

TOM PORTA

## GAIJIN / LO STRANIERO

curated by Angelo Crespi

**Opening reception:** SATURDAY, APRIL 9th, from 5 pm to 7 pm  
**Dates:** April 9 – April 30, 2022  
**Location:** PUNTO SULL'ARTE, Viale Sant'Antonio 59/61, Varese  
0332 320990 | info@puntosullarte.it  
www.puntosullarte.com  
**Visiting hours:** Tuesday – Saturday: h 9.30 am - 5 pm.  
**Catalogue:** Critical text by Angelo Crespi

**TOM PORTA**, one of the most refined painters of his generation, comes to Varese: his sublime figuration is characterised by a lyrical style in which he skilfully mixes the flavour of Italian tradition with the newest international painting trends.

In this latest series, "**Gaijin / The foreigner**", Tom Porta completes a long research journey dedicated to Japan and its imagery. Following in the footsteps of the great travellers of the 19th century, who saw the Land of the Rising Sun as the last exotic land to explore, **Tom Porta reshapes the fashion of Japonisme against the background of contemporaneity**. Thirty paintings, including several refined graphite on paper drawings, will be presented in the show together with the installation of the 36 views of Mount Fuji.

The phenomenon of Japonisme was widespread in Paris, above all when several of the great collectors, one thinks of Henri Cernuschi or of the Goncourt brothers, and important art critics such as Theodor Duret, true inspirer of the Impressionists, began to interest themselves in oriental art. Many of the most renowned artists of the era – Monet, Degas, Manet, Pissarro... to quote a few – were influenced by Utamaro and Hokusai's works, often adopting an oriental lightness in their painting. More than a century later, Tom Porta follows suit, contrasting the gesture and speed typical of western art with the meticulous patience of the oriental masters, exploring the themes of grace, strength, symbolism, nature as a divine spiritual guide.

Here, therefore, is the reinterpretation of Hokusai's 36 views of Mount Fuji, to be looked at with the eye of the contemporary visitor; here is the rarefaction of Kitagawa Utamaro's geishas, but with a neo-impressionist view; here are the most classic views but taken with the speed of a photographer who has just arrived in a country newly opened up to the rest of the world.

"In my work" – Tom Porta explains – "there is no pretense of confrontation or indulgence in imitation, I am a man who recently arrived and immediately left again, ten thousand kilometres and one hundred and seventy years away. A foreigner".

The opening reception of the exhibition will be held on **SATURDAY, Aprile 9th, from 5 to 7 pm, at PUNTO SULL'ARTE** – Viale Sant'Antonio 59/61 and the artists will be present at the Gallery. At 6pm the art curator Angelo Crespi will take a short speech in which he will introduce the artists and the essence of the exhibition.

The exhibition is accompanied by a **BILINGUAL CATALOGUE** created by PUNTO SULL'ARTE containing curator Angelo Crespi's critical text and the reproduction of the exhibited artworks.

Per ricevere informazioni e immagini rivolgersi a: info@puntosullarte.it

**PUNTO SULL'ARTE** di SOFIA MACCHI  
VIALE SANT'ANTONIO 59/61 | 21100 VARESE (VA) ITALY  
+39 0332 320990 | +39 366 26 40 256 | INFO@PUNTOSULLARTE.IT  
P.I. 03186310128 | C.F. MCCSFO68C49Z132A

[PUNTOSULLARTE.IT](http://PUNTOSULLARTE.IT)



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**TOM PORTA** was born in Milan in 1970 and, since his childhood, he has shown a strong attitude towards drawing and art in general. He graduated as Art Master and began a successful career in illustration and photography. He has lived in Italy, Germany, France, Japan and the United States and, since the very beginning of his career, he has chosen to merge his life experiences into his own paintings. Since 2003 he has chosen to abandon illustration and photography to dedicate himself only to painting, quickly gaining a prominent position in the Italian art scene. Besides being mentioned among the top 100 Italian artists (2007), Porta's artworks are published in important publications such as "*500 anni di pittura italiana*" (500 years of Italian painting) and in Sotheby's and Christie's catalogues. His work focuses on the history of 1900 by using past as a mirror for present. The artist is also attracted by the passing of time that he tells through objects and places chosen in order to invite the viewer to embark on his personal journey within present and future memories. He has taken part in many solo and group exhibitions, including: "*W.A.R. – We are Restless, the unheard soldier scream*" at Palazzo Ducale in Genoa (2011), "*Inferno*" at il Famedio del Cimitero Monumentale in Milan for the hundredth anniversary of World War I (2014), "*Icarus*" at Terminal 1 at Milan Malpensa Airport (2018) and "*Inferno*" at Pirelli Skyscraper in Milan (2018). He lives and works in Milan.

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