

KIPNZ

SIMONE MANTELLASSI

(Born 1971, Florence, Italy. Lives and works in Gilbertsville, NY.)



*Inspired to be an astronaut by a load of comics, he applied to be an astronaut, but was sadly rejected. "Too self conscious and flip-floppy" was their conclusion. After a period of depression and eventual self discovery, Simone embraced art as a way forward. Still shy as a mole, art was able to bring the realm of the unknown up-front for him. Instead of travels on the edge of space or jungles, his travels developed within the boundaries of his own mind.**

* Bio as written by the artist

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Simone Mantellassi is a self-taught artist, born and raised in Florence, Italy. He moved to the United States in 2002 and lives and works in Gilbertsville, New York, in the Western Catskills.

Mantellassi loved drawing from an early age. Inspired by comic books of the 1970s, he created his own. His first comic “Il Muro” (The Wall) was about a hero who always dies without reaching his goal. Inspired by the Renaissance art of his hometown, Florence—and its particular lack of humor—he practiced his own drawing, incorporating the absurdity of everyday life into his figurations.

Growing in complexity, Mantellassi’s drawings echo the multi-perspective quality of comic book pages where overlapping storylines and viewpoints cohabitate in one plane. Non-sensical alignments of objects and narratives intermingle with a humorous, dreamy palette of color, often paired with poetically off-kilter titles in his second language, English. Images and ideas expand and contract between resolution and dissolution, animating a dreamlike quality where highly vivid thoughts remain incomplete and half-formed. Mantellassi is drawn toward this “half-formed” state of being. “The downcast and the half-inflated interests me very much for its human feeling of being funny and sad at the same time.”

From certain drawings, Mantellassi creates three-dimensional sculptures—compact, diorama-like compositions composed of everyday materials in plexiglas casing. The humor and irony of his work is made concretely manifest in these objects, whose crumpled, crude surfaces and “imperfect” finishes are precisely where the work culminates most fully—stage-sets for the tragi-comedy of life where narrative and its artifice are on display at the same time. “As a stage set, from the audience you see something, but from backstage you see how everything is propped up, and just barely.” For Mantellassi, the humor in the artifice is the only release for the pressure and strangeness of everyday life.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS:

2024 - KIPNZ, Walton, NY. “I Can Do It Alone When You’re Not Here: Artwork by Zena Gurbo and Simone Mantellassi

2016 - Bullet Space, New York. “Wrong Side of History”

2008 - Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY. “Everson Biennial”

2007 - Albright Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY. “In/Beyond Western NY”

2006 - Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse NY. “Everson Biennial”

COLLECTIONS:

Buffalo AKG Art Museum

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