

Fabulae Romanae is a body of work by the artist duo Lucy + Jorge Orta that takes the viewer on a symbolic excursus across the city of Rome, drawn from archaeological and historical research conducted by the artists and their observations on the cultural and social map of the city and its seven hills. Starting from the most cherished form of the artists duo's language: the tent, Dome Dwelling and accompanied by the protagonists of their research the Spirits, who take on the form of ethereal and mysterious figures that inhabit the city. This publication brings together the installation of Lucy + Jorge Orta's work in MAXXI, the National Museum of XXI Century Arts in Rome and the video performance in which the contemporary sentinel Spirits silently explore the Roman city accompanied by the poetic verses of Mario Petrucci: we encounter the Traveler under the Castel Sant'Angelo bridge and in the Trastevere back streets; the Observer overlooking the Sacro Cuore dei Monti and the Isola Tiberina; the Tunneler and the Myth Maker in the Villa Gregoriana Park; the Flying Man, Chariot Rider, Memory Man, Bale Maker... Fabulae Romanae assumes the meaning of "homage" to Rome and was commissioned by ZegnArt with the curatorial advisor by Maria-Luisia Frisa.



LUCY + JORGE ORTA FABULAE ROMANAE



FABULAE ROMANAE

LUCY + JORGE ORTA

Marsilio

ZegnArt | Marsilio

ZegnArt

FABULAE ROMANAE
LUCY + JORGE ORTA

MAXXI
National Museum of XXI
Century Arts, Rome
March 22 – September 23,
2012
part of MAXXI Arte Collezione
TRIDIMENSIONALE

Curated by
Maria Luisa Frisa

A commission by
Ermenegildo Zegna
ZegnArt
Special Project

In collaboration with
The Centre for Sustainable
Fashion
London College
of Fashion

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We would like to thank
The Ermenegildo Zegna team
for its support in the research
and realization of
the Fabulae Romanae project.

Special thanks to
FAI – Fondo Ambiente Italiano
and Villa Gregoriana Park

Catalogue edited by
Maria Luisa Frisa
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Graphic design
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Front cover image
The Observer, Lucy+Jorge
Orta, 2012
Photo: Paul Bevan

Back cover image
Sketch book drawing,
Lucy+Jorge Orta, 2012



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Holditalia S.p.A.
www.zegnart.com
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www.studio-orta.com
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© 2012 by Marsilio Editori
s.p.a. in Venice

First edition: July 2012

ISBN: 978-88-317-1338
www.marsilioeditori.it

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VIDEO PERFORMANCE



FABULAE ROMANAE

poetry by **MARIO PETRUCCI**

Male voice
Female voice

Uprights Crossbeams Corridors Halls...

Watch
how I watch –
before me and behind

each Roman
flutter memories: white
memory risen suddenly on wings

at my thunderclap
observation. Such spires:
high places from which to peer or

speak – steer
each workbound mind,
to hear in the stillest hour how

the city awakes...

... a soon-to-be mother
stirred by the kick
within: those

flickerings in her
concrete face on Italy's
long pillow inclined

with sleep
elegantly stoned
her shaped cheekbones.

Bitter orange
streaks sunrise: each
sloped roof. I count these

days through her
mouthlight – and into her
lips parted in truth or half-truth

I gaze.

Each skull
is a cave where
stories vie as wolves

or murderous twins. Such
dominant plots up
here –

the woman
within this lesser fiction
I am...

... bones –
their clothes a tale
as my stones climb hand

by hand to brand their fable
on global horizons
whose light

cloud-lined
never fails but roosts
static in flight...

... so
who can be
noble with delusion?

This loose garden in which
she walks as though
to move

were invention or what
one wears snugly
protagonist...

... who talks
of home remembering
not all Romans are poets and

not all of Rome – nor most
of me – will fit this
story.

Roman Spirit
is not vapour
Roman Spirit

does not flutter
as a sheet flung
by the moon –

These Spirits
are satchels
hard-sewn a-

spiring to
contain only air
a ziggurat s-

tacked at
wishful angles
unfinished

to the sun
seen as if
in dream

as the mountain
village clung
to its human

pinnacle

See his finger
pointing along the centre
unmet by any Maker –

as though all Rome
were a Sistine dome whose
trains of light (so slim)

drift in...

... or recline
among my laurels
soundlessly dressed

so I may bless then
redefine your
boundaries...

He is gemstone
reflecting humanity
differently for each
and each alone...

Every fashion
that swept you through...

