

PRESS RELEASE

GAIALIGHT – DARKLIGHT CHRISTMAS 2010 Don Chisciote Gallery/December 3, 2010 – January 29, 2011 Inauguration Thursday, December 2 at 6.30 p.m.

In the exhibition *Darklight Christmas 2010* curated by Giulia Collina and Tiziana Gazzini, the Don Chisciote Gallery will present 28 original works by the Italian-American artist Gaialight (www.gaialight.com) that celebrate an unusual Christmas in which light is devoured by shadow and good cheer is truly put to the test.

The exhibition is also a debut of Gaialight's new artistic project based on the *darklight* technique (black and white in exasperating contrast), which also becomes the ideal metaphor to illustrate some of the deepest and little known aspects of American reality.

The core images of this exhibition, elaborated, sublimated and abstracted by the *darklight* treatment, come to us from Florida, where in February 2010 Gaialight photographed *The Holy Land Experience*, one of the most extreme theme parks upon which the economy of the city of Orlando is based (Disney World is simply the most well-known).

For 35 dollars – the price of a one-day pass to The Holy Land Experience - you can take part in the last supper and attend two daily Crucifixions and their respective Resurrections as well as share in the Nativity experience, naturally.

This is an experience of the sacred that is rather out-of-the-ordinary, somewhere between performance and devotion, pop culture and traditionalism, which Gaialight interprets through her mix of Bauhaus, in an optical version of Josef Albers (her residence with the Albers Foundation left its mark), and Pop Art, Dadaism, Surrealism and Conceptual Art.

All the Christmas icons are represented. There is a Holy Family with a Madonna who is more Pop than the rock star (*Maddy*). In *Darklight Christmas 2010*, the Christmas trees, which there is no shortage of, are cypresses and weeping willows or are lit up at the base of Calvary (*Crucifixion*). The angels are those of Justice and Peace, Purity and Liberty. Though along with the Awakening Angel, they cry or turn their backs or bow their heads to show their despair, while the Three Wise Men, as dictated by tradition, are distinguished by their sparkling crowns (*King of Kings*) and their opulent coffers (*Treasure*).

The images in Gaialight's 2010 Pop-Conceptual Art are never innocent, but rather are mercilessly symbolic of the present day. For example, in *Leo & Lambs* small silent angels are frightened by the roar of a lion and crushed by its power. This is the metaphoric declaration of the pain caused by a wound as well as by scandals such as the cases of pedophilia that the Church, especially in America, has only in recent years acknowledged.

Darklight Christmas 2010 alludes to the Cardinal Sins and Vices marking the end of the first ten years of the third millennium of the Christian era, and Gaialight challenges the oxymoron, bringing together light and shadow, good and bad, sin and redemption, while defining her new creative process making its public debut in this exhibition.

Gaialight/DARKLIGHT CHRISTMAS 2010

curated by

Giulia Collina and Tiziana Gazzini

December 3, 2010 – January 29, 2011

Inauguration December 2, 2010 at 6.30 p.m.

Don Chisciote Gallery

Via Angelo Brunetti, 21 a/b – 00186 Rome

Tel: 06 3224515

Catalogue/ in gallery

Text by Tiziana Gazzini

The exhibition has been organized in collaboration with **La coda dell'occhio** Cultural Association – www.lacodadellocchio.com

CHRISTMAS ON CALVARY

by Tiziana Gazzini

If the Christ depicted by Gaialight in *Crucifixion* still had the breath to raise his head, at the base of Calvary he would see a tree decorated with red and green Christmas ornaments. He would understand and, before sacrificing himself to provide humanity with the hope of redemption of sin and pain in the world, a faint smile would appear on his face.

With her instinctive theological knowledge and usual visual power, Gaialight combines Good Friday and the 25th of December in one contemporary and violent image: that Christ was born to die and be resurrected. The end is contained within the beginning.

Yet, in one innocent gesture, she has simply lit up Christmas decorations at the base of Calvary.

The significance of *Darklight Christmas*, summarized in *Crucifixion*, can then be extended to the other works in the exhibition.

Depressed angels float around in the *darklight* nativity scene, seraphim shedding jewel tears. Something artificial may be sensed in her representation of the Holy Family, something that upsets the viewer, sheep silently crying and running from a roaring lion, coffers overflowing with treasure and the Three Wise Men holding up shamelessly resplendent crowns.

A heated subject, red-hot and filled with content as well as a high degree of contemporary significance.

However, for as red-hot as this subject is, it is equally cooled by the *darklight* technique. The spectator is drawn into the work by the lightness of the its images, by the elegance of the stark white and black set off by hints of light. Then, catching the spectator off-guard as usual, Gaialight plunges him or her into the uneasiness of perception. Yet again, Gaialight's art, though only aesthetics (or perhaps precisely because it is simply aesthetics), bring ethics into play.

