

Lorenza Longhi
Dazzle Dazzle
24 Jan–9 Mar 2025

Imagine arriving right at the aftermath of a lavish celebration. Lights on, party's over. The remains of what once was unbridled luxury now sparkle scattered around, clumsy witnesses of opulence turned bare ruin ...

If you are reading this text you are probably trampling a large-scale floor piece specifically conceived by Lorenza Longhi for Kunstverein Freiburg. Made of silkscreen PVC painted metallic grey, this stands out from the existing floor, letting its printed patterns seem like crinkled lost garments and tissues, or garlands and festoons. If the light falls at the right angle, its applied sequins, will likely sprawl lively revealing their shimmering facets. The piece draws inspiration from an ancient Roman mosaic preserved at the Vatican Museums, whose decorative theme is known as *asàrotos òikos* or “unswept floor” and depicts food scraps left after a rich banquet.

Such a departure point sits well within Longhi's practice, often tracing ostentation through its remnants. The artist has long been fascinated by unabashed abundance, specifically within the fashion industry, or consumerist Western society in general, and waste characterizes her artworks both on a material and aesthetic level. Relating to debris becomes for Longhi both a way to understand the codes of taste and desire, and an urge to reenact these in her own way.

Georges Bataille could function as a good reference here. According to the French philosopher luxury, as all those activities which have no end beyond themselves, is in essence a form of excess – “unproductive expenditure” in his own words – and an act of loss that defies utilitarian logic. In the essay titled *The Notion of Expenditure* (1933), Bataille traces unproductive expenditures back to archaic forms of exchange, reuniting these with religious sacrifice, thus unveiling the act of expenditure and wastefulness not just as economic conditions but as a psychological drive for loss, very much linked to cosmic dissipation of energy. It doesn't feel as paradoxical then to observe how already within modern capitalism also the subaltern classes started actively participating in the dynamics of expenditure, purchasing luxury goods, or praising consumerist rituals. Whether this drive is linked to showing off power – “swagging” as William Shakespeare once remarked, and now all the generation z; “conspicuous consumption” in Thorstein Veblen's words – or to psychological needs that transcend economy and that were intercepted by capital's genius, it is not a matter of analysis here. It suffices to mention that Longhi too, intercepts those societal rituals, making them personal. That's how in *Dazzle Dazzle* the high and the low come together in an ultimate trickled-down “bal de débutantes” where the glamour of luxury reveals its eroded protocols. The act of stepping onto something valuable, an artwork precisely, translates into compliance as the visitors are made participants of the withered party Longhi set for them. It's important to mention that the artist approaches observation and mimicry, as strategies to engage with

taste and its implications. Employing the language, and materials, of fashion or fashionability she pins down how this is constructed, displayed, and performed and she hijacks both mechanical reproduction and exhausted standardisation through the act of amateur making. Overall, by intercepting given systems, Longhi crafts liveliness out of what could be easily perceived as the most typical nightmare: arriving late at a societal debut, being off the grid of something considered unchangeable. In a similar vein, Longhi's set-ups often toy with the given architecture, making the most of existing structures while also manipulating the perception of space, or aligning this to the narrative of the show. On the above floor of Kunstverein Freiburg a series of suspended silkscreen paintings seemingly gazes down from the balcony running across the perimeter of the room. These were made following a rather dysfunctional screen-printing technique developed by the artist in the past years, which involves the direct application of stencils, stickers, textiles and other solid elements of various nature on deadstock nylons, other synthetic fabrics and Tyvek. The absence of a matrix determines the uniqueness of each piece, as chance, prints accidentally left on the surfaces, or the deliberate addition of new elements mark their differences. In other words, Longhi strips the technique of its potential for seriality, adopting clumsiness and failure as appreciable standards. Varying in height – mostly at human scale – and adorned with unique painted motifs or vintage cloth-cut appliqués, each piece exudes a certain personality. The creased texture of the printed surfaces and the frayed edges of the fabrics impart a distinctive roughness, while their silver and gold peppy tones, rhythmic polka-dots, damasks or chubby deep red roses, combined with the elegance of the chosen fabrics, convey that typical frivolousness of any grand soirée. Sequins appear again as the centres of Art Nouveau flowers, covering entire sections of fabric or arranged in upright grids, seemingly striving for the orderliness of structure. In one painting, they populate a white net on an ivory background, warping the regularity

of its geometry. On the wall behind, corresponding to each of the suspended party guests, hangs a series of custom nail bouquets, meticulously arranged into round conglomerates. Their shimmering heads are wrapped into ribbons of eclectic taste, ranging from festive 1950's streamers, charming organdy and ballerina bows to glamorous 1990's velvet laces and grungy straps. Both officials on a holiday and confident top-models, the nails seemingly forget their rigid purpose as the hierarchies among function and decoration come undone. Ornament takes on a central role in the show, jauntily reclaiming the power to strip down seemingly fixed systems, and redefine notions of value and permanence.