... every thought
each passion or
true doubt

you ever wore...

... trails behind you
welded
heavily into a wake

and unlike water
none of it
fits –

... yet every moment
as if
into clear lakewater

a fresh self

steps out

Horse? Man?
Some deep-grained
Sagittarian?

Half Troy.
Half Rome –
half-brained

wood marching
home. O his
puppet-toy

made good.
An egg
in his square

an egg
in his mouth
he out-stares

out-knows both
South and North.
If he could he'd

rock himself
as groom and bride,
bestride the very

Campidoglio.

Highest, widest –
my hill many-tongued.
Complex breast

you button up
one word at a time.
Gather me in

with your maps –
still my aromas
sail through

from China,
each narrowed street
a handle laid flat

idling lovers grasp
till I wander
no longer

in the mind –
each squared tuff
a suitcase packed

upwards into walls,
every arch a farewell
embrace.

You come to me
but walls cannot
walk – talk

to me of stone
where no stone
mid-fall

takes flight.
Put one cobble
in your pocket

as you go
so I too may
travel.

My circle is
that circled horizon:
my abstract clutch of almonds

colourless against
hue – a circular sound
uttered by blue become silence

as it rises. I may
pose in an instant as moon or
sun for these break or

set in my contemplation...

... but I stress
everything upwards
strained and tested

between – between
man and woman or
earth and sky

as the Roman
awaiting that
Imperial thumb

in its Coliseum
suspended I
live or die.

Through fields of summered fabric
I harvest softness – bale it

Rustic sunlight asleep in fibres –
Roughness tight with yellow hues

Bundled up –
An Icarus

Without wings: my face builds
Its frown muscle by muscle or

Nonchalantly awake allows my climb
To sling this old and humbled world

All brown or
Gold behind me.

My birds do not soar.

They take to fire, water, earth.
These are my thoughts – weightless
with brain, spun elegant across piazzas,
winding my DNA through stairwells:
a red planet thinned to warlessness,
each stone horse reared and tamed.
A head of State cast in glass.

I span
that spirit in
abandoned bridges:

each to each
cloud to cloud
late light to light –

the all but massless
balanced on scales,
my sky a tigress

striped whitely
with contrails,
bluely supple

and tight in her
clothes. So I drink
but of myself –

you cannot
penetrate me
with those

mighty looks.
Let your eyes be
slightest brush –

our meeting
a manner of dance
matter to matter:

whether I be gilt
or brinkwater this
soul shall rush

to that glance.

Space here has an innard geometry –
passages down which the mind will

see an eye that walks hard with light
yet illumined from within the walker

not knowing who might be
met at each bend mends

herself as one door
opens another

opens.

Uprights Crossbeams Corridors Halls...