Gaialight's artwork is never calming, but rather always disturbing. Especially in this *darklight* version of Christmas 2010.

Darklight. Essentially, Gaialight challenges the oxymoron, and by bringing together light and shadow, good and bad, sin and redemption, defines her creative process.

To her mix of Bauhaus, in an optical version of Josef Albers (her residence with the Albers Foundation left its mark), and Pop Art, Dadaism, Surrealism and Conceptual Art she adds that extra-special something that demonstrates Gaialight's ability as an unparalleled artist-reporter (something already apparent in the exhibition *Light America* documenting the USA during the six months prior to the election of Barack Obama).

While *Darklight Christmas 2010* alludes to the Cardinal Sins and Vices marking the end of the first ten years of the third millennium of the Christian era, it also illustrates a profound and unexpected American reality.

The core images of the exhibition, elaborated, sublimated and abstracted by the *darklight* treatment, come to us from Florida, where in February 2010 Gaialight photographed *The Holy Land Experience*, one of the most extreme theme parks upon which the economy of the city of Orlando is based (Disney World is simply the most well-known).

For 35 dollars you can take part in the last supper and attend two daily Crucifixions and their respective Resurrections as well as share in the Nativity experience, naturally. This is the ideal basis of the surprising *Darklight Christmas 2010* as well as for the public debut of Gaialight's new artistic project.

The *darklight* process

Gaialight selects a subject and photographs it.

The images then undergo a “desaturation” process.

The subsequent step in the technical/creative process is the identification of levels of extreme white and black revealing the essence of the image.

The visual result of this process is, in its entirety and in detail, the origin of the language of expression used by Gaialight to produce original works whose initial photographic moment is simply a conceptual reference.

This is how *darklight* is created.

The *darklight* process is making its public debut with the exhibition *Darklight Christmas 2010*.

Main exhibitions and events 2004-2010

2010

Artist Residency, Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, Connecticut, USA

Cruzamentos, Group exhibition, Territorio da Foto Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil; Galeria de Gavea, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Arte Plural Galeria, Recife, PE, Brazil

2009

Light America, Solo exhibition, Galleria Fontanella Borghese, Rome

Bare Smile 2/13, Installation, Foyer Teatro Valle, Rome

Bare Smile 1/13, Performance with Lidia Ravera, Parco di Villa Torlonia, Rome

Bare War 1/13, Site-specific installation and performance with Francesco Zizola, Galleria 10b Photography, Rome

2008

Starlight in New York, Nancy Koltès Gallery, Solo exhibition, Tribute to the Tribeca FilmFest, with the support of the Italian Cultural Institute of New York, New York, USA

Light Treatment, Solo exhibition, KunstPraxis der Siemens AG, Munich, Germany

Light Treatment, Solo exhibition, Drissien Galerie, Munich, Germany

2007

Omaggio a Mario Schifano. Sottoterra 02: esempi di arte urbana, Group exhibition, Studio Giga, Rome

Trattamento Light, Solo exhibition, 5th edition of "RomaDesign +", Spazio Etoile, Rome

Birmania on my mind, Installation, 5th edition of "RomaDesign +", Spazio Etoile, Rome

Starlight, Solo exhibition, Café Panique, Paris, France

Starlight, Solo exhibition, Tribute to the Rome Film Festival with the support of the Italian Cultural Institute of Paris, Paris, France

2006

9x100, Group exhibition, International Festival of Photography, Rome

35mm, Group exhibition, Yuko & Biba, Rome

2005

Can, Solo exhibition, Galleria Santa Cecilia, Rome

Made in USA, Solo exhibition, AbitArt Hotel, Rome

2004

Light, Solo exhibition, Galleria Santa Cecilia, Rome

Gaialight was born in Rome in 1973 to a New York mother and Sicilian father. Her educational background is rich and original. On the one hand, she pursued classical studies and holds a Law degree with a thesis on the conditions in Italian prisons. On the other, early on she showed an aptitude for the arts, which found expression during her university years when she spent time on the Italian and American art scene collaborating with international photographers and artists.

Her travels throughout India, Europe, the USA and Israel have inspired her to experiment with different techniques: collage, installations, performances, *objects d'art* and photography. Through her experiences, she has developed a language of personal expression that goes beyond genre.

Since 2004 she has dedicated herself exclusively to art and has chosen the pseudonym Gaialight.

In 2007 she moved to New York where she now lives and works.

She is one of a new generation of artists who best represent the contamination of language and artistic movements (Optical and Pop Art, Dadaism, Surrealism and Conceptual Art).

The most important newspapers and magazines in Italy and abroad, including China, have written about her, and *Io donna*, the weekly magazine for women published by the *Corriere della Sera* dedicated its cover to one of her works, *The Wall*.

She can be found in *Arte Contemporanea* (Electa Mondadori), eleven volumes dedicated to the international art scene from the 1950s to the present.

