

Galleria del Cembalo

The Spiders and the Bees Paintings by François Xavier Saint Pierre

Galleria del Cembalo from 12 January to 18 February 2023

The Spiders and the Bees, a solo exhibition of paintings by François Xavier Saint Pierre, will be presented from January 11 to February 18 2023 at the Galleria del Cembalo in Rome, together with the photographic project *La vie en vert* by Karmen Corak.

These paintings were exhibited in Venice in 2022, concurrently with the 59th Biennale d'Arte, following the artist's recent major survey exhibition held in Toronto in Winter 2021-22.

In Venice the artist had the chance to meet Karmen Corak and found many points in common with her photographic work: a passion for Italy and the Classic Age, a sensibility for Nature, a similar artistic vision. The desire to exhibit together arose and they found in the Galleria del Cembalo the best place to make it happen.

François Xavier Saint Pierre's work is informed by both early Modernist painting and Classical and Romantic tropes. The exhibition's title references Jonathan Swift's satirical fable "The Spider and the Bee" written in 1704, which is situated within the larger context of the historical debate known as the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns that began within a circle of authors and artists in France in the 17th century, at the court of Louis XIV. The Ancients valued the foundations of Greco-Roman thought and art, and links to past glories, while the Moderns believed that technology (such as the compass, the printing press and firearms) made them vastly superior. Swift likened the Ancients to bees, who took from various flowers to create something beautiful, and the Moderns to spiders, who spun something new literally out of nothing. These debates about approaches to history have been renewed throughout the centuries and touch on all aspects of European intellectual, artistic and political thought: how do we value what has come before, and

does technological advance always make a society superior? Today, for example, it is leading to a rapid decline in manual dexterity. This framework serves as a reference for the artist as he navigates inherited artistic forms, the notion of progress and what it means to be contemporary.