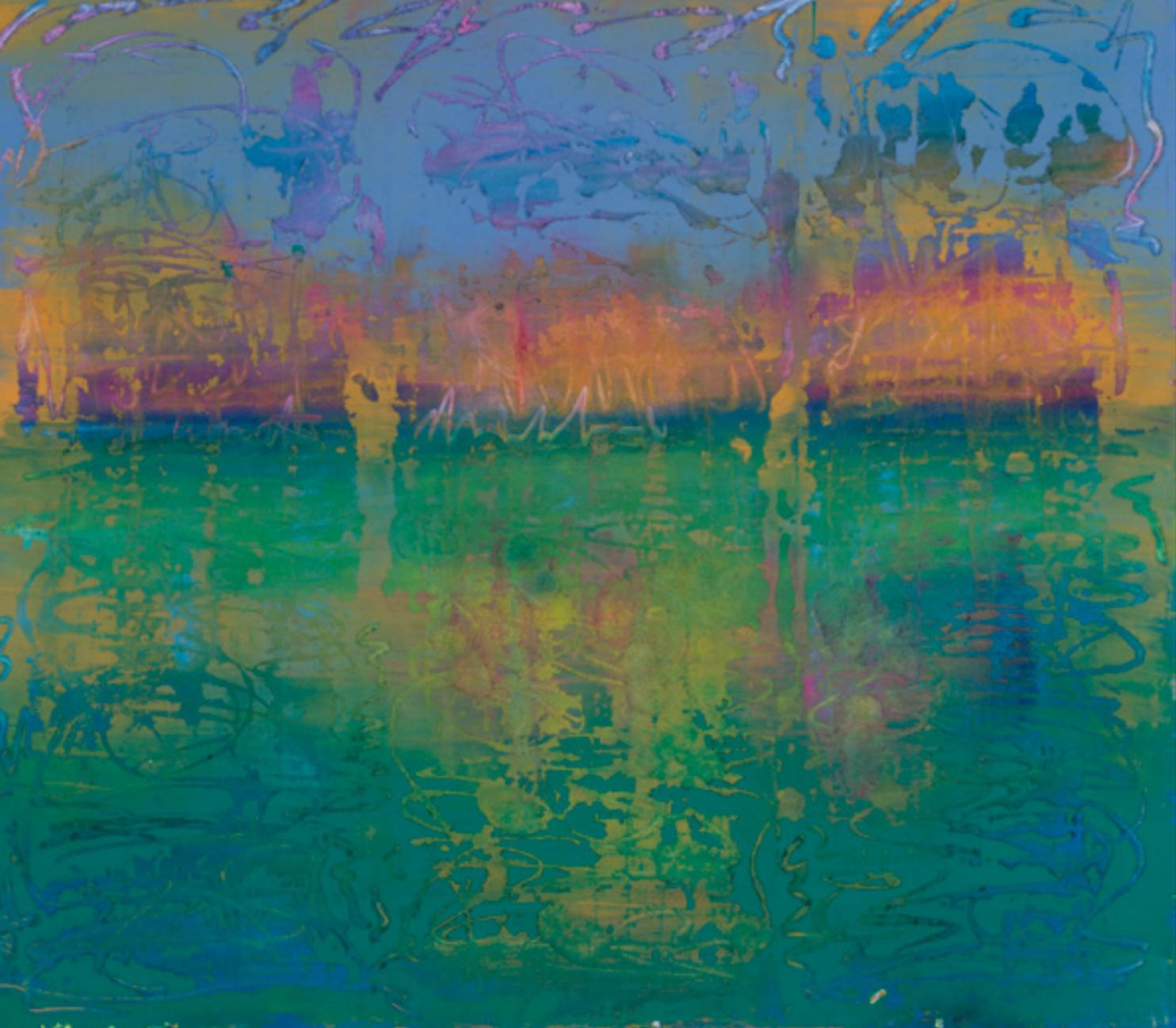
*2012*



**The Sea Overpowers the Noise of Men,  
Triptych**

120cm x 90cm x 3  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust with raw  
pigments on canvas

*2012*



### **The Dawn**

140cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

2012

## Change With The Rhythm an essay by Libby Anson

*'I want to bring to the viewer the performance aspect of my paintings - their own musicality to be precise. While each painting was created, I was hearing a specific tune; at times music helps me to elevate my creativity. I want the viewer to experience the original musical moment of creation (the beginning) of each painting, yet also to experience the final finished work visually (the end).'*

This series of paintings mark a change in direction for Endri Kosturi; they emerge from a context different to that of previous works. The way in which he has chosen to exhibit *Change With The Rhythm* – with each painting as an individual ‘act’ rather than in a more conventional exhibition format - takes the performative element of his creativity further and provides a meditative, more intimate space - or ‘set’ - in which the viewer may contemplate the work.

