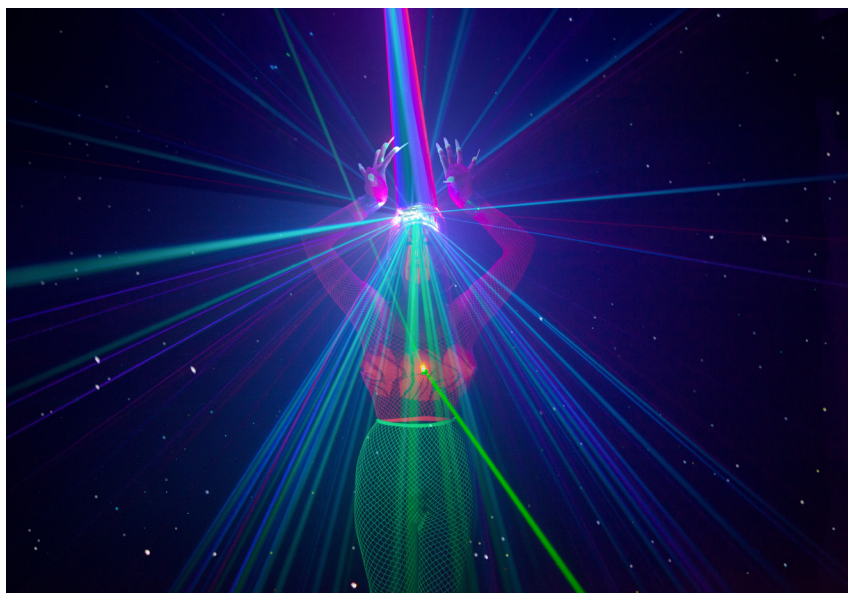


# MULTIVERSE

**Boris Eldagsen + Gilda & Bodha**

MIA PHOTO FAIR 21st-25th March 2019, Milan - Italy  
Stand Nr. 9 Corridor A: LUISA CATUCCI GALLERY



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GALLERY

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With the exhibition MULTIVERSE we create an artistic and philosophic dialog between the Italian duo of photographers Gilda&Bodha and the German photographer Boris Eldagsen.

The show aims to become a sort of metaphysical homage to the quantum physics theory of Multiverse, an hypothetical collection of multiple universes including the universe in which we live, each of which would comprise everything that is experimentally accessible by a connected community of observers: the entirety of space, time, matter, energy, and the physical laws and constants that describe them.

Boris Eldagsen challenged the idea of a unique reality through his images. He investigates the multiverse of human mind in order to examine the unconscious, communicating on a dreamlike level through the images he creates. By studying and exploring the unconscious dimension of life in a very methodical way, Eldagsen transform the subjects of his photographs in psychological archetypes, able to open doors, trigger emotions and unlock memories on a subjective as much as on a collective way. Despite over 200 years of psychology, the unconscious remains as vague and powerful as the gods it emancipated itself from. As a reservoir of our past experiences, it stores urges and feelings that we rationally have no access to. And this fascinates completely this German artist. Eldagsen only works at night, with minimal equipment, an in-camera approach without digital manipulation. Like a moth, he roams the streets searching for light, practicing what he has termed 'Inverted Street Photography': instead of exploring stories, a place or a person, he hijacks and transforms what he sees in front of his camera into a symbol for the timeless workings of the mind.

Some other time he also stages images with models to create portraits of the Collective Unconscious. To develop ideas and impulses for the shoot, he maps the overlapping areas of his unconscious and the models; he is then guided by the dynamics of the shoot to move deeper down the rabbit hole.

His visual poetry transports the viewer between the sublime and the uncanny - where the attributes of photography, painting, theatre and film unite.

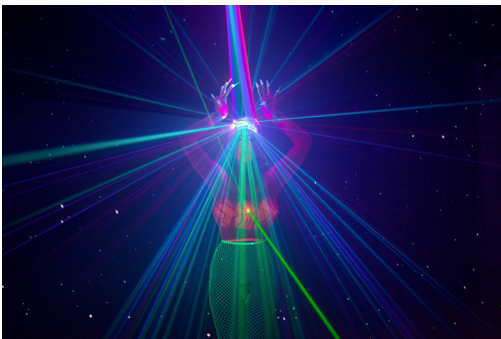
The Milanese duo GILDA & BODHA describes their artistic practice as an urgent need to share the inner exploration on which the two have been working for a long time. Practices that lead them, in a more or less conscious way, to artistically research the multiple facet of the universe's soul.