On the ground floor an apron of fine trimmings, sourced from a second-hand charity shop where Longhi's mum volunteers, adorns a column of the space. The inspiration this time comes from US-American Fashion designer Mainbocher, known for having repeatedly revisited past silhouettes, updating his looks with restrained embellishments as a response to World War II and its aftermath crisis. In the 1940s he created a collection of interchangeable "dress aprons" worn over simple cocktail or evening dresses to update pre-existing looks without the need for any new or special garment. The piece is key to fully grasping Longhi's methodology, rather pragmatic and resilient. Lights on, party's over, yes ... but the rhythm hasn't stopped: its dysfunctional organisation is simply accentuated, getting closer to a rave while maintaining the capacity to shine. Get ready to tip-toe among sequins, stencils, ribbons, and grapples ... it's them setting the tempo of the next get-together.

Text by Caterina Avataneo

Lorenza Longhi (* 1991, IT) lives and works in Zurich, CH. *Dazzle Dazzle* is her first institutional solo exhibition in Germany.

Selected solo exhibitions:

World of Yum Yum, Swiss Institute, New York, USA (2024); *Sentimental Pop*, Weiss Falk, Basel, CH (2023); *The Olds*, Fanta-MLN, Milan, IT (2022); *Minuets of Manners*, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, CH (2021); *Treat Yourself to a Break*, Weiss Falk, Basel, CH (2021); *Visual Hell*, New Location, Fanta-MLN, Milan, IT (2019); *You're In Business? I'm In Business*, Plymouth Rock, Zurich, CH (2019).

Selected group exhibitions:

Hoi Köln! Teil 3 : Albtraum Malerei & Teil 2: Im Bauch der Maschine, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, DE (2023); *Zürich Biennale*, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, CH (2023); *on affairs*, Halle für Kunst Steiermark, Graz, AUT (2023); *The Wig*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, DE (2022); *The Equality of Possibility*, Kunstverein Bielefeld, Bielefeld, DE (2021); *Stop Painting*, Fondazione Prada, Venice, IT, (2021); *Fuori. 17° Quadriennale d'arte*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, IT (2020).

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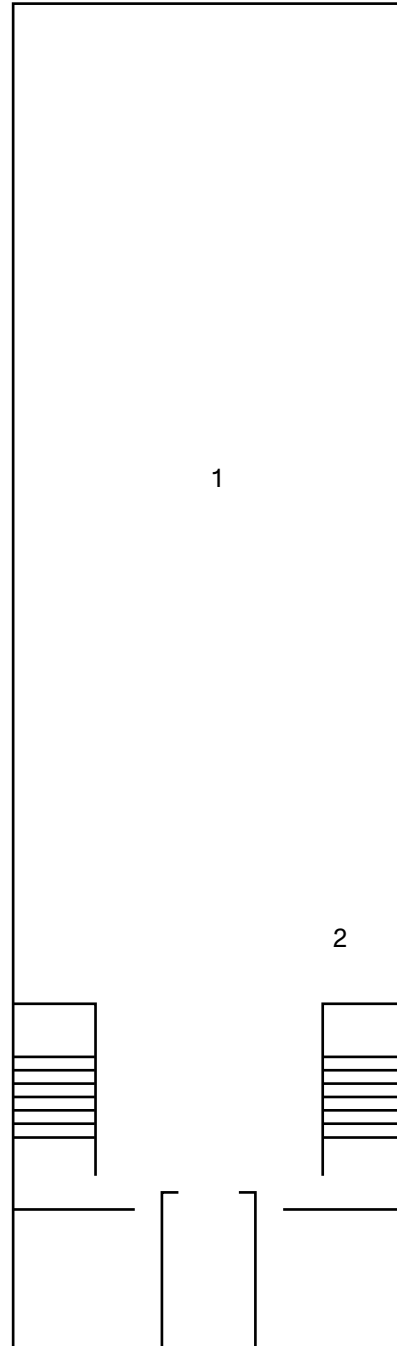
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Gloria de Risi