Interestingly, again different from other series also, is Kosturi’s use of a landscape format. Whereas he was committed to a portrait format, favouring a ‘window’ motif, a frame within a frame, here we see a ninety degree shift and with the picture plane expanding and opening out to the canvas edges. There is no containment, less restriction and a more blatant sense of freedom in response to a sense of place.

The place, in this instance, happens to be Trieste, Italy, where the artist grew up. The paintings represent a narrative, not just Kosturi’s, but also the story of their own existence. This began with a desire to escape London ‘... in search of a new light’ and a need to paint in a different way, to paint in response to the particular character of his home. He wanted to paint a different culture’s views – and literally - of the sea and the sun; he wanted to be taken over by the experience, rather than to conquer it.

Just as music and performance have never been many steps away from the artist’s work or sensibilities, so it is with thoughts of the sea. He describes himself as ‘a sea creature’ and his passion for this natural element, its energy and regenerative power, is almost a reflection of the artist himself. Energy and vitality and constant changes of mood and movement are personal traits of which one becomes aware when in Kosturi’s company; accordingly, he lists the different selves - the tireless priest, the romantic, the hero, the relentless idealist,

the philosopher – that compliment the painter within him. Enigmatically, he marks out one particular element of his identity for comment, ‘The antagonist’, he says, ‘is my future self’.

In the present, he is garrulous and sociable, yet introspective and reflective. Previously his work has emerged from the inside out. For *Change with the Rhythm*, it is as if he wanted to start from nothing, from an almost empty space, metaphysically, in order to respond to the characteristics peculiar to a locality loaded with personal history and meaning. ‘The idea of collaboration started in order to sustain an exhibition ethical to the sense of place’. He spoke with local artists and with architects and just as the cycle of paintings was created with the spirit of collaboration, so it is with the exhibition and the performative aspects of it. ‘What started in me was the need to engage with the place in a multilateral sense. My intention was not to bring a series of works ready made, but rather to collaborate with other artists in a site-specific and cross-media art exhibition inclusive of film, architecture and music, in order to truly engage the audience’.

His own contribution to this was about changing with the local rhythm, responding to what’s available. One painting does stand out from the series, for it is in the portrait format, completed in situ, the most direct result of the collaborative spirit from where Kosturi began: ‘A local paintress took me to the cliffs. I was discovering through the eyes of an other. I had the conscious intention to see what others see.’ The result, ‘... is not a figurative description of depth, but is (about) light. There are not many contrasts. I let my hand go free... to make a diagonal, a beam of light cutting through green and the blue...’.

He journeyed to Trieste largely unprepared in a practical sense and, artistically, without fixed intentions. His starting point was his materials; to the polymers of rock and quartz dust he usually uses, he added carsic rock made from local limestone, and local quartz and marble from ancient Roman open caves in Trieste. From a local factory, he also sourced organic, pure pigments as a result of tip-offs from the locals themselves. These are the colours that you see in the town – Venetian Red, for example. This is a hue that predominates ‘Midnight Lover’, the romantic concept of which emerged from a while spent drinking wine on the Trieste molo (jetty).

This subject of the *Change With The Rhythm* series provided content for painting on numerous levels. Literally speaking, the climatic conditions to which Trieste is subject – the low humidity and the northern, Baltic wind – La Bora – means that the sky over the sea at noon can look pink like the dawn and the sea itself can change from iron grey to azure blue in an instant. In addition, not only does the locality have biographical meaning for Kosturi, but, looking out to sea from the Trieste rocks, it also has metaphorical, universal significance: the sea as life-giving, the place from whence we originally came and a transformative force, changing as it does, rock into sand, for example.

Kosturi’s starting point was the horizon line, that rendezvous where the sky meets the earth, the line that both unifies and separates, that defines the interaction between sea and light, night and day. It is, ‘... a destination for visionaries, for courageous and illuminated pairs of eyes, wondering (sic) further and further, from within the inner self to the outer reaches of creation.... It’s a place to cross over with the mind, heart and soul’. It represents the notion of hope – to explorers and sailors certainly – hope of a new dawn, hope of an unexplored land, hope of returning home. Hope is also a recurring theme in Kosturi’s work. The notion of light being a symbol of hope is evidenced in the play on words he uses for another title, ‘See a Light’. ‘Green Ray’ refers to the colour of the very first and the very last rays of the sun – although Kosturi confesses that his use of green here was unconscious; someone pointed out later that he had painted the green ray. Green, too, is the colour of hope.