Their creative process starts with the creation of a still life photographic set where, thanks to their masterful use of light - "Photography is light. Light expresses, hides, amplifies, minimizes, caresses, excites" - they manage to give life to images capturing the three-dimensional forms into two-dimensional abstractions. The results are pictures that not only influence our perception of the reality of the subject, but become a new form of reality, the artists reality. A Multiverse.

Following the brilliant, almost fluorescent trajectories that flow whirling in their COSMIC series, the mind remains suspended between the dream of both the infinitely immense, celestial, stellar, and the infinitely small, microscopic, subatomic.

The spiritual repercussions of recent quantum theories such as the Multiverse, arouses in Gilda&Bodha a deep fascination. Matter and meaning influence each other continuously, just as much on an individual level the state of the mind can influence the body and the state of the body can influence the state of the mind.

The plexiglass shaped in the sculpture portrayed by this artist duo becomes an emblem of the vital energy of the cosmos, hiding in its shapes and colors details and atmospheres common to all levels of existence, in this, as in other possible universes.



Boris Eldagsen - The Marriage of Yin and Yang



Gilda & Bodha - Cosmic, Fire No. 1

## BORIS EL DAGSEN

Berlin-based German artist Boris Eldagsen (\*1970) studied photography and visual arts at the Art Academy of Mainz, conceptual art and intermedia at the Academy of Fine Arts, Prague and fine art the Sarojini Naidu School of Arts & Communication Hyderabad, India. In addition, he studied philosophy at the Universities of Cologne and Mainz. 2013, he participated in a Roger Ballen Masterclass.

His photomedia work has been shown internationally in institutions and festivals including Fridericianum Kassel, Deichtorhallen Hamburg, CCP Melbourne, ACP Sydney, EMAF Osnabrück, Bundeskunsthalle Bonn, Edinburgh Art Festival, FORMAT Festival Derby, Encontros da Imagem Braga, FestFoto Porto Alegre, Photolux Biennale Lucca, Singapore International Photography Festival, Indian Photo Festival Hyderabad, Chobi Mela Dhaka, PhotoVisa Krasnodar, Noorderlicht Groningen, Voies Off Festival Arles, Media Forum Moscow, WRO Media Art Biennale Wroclaw, Biennale Le Havre and Biennale of Electronic Arts Perth.

Since 2004, Boris has lectured at Victorian College of the Arts / University Melbourne, Photography Studies College Melbourne, Akademie für Bildende Künste Mainz and Hochschule Furtwangen.

In addition, he has given workshops for Goethe Institut Gulf-Region, Pathshala South Asian Media Institute Dhaka, Escola d'Art i Superior de Disseny d'Olot, Centre for Contemporary Photography Melbourne, RMIT University Melbourne, Monash University Melbourne, PhotoWerkBerlin, Fotografie Forum Frankfurt and Westlicht Wien.

Boris has been awarded the „Prix Voies Off“ in Arles (2013) and the „Photography Show Award“ at the FORMAT Festival in Derby (2015). Since 2014, Boris is a member of Deutsche Fotografische Akademie.

## INTERVIEW WITH BORIS EL DAGSEN

### **Could you talk about your project “The chamber of reflections”?**

“The Chamber of Reflection” is a 360° installation, reflecting on the tradition of the “Anteroom”.

The Anteroom is a small darkened chamber; used for spiritual initiation by many traditions ranging from Egyptian, Persian, Mayan and Greek religions to Freemasonry and Voodoo.

It resembles a sepulchral cave, furnished with symbols of death and destruction. The candidate is locked inside to meditate on life and death and to confront their own fears and demons. Descending below the earth, one undergoes a symbolical death, by „looking within oneself for the truth“ before resurfacing clear and purified. My work “Chamber of Reflections” was inspired by the Initiation Well of “Quinta da Regaleira” at the World Heritage Site of Sintra, Portugal and shot in and around Lisbon.

### **Your photos seem to present a surreal and dreamlike world. As a matter of fact the study of the unconscious is actually a central point of your artistic production. In what ways your study of the unconscious take form with your photos?**

I am interested in the unconscious mind. Despite over 200 years of psychology, the unconscious remains as vague and powerful as the gods it emancipated itself from. The mind is a curious thing. As a reservoir of our past experiences, it stores urges and feelings that we rationally have no access to. However some images can open these doors, trigger emotions and unlock memories. This is what I am after.

Using archetypes and symbolic acts, my work speaks the language of the unconscious and communicates on a dreamlike level. My visual poetry transports the viewer between the sublime and the uncanny – where the attributes of photography, painting, theatre and film unite.