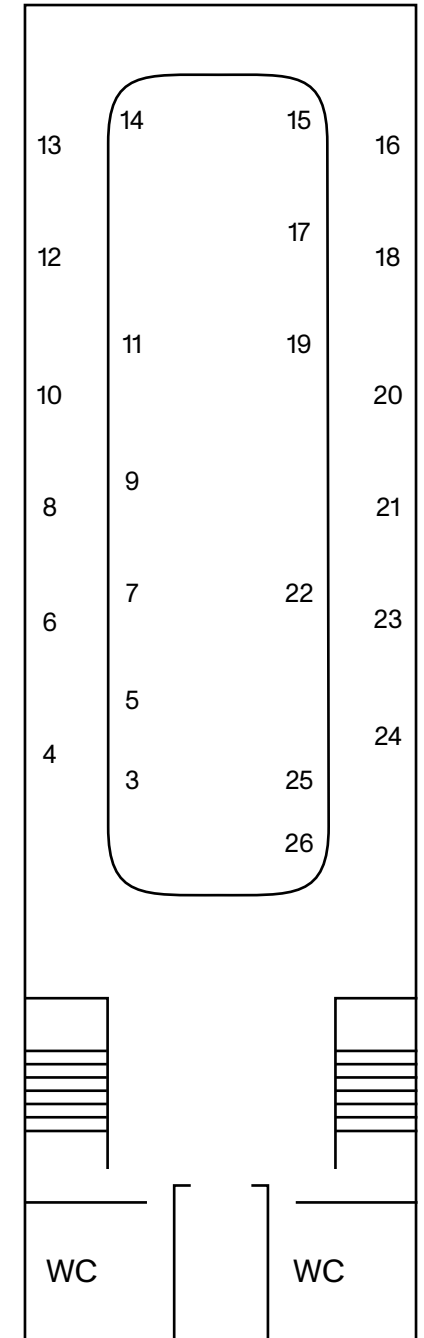
Alessio Baldissera

- 1
Unwept floor, 2025
PVC, silkscreen ink, sequins
16 × 6,85 m
- 2
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on apron
Dimension Variable, Edition 1/2

Hall



Gallery



3
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted
on wood panel, sequins, nails,
aluminum, screws
150 × 100 cm

4
Corsage (Pale Pink), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

5
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted
on wood panel, sequins, nails,
aluminum, screws
90 × 65 cm

6
Corsage (Rose Gold), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

7
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted
on wood panel, sequins, nails,
aluminum, screws
160 × 70 cm

8
Corsage (Vivid), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, fake flower
petals, glue
ø 10 cm

9
Untitled, 2024
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted on
wood panel, sequins, nails
120 × 80 cm

10
Corsage (Burgundy), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

11
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted
on wood panel, sequins, nails,
aluminum, screws
120 × 80 cm

12
Corsage (B&W), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

13
Corsage (Ruffled), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

14
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted
on wood panel, sequins, nails,
aluminum, screws
150 × 100 cm

15
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted
on wood panel, sequins, nails,
aluminum, screws
140 × 60 cm

16
Corsage (Flowered), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, fake flower
petals, glue
ø 10 cm

17
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted on
wood panel, aluminum, screws
160 × 70 cm

18
Corsage (Pale Greens), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

19
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted
on wood panel, sequins, nails,
aluminum, screws
120 × 80 cm

20
Corsage (Beaded Blue), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

21
Corsage (Festive), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

22
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted on
wood panel, aluminum, screws
90 × 65 cm

23
Corsage (Pink), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

24
Corsage (Blue), 2025
Coil nails, trimmings, glue
ø 10 cm

25
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted on
wood panel, aluminum, screws
140 × 60 cm

26
Untitled, 2025
Silkscreen ink on fabric mounted on
wood panel, aluminum, screws
120 × 80 cm

Programme

Fri, 24 Jan 2025, 7 pm
Opening Night with an Introduction
by Heinrich Dietz

Wen, 5 Feb 2025, 7 pm
Curator's Tour with Heinrich Dietz

Mon, 17 Feb 2025, 7 pm
Film Screening
// Gattopardo (Luchino Visconti, 1963)
Location: Kommunales Kino
Freiburg

Wen, 26 Feb 2025, 7 pm
Guided Tour with
Marilena Raufeisen

Wen, 5 Mar 2025, 7 pm
Artisttalk with Lorenza Longhi

Sun, 9 Mar 2025, 2–4 pm
Workshop for Children 6–12 years
(registration required)

Opening hours

Wed–Fri, 3 pm–7 pm
Sat–Sun, 12 am–6 pm

Entrance: 2 € / 1.50 €
Thursdays free
Members free

The exhibition is supported by:

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