His painting ‘Rainbow of Hope’, (painted while listening to Steve Reich’s ‘Violin Phase’) – is a more conscious representation of this subject. While painting, he is thinking of the port of Trieste, of being a child of the sea. This picture started, literally, with a rainbow – stripes of almost neon, rainbow colours dripped vertically down the left hand side of the canvas. In a video of its making, early stages of the painting reveal bold, clearly defined areas of colour and decisive mark-making. As the picture develops, it becomes more coherent overall, more of a surface impression of colour and texture. It is the graphic realization of the regenerative force, painted intuitively rather than formally. ‘The only conscious moment (of the process),’ says the artist, ‘is when I press the painting’ – by which he means the point when he takes off layers, by pressing the wet picture against and transferring these to another unstretched canvas.

Despite the sources of Kosturi’s inspiration, he made no conscious decision to create panoramas. The paintings were not intended to be landscapes but they do look like this. We can’t help but make this figurative association ourselves as we gaze; we also read gestures and colours as waves and clouds, ripples and reflections in water. Unlike his vertical format pictures, here, starting with a sweep of the horizon line, the gesture beginning the painted image is gentler, more meditative. Following this, then, every gesture requires another quicker gesture and another, each a palimpsest being anchored still by the vertical.

All the paintings in the series, like in previous series, follow this same, ‘baroque’ process, as Kosturi calls it. (This is a term he uses as shorthand for a complex personal idea, referencing elements of the master Caravaggio’s technique of revealing, rather than depicting light in a literal sense. Likewise, Kosturi intends the term ‘baroque’ to be read here as a cerebral, intellectual statement, rather than a stylistic description). The pictures are multilayered, gritty in texture. In each case, the image appears as in one layer of space – there is no illusion of space, no recession, no spatial depth. They are all surface; shallow space. Part of the painting is campitura – an almost monochrome area of colour, created by the overlapping of the layers. The act of writing, also usually so explicit in Kosturi’s work, is not the focus here – or at least, is not read as such. In this series any hand-writing

is more like that made in the sand, sometimes partly washed away. 'A painting is like a dream', he says, capturing the essence of what is layered and elusive and subconscious. 'Salut d'Amour', painted in the morning, refers to when the sun kisses you and warms your skin and describes the point between memory and the moment. The layers on the painting are literally still peeling away, like old manuscript pages, veiling then revealing messages we cannot quite recognize or translate.

All these paintings could be said to be *momento mori*. They are a reflection of the notion that we have a short life span. They are about expressive power in the moment, 'I free the regenerative force; I free myself,' says Kosturi. 'I am not worried about life or death... I'm worried about our megalomania, our thought that we are in control, that we will live life forever. We need to make the best of it, leave nothing behind. The concept behind this is HOPE. Despite describing the moment, that which will stay forever, what is behind it is the notion that we are transient beings. You paint a moment to live it, to describe it.'

This is a lot to ask of painting. One may question, how can paint, quartz and marble dust applied to canvas communicate such a message? Kosturi's considered answer is that, 'Those with sensitivity will experience it. Each painting has its own expressive power, yet through the process of the making I want to express the transient being. I am a poet, a colorist in love with light, a melancholic optimist, holding existentialist values.' He is saying that his painting intention is not just about expressive power, but it is also about consciousness - a thought he relates to Kierkegaard's notion that subjectivity and inwardness are the truth. Ultimately, in the light of these pictures and the specific context of their exhibition, it is a concept with which I am inclined to agree.