### **In your artworks you often talk about “archetypes”, could you talk about this concept and explain it?**

C.G. Jung understood archetypes as universal, archaic patterns and images that form the collective unconscious. It is his psychological twist on Platonic ideas.

As such archetypes are timeless empty forms, that are given a particular expression in time, by individuals and cultures. They express themselves in stories, art, myths, religions, or dreams. If I can create a work that is



an expression of an archetype, it has the potential to become timeless and understandable across times and cultures.

### **Why did you decide to use the photography as a medium of expression? How did your photography research evolve in time?**

I started as a draughtsman and wanted to become a painter. But I couldn't paint, couldn't think in colour temperature and spaces. However I was good in b&w photography and working with people. So I gave myself a challenge: Can I work with photography as freely as a painter with a blank canvas? The answer was "yes", but it took me ten years to be able to give it. During this time I was more and more drawn to night photography. One day, I happened to visit a Chinese botanical garden, built on the philosophy of Yin and Yang. There, I realised that my night photography was full of Yin elements – the night, the moon, the female, the sea etc. I was baffled, that Yin was the underlying subject of my work and started to research the Western understanding of the Chinese Yin. I was impressed by Swiss psychologist C.G. Jung, for whom Yin is the symbol for the unconscious mind. And I was fascinated, that an unconscious process led me to the unconscious as a subject. Today the task I have given myself is: Can I create timeless images, archetypal images, that have an impact on the emotional, unconscious level? Images that cannot be translated into words? Can I show an internal psychological structure by using the material world in front of the camera? Like the Zen-Koan "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" this is a paradoxical task, and the most interesting I can imagine for photographers.

### **Is there any artist who really inspires you and your work?**

Without being aware of it, I always felt myself connected to artistic movements that have dealt with the unconscious: from religious, mystic and magic practice to Romanticism, Symbolism, Surrealism and beyond. I love the light of Rembrandt van Rijn, the sublime of C.D. Friedrich, the otherworldliness of William Blake, the labyrinths of Jose Luis Borges, the crazy wisdom of Alejandro Jodorowsky, the absurdity of Roy Andersson and the psychological approach of Roger Ballen.

## **GILDA & BODHA**

Bodha, born in 1964, began studying photography at a very young age in Milan, his hometown. In the early 1980s he collaborated – as an assistant – with great contemporary Italian photographers. Giovanni Gastel, Fabrizio Ferri and Oliviero Toscani regularly shot at the photographic studio in which he worked: this day-to-day experience was a school that shaped his relationship with photography. In the moment of maximum splendor charismatic fashion designers like Moschino, Gianfranco Ferré and Krizia become models of creativity for the young photographer. In 1986 he founded his own studio. His work, both professional and personal, focussed mainly on still life. By 1996 research on an aesthetic level was no longer sufficient and he began to follow a path of inner research that led to meditation. Reborn as Dhyana Bodha (Sanskrit for understanding in meditation), from that moment he signed all his works Bodha D'Erasmo, combining his new path with the surname he was already known by in the worlds of photography, fashion and design.

Gilda was born in Florence in 1957. Her father collected works of contemporary artists in the 60s and 70s, ranging from the conceptual Vincenzo Agnetti to Mario Merz, the key exponent of Arte Povera. Those years left a strong impression on her childhood and youthful memories, especially various Florentine artists including Maurizio Nannucci, whose work investigates words, colour, light and space. Those concepts marked the stages of Gilda's life step from being a model of life drawing in the Florentine academies, to studying Psychology at university, to traveling in India. From 1980 the meeting with the East marks her rebirth and meditation becomes a fundamental part of her life. Practicing weaving brought her closer to "art making", and she became a muse for various designers. Then she met Bodha.

## **INTERVIEW WITH GILDA & BODHA**

**Your work with photography has always ranged from the world of fashion, as you live and work in more**

**dimensions. How do these aspects coexist within your creative world? What made you want to open up to the world of contemporary art?**

Art has always been part of our creative journey.

In our journey into the world of fashion we have always brought our artistic research, putting our creativity within what is a communication between the "commercial", always trying to work in areas where the fusion of a creative language and a commercial approach is precisely considered a plus value, able to convey communication in the best possible way, giving it extra character. The drive towards art is part of us, it is our way of seeing life in its various forms. The word "seeing" of course is not a random choice. Our creativity starts from the vision, generating images, which can take even more than one aspect, as in the case of COSMIC where also the relationship with the matter has generated a physical sculptural entity. In recent years we have heard that our work in its artistic facet had reached a point of maturation and this very feeling has spurred us to share and show our visions, understanding that art is also this: a belonging of the world, that wants to spread in it.