EACH ROMAN
FLUTTER MEMORIES: WHITE
MEMORY RISEN SUDDENLY ON WINGS





WATCH
HOW I WATCH –
BEFORE ME AND BEHIND



EACH SKULL
IS A CAVE WHERE
STORIES VIE AS WOLVES



... BONES –
THEIR CLOTHES A TALE
AS MY STONES CLIMB HAND



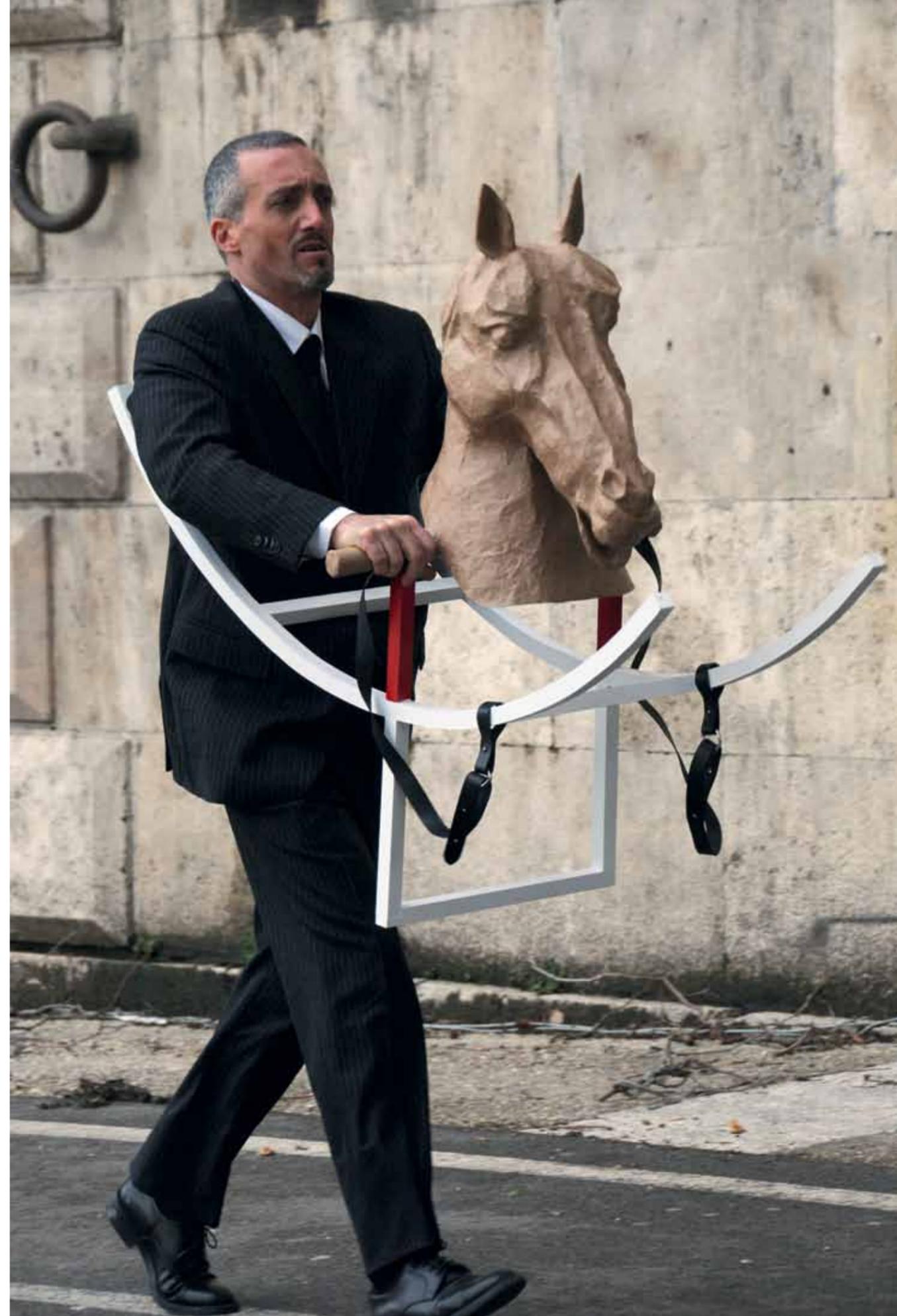




HE IS GEMSTONE
