

# Vickie Vainionpää: Metamorphoses

## Complesso Monumentale del Belvedere di San Leucio (CE)

Opening Saturday 27th of May 2023 at 18:00  
From the 28th of May to the 15th of July 2023

Vickie Vainionpää: Metamorphoses  
May 20th, 2023 – TBC

Nicola Pedana Gallery presents Metamorphoses, the first institutional solo show by Canadian painter Vickie Vainionpää at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of The Belvedere San Leucio.

It was the American media theorist John Culkin who exclaimed “we shape our tools and thereafter our tools shape us” – there can be no greater statement which encapsulates the scope of Vainionpää’s practice. Through her combination of generative digital software and traditional oil painting processes, Vainionpää offers a unique investigation into the contemporary expansions, and indeed possibilities, of abstract art’s continued vitality.

Tools are both subject and process in Vainionpää’s practice, whereby simulated biomorphic forms are dictated by chance, in the form of a computer script. These quasi-organic morphologies are painstakingly manifest as large-scale oils on canvas, bridging the outdated binary oppositions of analogue and digital through an adroit amalgamation of traditional and cutting-edge technologies; an aesthetic Vainionpää herself refers to as *computer-assisted abstraction*.

The title of the show, *Metamorphoses*, is an allusion not only to the translative processes used in Vainionpää’s work, but to the ever-evolving relationship painting has shared with the technologies of its time; the unique exhibition location confirms and consolidates this fact. The Belvedere San Leucio’s former life as a silk production factory in the 18th century employed the most advanced technologies of the time; aptly echoed in Vainionpää’s painting practice are these temporal and spatial linkages, whereby themes of technology and progress weave together histories and narratives between place, artist, and process. More directly, however, works in this exhibition reference Ovid’s epic poem *Metamorphoses*, specifically, the *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, a scene which adorns the Grand Dining Room ceiling in a fresco by the Italian Neoclassical painter Fedele Fischetti. In what could be termed a Post-digital reimagining of Fischetti, Vainionpää’s *Gaze* series (2022 – Present) responds to his San Leucio fresco by utilising eye-tracking software to directly translate her own gaze of this work into visualised Bézier curves and lines; the act of gazing itself, through technological allowance, functions here as a conduit of interpretation and transformation.

Through shaping, and being shaped by, the tools and technologies of her time, Vainionpää’s response to the stunning location and context of The Belvedere San Leucio metamorphoses themes of technology, lineage, place, and progress.

Words by James Frew.

