

‘IMPUNITI, LIBERI, TESTARDI’

Gabbi Cattani, Cecilia Mangini

21 February – 14 March 2025

‘IMPUNITI, LIBERI, TESTARDI’ features works by Gabbi Cattani alongside Cecilia Mangini’s *La briglia sul collo* (1974) and *La canta delle marane* (1962), two films that investigate childhood as a state of “pre-political rebellion” resisting structures of adult society.

Through a series of interviews, *La briglia sul collo* follows seven-year-old Fabio Spada, labeled a deviant by his school, family and neighbours. The film suggests that unrest and dissent stem from oppression, aligning young misfits like Fabio within the archetype of Christian saints, revolutionaries, and artists—figures who resist, reveal, and disrupt.

In *La canta delle marane* (Swamps Song), her third collaboration with Pier Paolo Pasolini, Mangini captures the uninhibited lives of a group of Roman prepubescents who gather at a marana, a small stream in the suburbs of the city. Within this autonomous microcosm, they fight, play, and forge their own social order, literally at the periphery of society. The film’s lingering shots on their restless bodies resonate with Pasolini’s novel *Ragazzi di vita* (The Street Kids, 1955), while foreshadowing their inevitable fate—solitude, delinquency, and early death. Cattani’s works establish a dialogue with Mangini’s films, particularly through their shared interest in childhood relics and photography as a tool of regression. The exhibition features three of Cattani’s Honey Boxes, a series of acrylic crates filled with honey encasing personal and family objects. The wall-oriented boxes function as sculptural tableaux in which honey serves as an embalming substance evoking mummification and pharmaceutical practices through honey—a theme the artist explored earlier in his text work *The Mellified Man* (2020), a translation of the 16th-century Chinese medical compendium *Bencao Gangmu*.

Also included in the exhibition are three portraits of Cattani’s childhood friend Filippo, whose facial features are shaped by generations of consanguineous marriages within his aristocratic family.

In *Drawing (d’après Mother 2/EarthBound, 1994)* Cattani sketches the baby-monster character *Giygas* from computer video game *Mother 2*. Designed as a reversible pattern figure of a foetus head and a vortex tusked alien, *Giygas* is the very background and final boss of the game which the player has to defeat/abort in order to save his own future.

The exhibition title ‘IMPUNITI, LIBERI, TESTARDI’ quotes Pasolini’s text of Mangini’s *Canta delle marane*, in which the anarchic confederacy of Roman swamp-boys are described as the “impudent, free, stubborn” enemies of our world.

