

# Gelitin

## Belle de ...

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MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique is delighted to present its first exhibition of Austrian artist collective Gelitin.

Arguably the world's most recognizable artwork, Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa finds itself playfully subverted in a new series of various sizes and shapes, in plasticine, glass and other mixed media.

Despite the works' bright colors, their somewhat comical, and intentionally naïf re-interpretation of Da Vinci's iconic painting leave the viewer with a sense of discomfort, opening the door to further considerations.

Firstly, by turning this unique art historical masterpiece into a series – begun in 2007 and restarted in 2020 - Gelitin face us with the reality of Walter Benjamin's seminal *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*: the Mona Lisa has been seen, reproduced and copied to such an extent that even its parody is instantly recognizable, whilst still contributing to strengthening its importance and "universality". The Mona Lisa is no longer a unique, covetable work. Instead, it becomes one of many.

"*Bad artists borrow, great artists steal*" this idea, attributed to Picasso, is particularly fitting, also because Gelitin reproduced Picasso's Guernica in a similar plasticine series, questioning the limits of authorship and originality.

Furthermore, the use of plasticine immediately alludes to children's all time favourite: playdough. Far from a "noble" art historical material, its pastiness gives the works texture and depth, making the artists' touch clearly visible in the composition. More than paintings, Gelitin's Mona Lisa series are more akin to wall sculptures, playing with volume and three dimensions.

Bulging noses, single eyes, ball-shaped heads... the Mona Lisa is kneaded like bread as it passes through the filter of Gelitin's transformative manipulations, to emerge, cartoon-like on the other side. As if from an alternate reality, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mona Lisa is still as iconic, perhaps even more likeable now that she is taken down from her pedestal...

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**Mardi**

Gelitin  
Mona Lisa, 2021, Ex. Unique  
Plasticine on wood  
86 × 52.5 x 8 cm / 33 × 20 1/3 x 3 inches

**Mercredi**

Gelitin  
Mona Lisa, 2020, Ex. Unique  
Plasticine on wood  
71 × 53 × 20 cm / 28 × 20 5/6 × 7 7/8 inches

**Jeudi**

Gelitin  
Mona Lisa, 2021, Ex. Unique  
Plasticine on wood  
66 × 50.5 x 14 cm / 26 × 19 2/3 x 5 inches

**Vendredi**

Gelitin  
Mona Lisa, 2020, Ex. Unique  
Plasticine on wood  
64.5 × 41.5 x 10 cm / 25 1/5 × 16 1/7 x 4 inches

**Samedi**

Gelitin  
Mona Lisa, 2022, Ex. Unique  
Plasticine on wood  
81 × 54 × 7.5 cm / 31 5/6 × 21 1/4 × 3 inches

**Gelitin** is an artist collective composed of Wolfgang Gantner, Ali Janka, Florian Reither and Tobias Urban.

They met in 1978 and began to increasingly work together in the coming years, actively exhibiting as a partnership in 1993. They live and work in Vienna.

Solo exhibitions include: Tiroler Landesmuseen, Innsbruck (2021), Interactive Genital Society Performance, Grey Area, San Francisco (2020), Gelitin. Stinking Dawn, Kunsthalle Wien Museumsquartier, Wien (2019), Pokalypse – Apokalypse – Okalypseap, Fondazione Prada, Milan (2017), The Guild of Giving, Cabaret Voltaire, Manifesta 11, Zurich (2016), Schlupfloch Dussilismus, Gelatin und die Deutschen Riesen, Kunstlerverein Malkasten, Dusseldorf (2016), Karaoke Machine, Donaufestival, Krems (2016); Human Elevator, Parallel Vienna, Alte Post, Wien (2016); Cave Show, Ciales, Puerto Rico (2014); Die Tusovka Runde, Solyanka VPA, Moscow, RUS (2014); Loch, 21er Haus, Museum of Contemporary Art, Vienna (2013); Stop - Anna Ly Sing, Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, D (2013) ; Ritratto Analitico (performance), Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milano, I (2013); Gelatin Pavilion - Some Like It Hot, 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice, I ( 2011); All or the Just, Teatro Regio, Turin, I (2009); La Louvre Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (2008); Percutaneos Delight (sexy summer evenings), P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (1999). Gelitin have exhibited in group shows in prominent institutions such as: the Malmö Konsthall in Malmö; the Arsenale in Venice, the Hayward Gallery in London, the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the S.M.A.K in Gent. Gelitin represented Austria at the 49<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Venice.

From September 15 to 17 2022, Gelitin will present *Laokoon* as part of the PERFORMATIVE.02 festival at MAXXI L'Aquila, in Italy.