REFLECTING HUMANITY

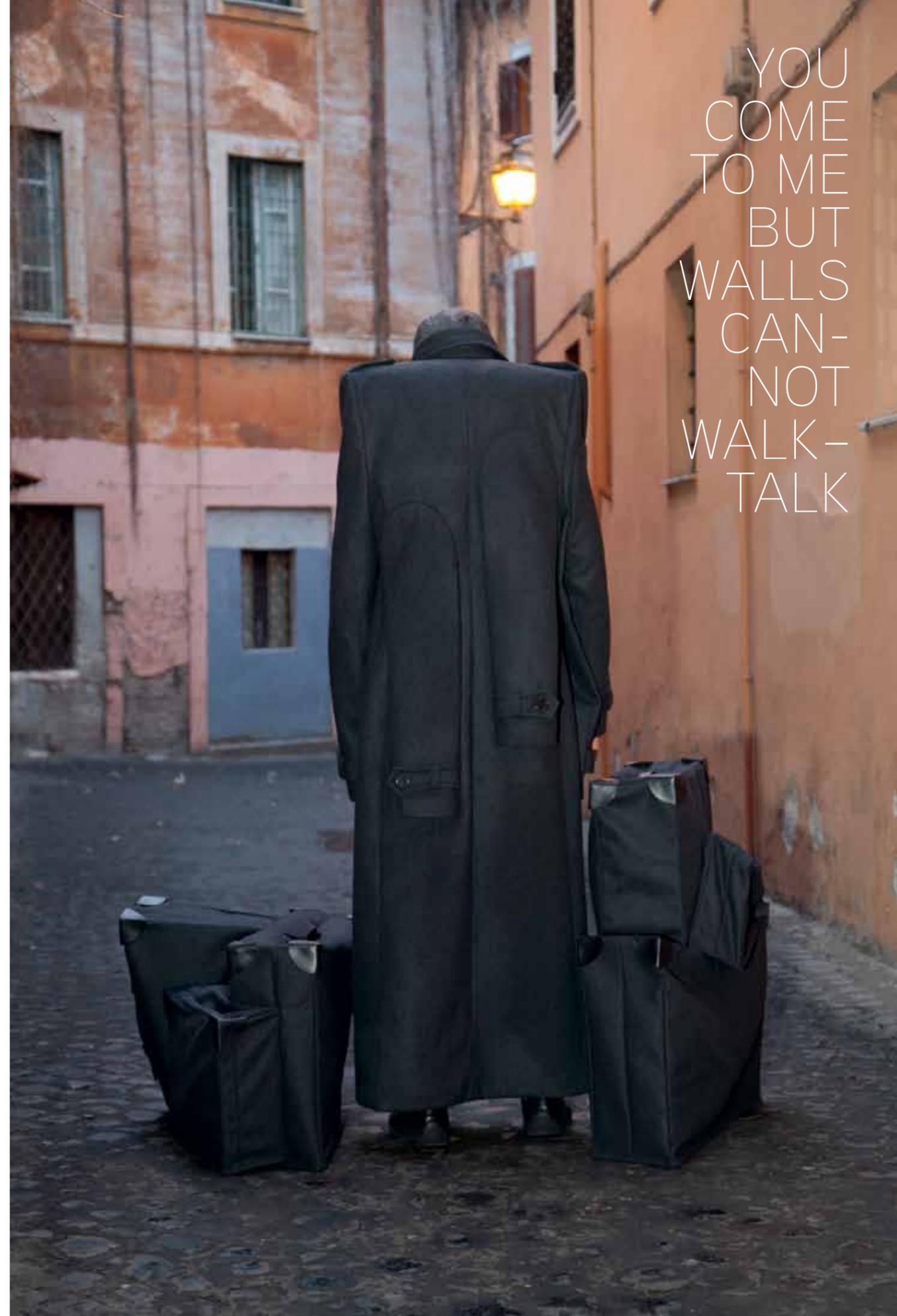


HORSE? MAN?
SOME DEEP-GRAINED
SAGITTARIAN?





WOOD MARCHING
HOME. O HIS
PUPPET-TOY



YOU
COME
TO ME
BUT
WALLS
CAN-
NOT
WALK-
TALK



AS THE ROMAN
AWAITING THAT
IMPERIAL THUMB

IN ITS COLISEUM
SUSPENDED I
LIVE OR DIE.