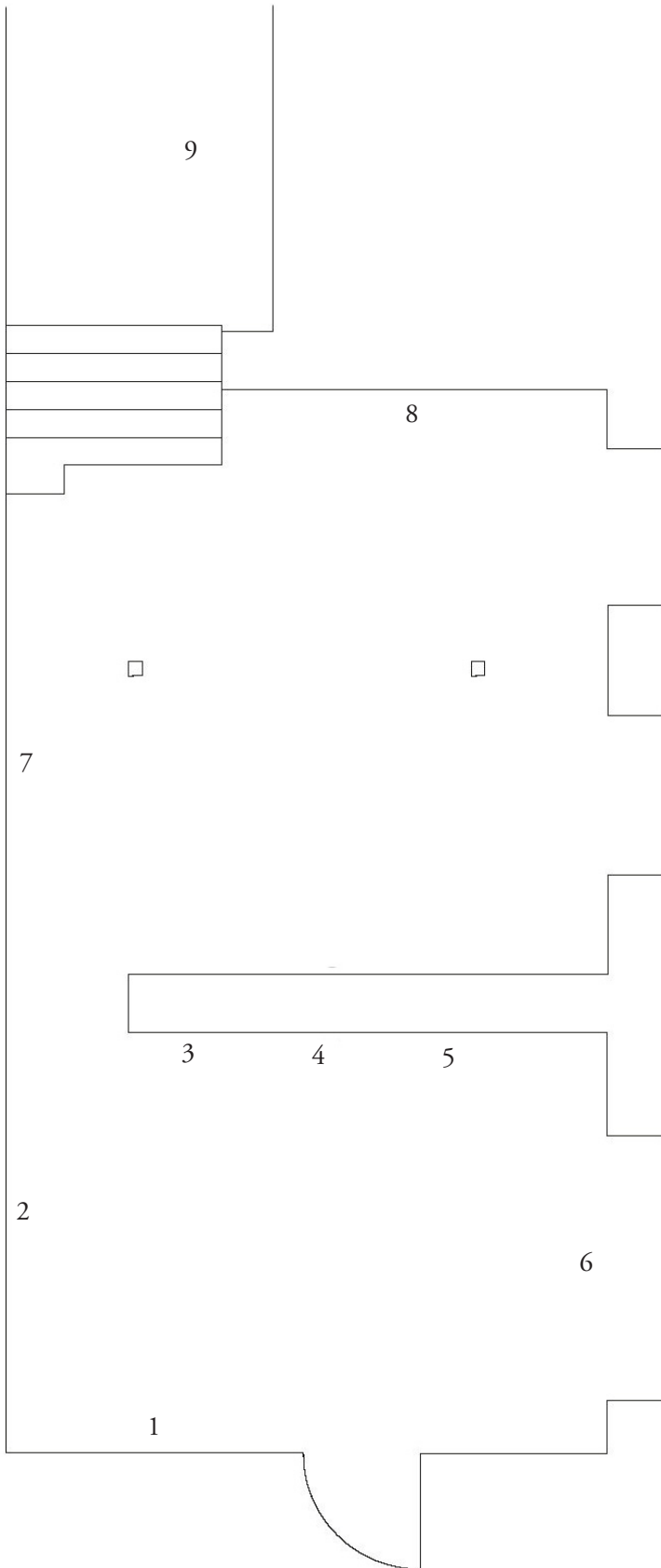
Artist biographies

**Gabbi Cattani** (b. 1990 in Rome, Italy) lives and works in Frankfurt am Main. He holds a diploma in Music Composition and Music Theory from the Music Conservatory S. Cecilia of Rome and the EHESS in Paris and graduated from the Städelschule in 2024 under the class of Gerard Byrne. Through performance, video and installation, he incorporates family archives and personal objects to explore how narratives are constructed, inherited, appropriated and preserved. In his practice he often adapts literary works as film-vignettes and tableaux vivants in which desire and the representation of sexuality hold a central role of aesthetic reflection. Recently his work was shown at Guggenheim Collection, Venice; Laden, Berlin; CCA: Center for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow; MEWO Kunsthalle, Memmingen; Return Gallery, Dublin; Mediterranea Biennial, San Marino; Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art and OUTPOST Gallery, Norwich.

**Cecilia Mangini** (b. 1927 in Mola di Bari; † January 21, 2021, in Rome, Italy) was an Italian documentary filmmaker, screenwriter, and photographer. She is considered the first Italian documentary film director of the post-war period.

Mangini began her career as a film critic: from the early 1950s, she wrote reviews for leftist film magazines such as Cinema Nuovo, Cinema '60, and Eco del cinema and began to collaborate with her husband and filmmaker Lino del Fra and Pier Paolo Pasolini on her own documentaries and feature films.

In her work she explored the transformation of a rural, agrarian, and religiously influenced society into an urban, industrialized, and secularized state during the 1960s and 1970s, highlighting the lives of women, the poor, workers, and children in particular.



- 1 Gabbi Cattani  
*Self-portrait, Filippo #2*, 2022  
inkjet print on paper  
paper dimensions: 15,8 x 18,5 cm  
framed dimensions: 34 x 44 cm
- 2 Gabbi Cattani  
*Self-portrait, Filippo #3*, 2022  
solvent transfer print on paper  
paper dimensions: 15,8 x 18,5 cm  
framed dimensions 34 x 44 cm
- 3 Gabbi Cattani  
*Untitled (honey box #1)*, 2023  
acrylic box, Helsapor gloves, honeydew honey  
30 x 32 x 10 cm
- 4 Gabbi Cattani  
*Untitled (honey box #2)*, 2024  
acrylic box, snake shed skin in Ziplock bag,  
acacia honey  
21 x 26 x 6 cm
- 5 Gabbi Cattani  
*Drawing (d'après Mother 2/EarthBound, 1994)*,  
2021  
fineliner on paper  
paper dimensions: 13,2 x 15,9 cm  
glass dimensions: 34 x 44 cm
- 6 Cecilia Mangini  
*La briglia sul collo*, 1974  
16 mm (digital version), color, sound  
14:53 min
- 7 Gabbi Cattani  
*Self-portrait, Filippo #1*, 2022  
screen print on paper  
paper dimensions: 24 x 20 cm  
framed dimensions: 45 x 55 cm  
Edition of 5 + 2 AP
- 8 Cecilia Mangini  
*La canta delle marane*, 1962  
35mm (digital version), color, sound  
10:35 min
- 9 Gabbi Cattani  
*Untitled (honey box #3, d'après Saint Sébastien  
soigné par Irène et sa servante by Nicolas Régnier,  
ca.1626–1630)*, 2024  
acrylic box, inkjet print, acacia honey  
25,7 x 36,4 x 6 cm