**Libby Anson ©**

*June 2013*



**Salut d'Amour**

140cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

*2012*



**Libero ▲**

90 x 120cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

2012

**Beam of Light ◀**

120cm x 90cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

2012



**Mist**

90cm x 120cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

2012



**Midnight Lover**

140cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

2012



**The Green Ray**

140cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

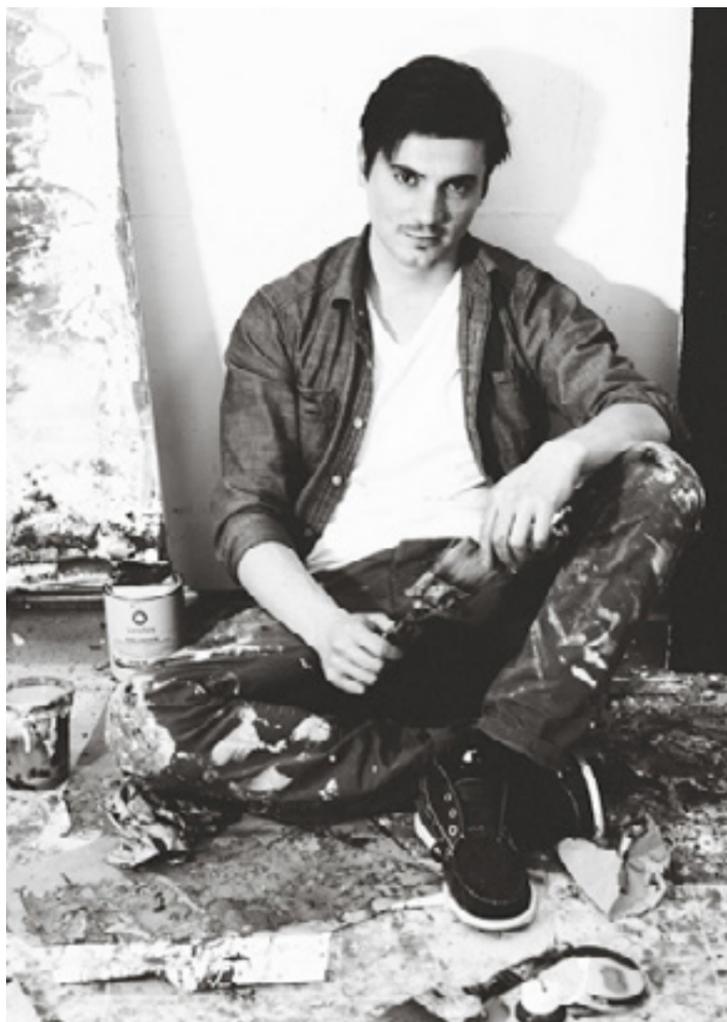
2012



**L'Orizzonte Infinito**

120cm x 160cm  
Quartz, marble and limestone dust  
with raw pigments on canvas

2012



Endri Kosturi, a painter and poet, was born in Tirana (Albania) on October 16, 1980. From an early age he inhabited a world pervaded by multiple creative stimuli, thanks to the influence of a family that included celebrities among its members. His grandmother, Gjyzepina Kosturi Misloca (1912-1985), who studied singing at the Santa Cecilia National Academy in Rome, was a lyric soprano noted for her performances as Violetta in *La Traviata*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and as Cio-cio-san, the love-sick suicidal geisha (*Madame Butterfly*). His grandfather, Rexhai Kosturi (1905-1968), a dilettante painter with high moral virtues, passed his passion for figurative arts onto his grandson.

In Endri Kosturi's painting, themes of love and freedom frequently recur, not to mention the constant references to existential values. The protagonists are light and colour, seemingly independent elements, of which the artist is able to sense, through the technique of layering, all expressive and symbolic implications. The stratification of each painting alludes to the transient aspects of existence. The overlapped layers, constantly evolving, conceal and bring out at the same time the regenerating power of the pictorial gesture, they reveal the lettering imprinted on the canvas and the residue of monochromes. An abstract process, where it is possible to track all phases of the painting, from the beginning to the final redaction of the artwork. The steps from one layer to another seem to give us back the moods of the artist.

## Curriculum Vitae

### *Solo Exhibitions*

- 2012** The Light from Within, Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Trieste, IT  
See-A Light, Torri d'Europa, Trieste, IT
- 2011** Light Within The Shadows, PWP, London, UK  
Immagina Arte, Reggio Emilia, IT  
Open Studio, Hackney Wicked Art Festival, London, UK  
Matter and Spirit, Posk Gallery, London, UK
- 2010** Unwiped Windows, Grange St.Paul Hotel, London, UK  
Unwiped Windows, The Lennox Gallery, London, UK
- 2007** Galerie d'Art ARCIMA, Paris, FR
- 2005** Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Trieste, IT
- 2004** Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Trieste, IT
- 2002** Expo CM, Paris, FR  
Chiesa Evangelica Luterana, Trieste, IT
- 2001** Expo Arambar, Paris, FR