THROUGH FIELDS
OF SUMMERED FABRIC
I HARVEST SOFTNESS – BALE IT





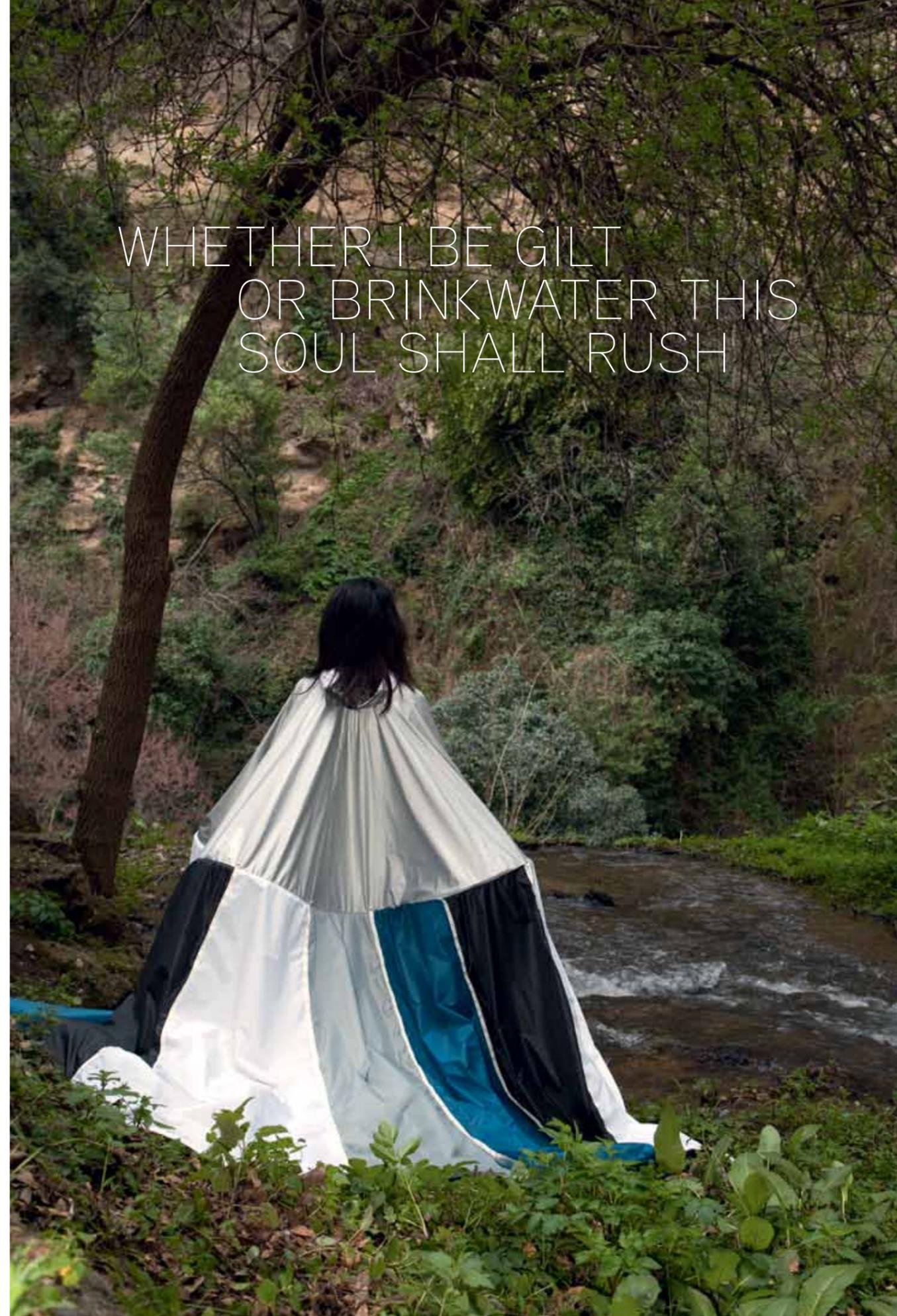
MY BIRDS DO NOT SOAR





I SPAN
THAT SPIRIT IN
ABANDONED BRIDGES





WHETHER I BE GILT
OR BRINKWATER THIS
SOUL SHALL RUSH



HERSELF AS ONE DOOR
OPENS ANOTHER



FABULAE ROMANAE

by LUCY + JORGE ORTA

Filmed and Edited by **David Bickerstaff**

Poetry by **Mario Petrucci**

Spirit sculptures by **Lucy + Jorge Orta**
in order of appearance: *The Observer*, *Myth Maker*,
Dome Dwelling Quirinale, *The Memory Man*,
Chair-iot Rider, *Traveller*, *The Buoy*, *Bale Maker*,
Flying Man, *Tunneller*.

With the collaboration of Studio Orta:
Roxanne Andres, Michel Aubry, Nicolas Doerler,
Charlotte Law, Susan Leen.

&
Alumni from London College Fashion:
Chloé Gayet, Mio Jin, Lara Torres,
Oliver Ruuger, and Sum Yu Li.
With the support of the Centre for Sustainable
Fashion, London College of Fashion, Curatorial
Research Assistant: Camilla Palestra
Communication Assistant: Zoe Beck.

Poetry narrated by:
Clare Corbett and Aldo Alessio

Music and Sound: David Bickerstaff

Second Camera: Simona Piantieri

Cast in alphabetical order:
Valerio Calabro', Enrico Campagnoli,
Riccardo D'Acunto, Fabiana Di Virgilio,
Emanuela Iorio, Saverio Magistri,
Marco Patassini, Dalila Valente

Crew:
Producer: Michele Virgilio
Production Manager: Karin Pavone
Location Manager: Francesco Colicigno
Set P.A.: Frederik Shelbourne
Prop Master: Leonardo Raponi
Prop Master: Fabio Marconi
Prop Master's Asst.: Massimiliano Ciamei
Seamstress: Gisa Rinaldi
Wardrobe Buyer: Cristiana Agostinelli
Van #1 Driver: Marco Di Francesco
Van #2 Driver: Emanuele Germano
Security: Mirko Carangelo, Cristiano Meloni
Minivan Driver: Alessandro Patrese
Cast Supervisor: Nicolò Rosa

With special thanks to
FAI Fondo Ambiente Italiano
and Villa Gregoriana Park

Photography: Paul Bevan

The video performance was created
for the purpose of a high definition video
projection artwork.

Duration: 29'

HD projection format: 4266 x 3200mm.

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