

Spring 2021
Giulia Mangoni
Primordial Shoes // Scarpe Primordiali



Primordial Shoes // Scarpe Primordiali presents a climax in Giulia Mangoni's archival research into the tensions that affect Ciociaria, the rocky terrain to the Southeast of Rome within the province of Frosinone where she was born.

The works featured, of which there are seven, that range from large-scale panels to handicraft from the region, were curated and created by Mangoni in response to the academic environment of the 4m2 gallery; situating her research within a collective response to the urgent need for the consolidation of Ciociaria's fraught identity.

In the eighteenth century, Ciociaria experienced an excess of image-production, serving as the backdrop for grand tourists travelling between Rome and Naples. With these paintings, the memory of Ciociaria is now fragmented across European museums, its people in mourning for the images that were never returned to their place of conception, having never been intended for their consumption to begin with.

This metaphysical loss of representation can be perceived at this moment in time. This is why the identity of the region has been defined by external influences, associated with cinematographic traditions. The arid landscape of Ciociaria and its proximity to Cinecittà in Rome presented an ideal solution during the proliferation of Italian-made 'American Westerns' in the mid-60's and 70's, often dubbed 'Spaghetti Westerns'. Today, the region is superimposed by the performed rurality of cowboy culture, best exemplified by recent videos of illicit horse-racing, where bandit-like figures gallops through empty streets, turning the winding lanes and artisanal character of Ciociaria into a spectacle for the urban viewer once again.

Mangoni brings these tensions to a head in *Primordial Shoes // Scarpe Primordiali* amidst a frenzy of image-retrieval championed by local aficionados and historians alike to gather and reconstruct the identity of the region as it is conceived locally and externally. Her works, a number of which were created to respond specifically to the unique opportunities for rural-urban confrontation presented by the 4m2 gallery's location within the Italo-American context of John Cabot University, layer archival images with stills from iconic Italian-made Westerns such as 'They Called Him Trinity', 'Ramon The Mexican', and 'Go West'. Hanging boar skulls emerge between synthetic figures in cowboy hats whose presence stands ghostly and fragile despite a vivid palette. A pair of local worn leather shoes, also known as 'ciocie', hangs casually by its laces, its motif obsessively revised and replicated sporadically across the show. Between Mangoni's generous brushstrokes and the intricacy of the found objects she presents alongside them, Ciociaria is characterised with nuance and empathy for its past and its present.

In collaboration with John Cabot University, *Primordial Shoes // Scarpe Primordiali* thus imports the peripheral stories of Ciociaria to the 4m2 gallery in a historicising action that recalls, in the hope of resolving, the exodus of its regional image.



Giulia Mangoni (1991, Isola del Liri, IT) is a Brazilian-Italian artist creating layered interventions that metabolize archival material through the lens of painting, mixing south American and European pictorial traditions in order to play with notions of memory and identity.