

Giorgio Andreotta Calò
ἸΚΑΡΟΣ (ICARUS)

12th May >23rd July, 2022

The exhibition *ἸΚΑΡΟΣ (ICARUS)* showcases the eponymous project conceived by Giorgio Andreotta Calò since 2019. Originally constituted as a medium-length film, *ἸΚΑΡΟΣ (ICARUS)* develops at ZERO... as a broader constellation of works, aimed at translating the poetic matrix of the film into the specific grammar of the exhibition space.

I

In December 2020 in Emmen, in the eastern part of the Netherlands, Calò worked on the so-called butterfly pavilion, a building once dedicated to lepidopterans and part of a larger zoological complex, abandoned for years and awaiting imminent demolition. Thanks to the collaboration of Enzo Moretto, an expert entomologist, and Bart Coppens, a young self-taught entomologist, a colony of moths is revived inside the building, in a last symbolic act that precedes its demolition. In a landscape dominated by the emptiness imposed by the pandemic, the pavilion, in a reverse gesture, comes back to life with thousands of moths.

The insects' metamorphosis, documented through filming, triggers a parallel change in the environment and in the figures who occupy it. The moths, motionless during the day, turn on at sunset – it is precisely in this liminal space, at the threshold of the oneiric, that myth can arise and coincide with reality.

According to the mythological narration, Daedalus was a famous architect, known for his inventions and for being imprisoned together with his son in the labyrinth of the Minotaur he designed. Able to defy the laws of nature, Daedalus created wings made of feathers, bound together by wax and linen. Through them it would be possible to escape by air, with the only condition of flying in balance between the threat of the sun and the sea.

During the following escape, Icarus, attracted by the light of the sun, flew too high and his wings melted, making him fall whirling into the sea.

The figure of the expert entomologist, a connoisseur of the secrets of science, identifies with Daedalus; the apprentice, fascinated by the former's ability to direct nature, represents Icarus. Their contingent acts become the manifestation of myth and the film, from a document of a biological transformation, becomes a testimony of the mythical narration, embracing the language of the coincidence of opposites, and hovering between reality and fiction.

II

The exhibition reconfigures the dichotomous logic of the film, relocating it in the spatial structuring itself and translating it into an installation. The exhibition is divided into two antithetical parts: the upper floor of the gallery, dominated by light, and the lower floor, dominated by darkness. Upper and lower constitute spaces of manifestation of symmetrical and opposite order - they are the high and the low within which Icarus is called to fly, the day and the night that mark the poetics and tones of the film. The works in the exhibition lie between these two extremes, rethinking the logic of opposites typical of mythical-film narratives in the language of sculpture, photography and installation.

A large metal cage, repeatedly shown in the film, is dismantled by the artist and rearranged to form a labyrinthine structure, recalling the construction carried out by Daedalus for Minos, a symbol of his engineering ability and analytical vision. In the film, the same framework is also the site of the dressing, the borderline moment between the transmission of the father's skills and the beginning of the son's nefarious metamorphosis.

A photograph of the dressing, as it occurs in the film, is displayed on a wall of the same room. The shot, realized by Calò, is inspired by Canova's artwork at Correr Museum in Venice, a sculptural portrait of the same mythological scene. Icarus' arm, covered with moths and a symbol of man-animal hybridization, transversely divides the photograph into two oblique parts. The chiaroscuro that characterizes the work rearranges in the photographic language the tension between light and shadow that marks the logic of the film.

A series of silver sculptures, microfusions of the *Argema Mimosae* moth cocoon, is scattered in the same upper space. The works hyper-realistically recreate the coloration of the insect's shell, recognizable precisely by its silvery color.

