

GAGOSIAN

F L A U N T

PIERO GOLIA | 'THE DOG AND THE DROP' AT THE DRIES VAN NOTEN LITTLE HOUSE

Nate Rynaski



Photographed by Joshua White

For the third artist to show at the Little House, Dries Van Noten welcomes Italian conceptual artist Piero Golia to present his installation piece *The Dog and the Drop*, curated by Hala Matar and showing until Thursday, March 11. Created in 2013, the piece includes two components, the dog and the drop as the name suggests. A slow, steady trickle of water droplets falls from the ceiling, dropping to form a puddle on the floor. As each drop descends, the dog's gaze follows down, and back up. Repeated in a continuous loop, the work creates a reciprocal relationship between the dog watching the drop and the viewer watching the dog.



Photographed by Joshua White

With its first location in America, Dries Van Noten made its home in Los Angeles off of La Cienega. With the two houses separated by a parking lot, the Big and Little Houses feature the designer's most recent collection of garments as well as an exhibition space, respectively. For Golia's exhibition in the Little House, Dries and the artist have collaborated on a limited-edition hoodie with the titular mechanical dog printed on the front and text embroidered over top.

Flaunt got the chance to chat with Piero about The Dog and the Drop and showing it at the Dries Van Noten Little House.

Why did you feel this particular piece, The Dog and the Drop, was the right one to bring to the Dries Van Noten Little House?

I think it's very much about LA. They told me that the building originally was Charlie Chaplin's dance studio. In LA... there is this house across from mine that they will tell you was Jimi Hendrix's home? Probably for a week, he came to LA, squatted on somebody's couch, and then it became Jimi Hendrix's home. So, I don't know how much it really was Charlie Chaplin's, but then I started to realize that their concept of the operation is that they have this house, and they let artists make a painting out of it. I felt a little bit uncomfortable, because I don't know how to do shit. You know, I'm like a camera phone kind of person. You give me a phone, I can change the world, but if you give me a screwdriver, nothing is going to happen. I thought the the idea was, how can you make a painting? How can you make a painting in a place that was the temple of silence, in a way? Because if it really was a Charlie Chaplin's dance studio, then we want to be silent.

And another thing, I love people. All my work is playing with people. Normally, I'd have the house in the parking lot, to think we would have had big parties. But nowadays, when you go out of your house—well you are younger—but me, the hypochondriac middle age man, I put on the mask, I have disinfectant all over. So it becomes little bit like going on the moon, and the first thing that they did that when going on the moon was to send a robot out, because the robot is that guy who can perform when we can't perform anymore. I come from the generation who grew up with Mad Max and Terminator. So I still have that utopia that the machine will be there where we can't do it on our own. So I thought was a romantic idea. Once you have this machine that continuously does the same shit over and over again. In reality this is a painting. We have a gesture. It's a dog that looks at the drop of water. It's this very cyclical operation. He looks up, and the drop goes down, he looks down, he looks at you again. And that's a very, very long answer to your question.

No, but I think it perfectly kind of segues into the next thing I wanted to touch on. Repetition is so key to the piece, and I just can't help but think about the repetition of the entire piece in different spaces.

It's very funny, because, I mean probably they warned you that I am a freak. No, I am not a freak.

No one said you were a freak!

I think that repetition is key to eternity, because you can achieve eternity in two ways: the physical way means you may find a block of stainless steel, you dump it, it's not going to go anywhere. So it's going to be eternal. Or if you repeat the same gesture over and over and over

again, you know the idea of the spinning, that's eternity. So repetition, it is eternity. I started the dog more as the idea of touring, enclosing a circle. So the dog was made in LA by one of these companies that makes animatronics for movies, but it was made for a show in New York. Then it went to Cologne, and then it came back. I usually never show the same shit two times, and I for sure never show something ten times. So it became this sort of tour that the robot was doing on his own, because I was not even following it. So I thought it was very fun to close the circle coming back to LA. I was more thinking about this circle. It is repetition. The more you repeat, the more you bring it to eternity, and we're all here fighting to eternity. Mainly when you see that life ends, you know.



Photographed by Joshua White

You talking about that eternity makes me think of the sort of architectural aspect of a lot of your work. The Dog and the Drop has this sort of fault in the architecture. I'm thinking of architecture, and while buildings aren't eternal...

The memory of them is eternal. Versailles will be forever, but not the building that you go to visit, but it's the stories that they tell you about Versailles. And, so yes, architecture is very important to me. Architecture, it's a scale, like mechanics. They scale you to reality. I did the show in London before the Summer, and that was very architectural. The Chalet was very architectural. When I mean architectural, I mean what they called the Frank Lloyd Wright package, meaning from the floor to the ceiling to the chandelier. Everything is top quality design.

If you look at the space, there's also this idea of passing it on from an artist to an artist to an artist to transform this place. It looks a little bit an empty theater, in reality, it's what it originally probably was built for. If you look at the floor, it definitely was a dance studio because it's a pine floor. It's made for that to be soft. So automatically you had this feeling of the theater. So it becomes very easy to darken the back and spotlight the figure. It's completely the opposite of how I normally showed the dog in the past, it was always in these perfect white cubes. So, what I considered very elegant of the dog, in the roughness of this place with all these narrative and history, with years of little touch ups. When you try to say "hey wait, but where is the trick?" It becomes appreciating the engineering of the machine. The dog is not to digital, it's completely mechanical. Meaning if you pull the skin down, you find how it works. It's all mechanical, like

the gearing of a watch. The dog and the drop, they're never going to go out of sync, because it's one machine that's moving and controls everything. That's the kind of machine that you need to achieve that perfect repetition, that is what you need for eternity.

I also wanted to touch on how the piece has to do with viewership — viewership of art objects — and this being in the Dries Van Noten space, in this fashion space, how that translates to the viewership of clothing like in a store setting.

When they told me that they opened the shop, you know I come from a culture, even if I show in a very commercial gallery and everything, where I come from, man is not cool. Glory's cool, man is embarrassing. So I always try to stay away from where they sell things. But, in this case, I think they did it very clean morally. There is a separation. They built the store that focuses on the selling, but then they decided to use part as the exhibition space. The Little House is a separate structure in the parking lot, so I think that gives a complete dignity to the operation. I said this dog is doing a tour. We should make you know like concert T shirts! I don't know if they still make them.

Oh, they still do!

So I was like, you know what you guys are very good with embroidering. For me, I am pretty obsessive with quality. If you want to be surviving to eternity, your shit has to be well made, otherwise it falls apart. So, I am very excited that this sweater will come out.