**In your photo series "Cosmic" you have the impression of being catapulted into a dreamlike and futuristic universe, a cosmic and almost alien context. What drove you to make this photographic series? What do you really want to convey and express through Cosmic?**

**Our inner search has led us, over the years, to be increasingly aware of what is called "oneness", unity. We** are all one, there is an energy bonding us. We can say that we, the earth and the universe surrounding us, are facets of a single energy source. We can call it in many ways, and there are many definitions, some scientific, some spiritual. In Cosmic we have and are investigating what forms this energy can take if observed during its transformation. We have chosen a material, Polymethylmethacrylate, which interacts with the light in a peculiar way physically, but at the same time could express the concept of energy almost as if it were made by light itself. We cut it and shaped it, following the path the material self was showing us, generating a dialogue between us and it that lasted days. In the end we started to compose the various manipulated polymethylmethacrylate elements on the photographic set, illuminate them and let the dialogue continue. Amplified by the reflections of the lighting, forms and memories, aroused, getting stronger and stronger, as if the material self became a mirror of a collective unconsciousness, a sort of oneiric capsule where all dimensions of time and space coexist. At that moment, on the set, we felt that it was happening, the gate had opened channelling the "oneness".

**Working with your partner to undertake a creative project must present certainly some interesting dynamics. How do this dynamics develop in your case? How can you find a balance in the creative process?**

The search for the encounter of polarities is a fundamental characteristic in our approach with a creative project, artistic or commercial, doesn't matter.

We can say that the search for balance is the button triggering the creative process. In this dynamic of re-search, there is no defined roles among us apart from those dictated by photographic technique. We find the equilibrium when we recognize that the differences arise during the creative process have merged into a single vision, basically they disappears and the united vision emerges. We share the same vision.

Until that point it can happen that we go in different directions, but inside we know that something is missing that the other one has, the goal is discovering what it is, and merging it into an united single vision.

**Who are your references in the world of visual arts? Can you name a few?**

To mention some of the references we feel close, we can talk about the artist Dan Flavin who has worked on the relationship between space, light and color. Or Anish Kapoor and his creative expression in materials and forms in a meditative dimension. Or Bill Viola and his research in video art about icons from art history to present time. From a strictly photographic point of view we quote Irving Penn, a true artist before a photograph, always looking for new languages and formal synthesis, never devoid of content, whether it was a portrait or a picture of a lipstick, always faithful to himself. His works on cigarette butts was understood many years later, but the timeless charm of those images is undeniable. For the performance part we'll say Marina Abramovich. Her journey with Ulay as a couple in art and life definitely touches us, as well as her latest fase, from the performance at MOMA on, where the inner research became the focus of her work.

## LUISA CATUCCI GALLERY

At the Luisa Catucci Gallery, we believe in the power of inspiring art and culture.

Humanity's emancipation and evolution, since the beginning of time, is reached by feeding the soul and brain with stimulating nourishment, in order to open more doors hidden in our brains, to become better beings, better societies and thus a better planet. Art is an outstanding power food. We truly value its fundamental role of instigator for reflections and feelings out of the ordinary.

Based in Berlin, in the newly trend neighbourhood of Schillerkiez Neukölln, just a few meters away from the unique park of Tempelhofer Feld, Luisa Catucci Gallery, is more than just a conventional art gallery; it places itself as one of the fundamental elements of the area's cultural turmoil.

The gallery's program focuses mainly on art exhibitions, inspired by ecological, social and existential matters, through a variety of media, including photography, video, painting, sculpture and printmaking.

Beside the exhibitions, Catucci organises regularly multidimensional events, in order to bind art with talks, culture and enjoyment, supporting the vibrant spirit of the town and the area.

As a natural evolution of a 15 years long project of the Italian curator and artist Luisa Catucci, known as Cell63 artplatform - a space to work and exhibit for young emerging artists- Luisa Catucci Gallery took on board, since January 2017, a new assortment of established and emerging artists from the European art scene, naturally with attentive eye to the Italian one.

Luisa works permanently in contact with the artists represented, not only to develop the gallery's exhibitions and international art fairs, but also to accompany them in their professional career, outside the gallery's wall. Several of our artists have already exhibited at museums and public institutions worldwide, or took part in prestigious exhibitions, such as Manifesta or Venice's Biennale.