### *Group Exhibitions*

- 2012** Personalita' a Confronto, Galleria Vittoria, Rome, IT  
Color Action, Torre Ghibellina della Rocca Montese, Modena, IT  
Flint Art Fair, Houghton Hall, Norfolk, UK
- 2011** Salon II, Forman's Smokehouse Gallery, London, UK
- 2003** Visioni al di la' del Mare, C C C G, Milan, IT  
Mitelfest, Art Festival, Cividale del Friuli, Udine, IT
- 2002** Mostra di Primavera, Galleria dei Rettori, Trieste, IT
- 2001** Mostra di Primavera, Galleria dei Rettori, Trieste, IT

### *Short films*

- 2012** Tree of Life
- 2012** Darkness and Light
- 2011** Moment of Grace
- 2011** Desire in Movement

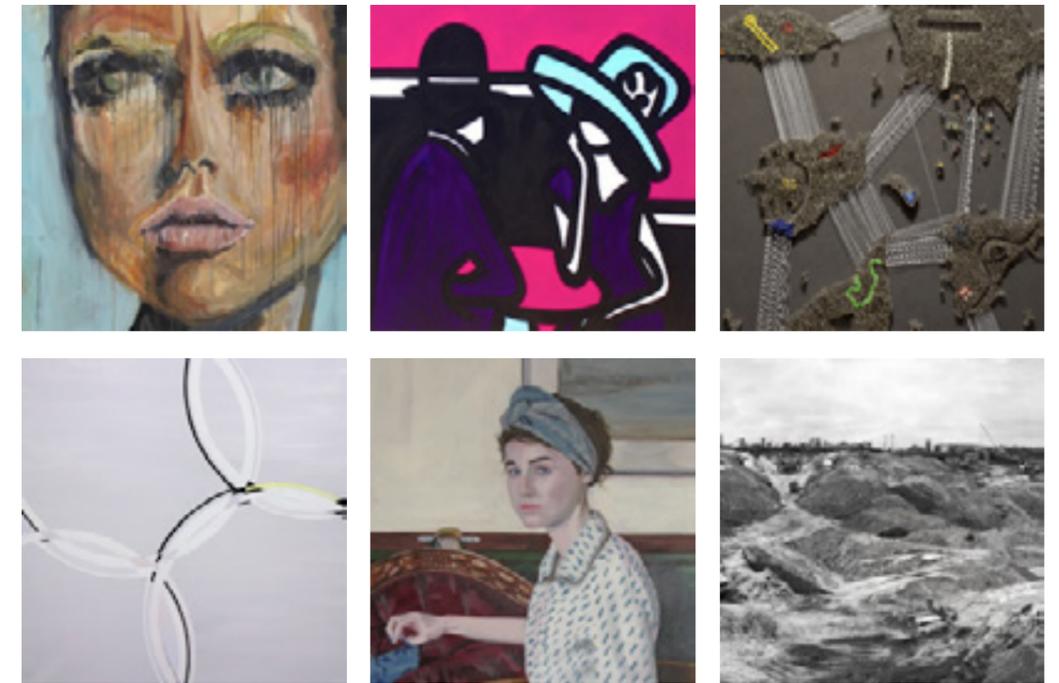
### *Publications*

- 2012** The Light from Within, Book, IT
- 2012** Il Kaiser di Atlantide torna nel Lager, LA STAMPA  
(main Italian national newspaper)
- 2012** Lo Spartito Ritrovato, Documentary, RAI DUE (Italian Radio Television)
- 2007** Una Mela due Parole e l'Immenso, Poetry book, IT

### *Awards*

- 2012** Finalist of Hackney Wicked Film Festival
- 2012** Shortlisted Artslant Prize

## Oaktree & Tiger Gallery



We work with carefully selected emerging artists and develop their careers through organising fascinating exhibitions. In doing so, we build relationships with collectors with the help of hard working and knowledgeable individuals beginning their careers in the art world. By supporting promising artists and building collections of enthusiasts, we offer a stepping-stone for practitioners and patrons alike. It is our pleasure to use our expertise and skills to nurture and promote the best-up-and-coming artists that London has to offer.

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## Credits

Exhibition Curated by Oaktree & Tiger Gallery  
Catalogue by Oaktree & Tiger and Alexander Taralezhkov

Endri Kosturi would like to say...

Thank you to:

Conrad Carvalho

Marcel bird Wieteska

Atsuko Kamisaku

Andrea Comari

Angelo la Rocca

And not for last my fiancé Lilianna Winiarska and my brother Gary Kosturi





&