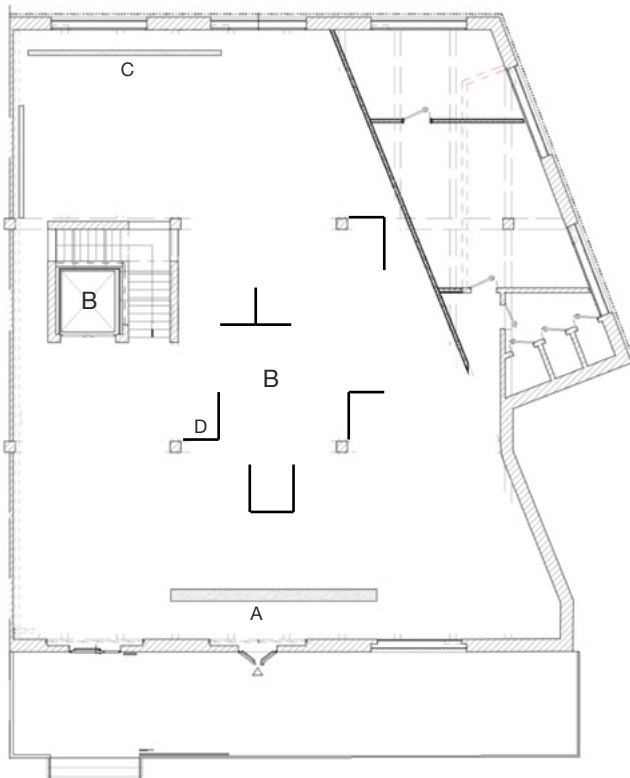
The transition to the lower floor of the gallery repeats the film's gradual descent into the dreamlike realm. It is only in this space, dominated by darkness, that the mythological storytelling can reveal itself - that the projection of the medium-length film can emerge from the shadows. The film, reproduced in circular mode, relocates the space of the underground into the cyclical temporality of myth, transfiguring the contingent here and now into a new symbolic dimension. On the opposite side of the projection, a garment hangs in a compartment dedicated to it. It is the sweatshirt worn by the apprentice entomologist at the moment of his transfiguration into a lepidopterist. Its surface is covered with cocoons of the *Samia Ricini* species, the same one that invaded the space of the pavilion in the film. The silk wrappings of the moth have been sewn onto the cotton of the robe, placing the living tissue of the former in continuity with the 'artificial' tissue of the latter.

The work is illuminated by a beam of light which, by casting the shadow of the cocoons, draws the feathery silhouette of the wings on the wall. It is through this interaction between light and shadow that reality can be revealed in its symbolic nature, turning the contingent nature of the sweatshirt into the revelation of a mythical flight, uniquely possible in the dreamlike dimension of reality.

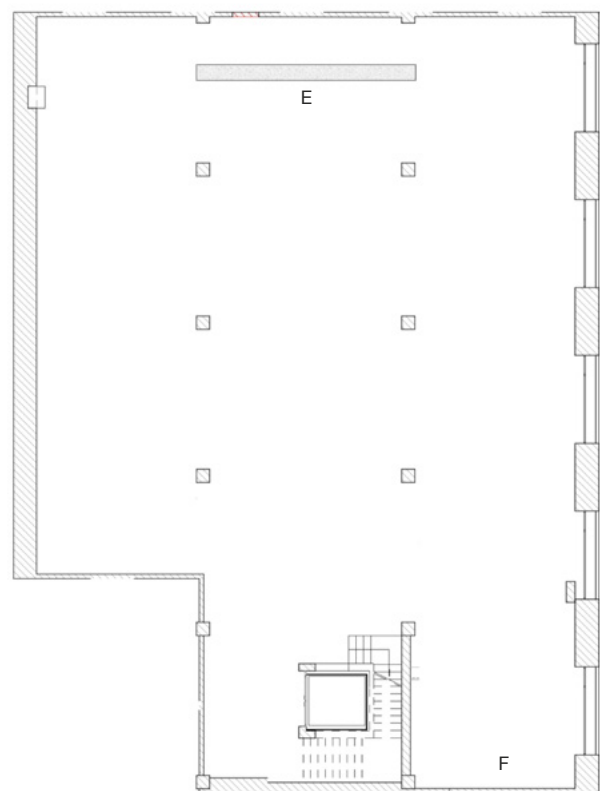
The work, an apparent still life, becomes a living sculpture - moths emerge from the cocoons sewn onto it, taking flight in the surrounding space.

Through a constellation of works that constantly overturns the boundaries between human artifact and biological manifestation, the exhibition *IKAPOΣ (ICARUS)* thus intends to reactivate the mythical dimension of narration. Placed in a new system of cultural and natural coordinates, the myth can be cyclically renovated and embodied in a contingent time and space, opening the current horizon to new visions and interpretations.

PIANO SUPERIORE / UPPER FLOOR



PIANO INFERIORE / LOWER FLOOR



A. *Dedalo e Icaro*, 2020
45 x 38 cm
lambda print from 6x6 scanned
negative, mounted on aluminium

C. *Dedalo e Icaro*, 2020
100 x 70 cm
lambda print from 6x6 scanned
negative, mounted on aluminium

E. *IKAPOΣ (Icarus)*, 2020-2021
30'23"
film, colour

B. *Senza titolo (Dedalo)*, 2022
variable dimensions,
aviary, natural cocoons, silver
casting, *Samia Ricini* moths

D. *Senza titolo (Ramo)*, 2022
34 x 8 cm ca.,
burnished brass, natural cocoons
and silver casting

F. *Icarus*, 2022
95 x 35 x 20 cm ca.
sweatshirt, natural sewn
cocoons, *Samia Ricini* moths