



Title: Ombra, Polvere e una Promessa di Futuro - Shadow, Dust and the Promise of a Future

Production: The Foundation Centre for the Visual Arts in Pietrasanta, in collaboration with the Municipality of Pietrasanta and the ArtigianArt Association

Curated by: Alessandro Romanini

With the contribution of: *Cassa di Risparmio di Lucca, Pisa e Livorno* Foundation; *Cassa di Risparmio di Lucca* Foundation

Artists: Marina Abramovic, Antony Gormley, Mona Hatoum, Anish Kapoor, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Chen Zhen, Ai Weiwei

Locations: Piazza del Duomo, the Church and Cloister of St. Augustine, the “Grasce” Hall (Sala delle Grasce), Pietrasanta

Vernissage: Saturday, July 26 at 6:00 PM

Duration: July 26 – September 14

Opening Hours: Tue-Sun 7:00 PM – Midnight. Closed on Mondays.

Free Admission

Catalogue: available from August 9



OMBRA, POLVERE E UNA PROMESSA DI FUTURO - SHADOW, DUST AND THE PROMISE OF A FUTURE.

Marina Abramovic, Antony Gormley, Mona Hatoum, Anish Kapoor, Chen Zhen, Nari Ward, Ai Weiwei

Shadow and dust as symbols of the transient nature of existence, yet also as reference to that gray area that stands between the viewer and the artwork, establishing a vast and complex universe of thoughts that bring into question concepts such as identity, meaning and limits of perception, the role of art and of the artist in a contemporary context.

Dust as the origin and the conclusion of human existence, yet also as a symbol and indicator of the artistic medium, the accumulated strength and resistance of the physical material as it opposes the will of the artist striving to bring their vision to life.

Materials that are envisioned and transformed by the artist and by the craftsman, in order to become concepts and reflections of a plastic nature, solid.

The exhibition is intended to mark and celebrate the 450th anniversary of **Michelangelo Buonarroti's** death, within a territory in which the great Tuscan genius lived, thrived and greatly influenced, imbuing it with an intense aptitude for the research and production of beauty, in its various forms.

The exhibition, conceptualised and developed in close collaboration with the artists and their collaborators, highlights the persistence of fundamental concepts of artistic practices and production over the centuries.

Shadow, dust, yet also the promise of a future. A future that art and creativity bestow upon the viewer interested in actively engaging the dynamics of perception.

Art intended as a space, a twilight zone in which the future and its many conjectures can be analysed, debated and shared.

The true protagonist of this exhibition is the viewer, the viewer's relationship with the artwork and the corresponding authorial master plans put in place by the artists in order to enable the viewer to become the protagonist.

A relationship that can no longer focus on a passive-contemplative approach; taking, instead, an active turn; forcing the same viewer to participate in a perceptive and meditative quest – sometimes even tortuous and difficult – in search of answers, perspectives, thoughts, transcending from the individual to the universal, from biographical facts to the collective memory.

The artists and the works on display were chosen for their ability to illustrate and substantiate these phenomena, providing testimony to the manner in which contemporary art returns to reflect on reality, reactivating relational dynamics, while at the same time contextualising a reflection on the art itself.

The work standing in the centre of Piazza del Duomo, “Stallers”, created by Jamaican **Nari Ward**, symbolically depicts that decisive moment when a child leaves the arms of his or her parents to be “pushed into the world” and come face to face with reality. A total of 12 colourful, oversized strollers invite adults to engage in a playful regression into childhood,



to participate in a rather anti-functional activity, in contrast to the pervasive rationality characteristic of Western society.

Antony Gormley's work titled "Feeling the Material" was specifically created for the church of St. Augustine. Suspended and arranged in accordance with geometric principles, the work strives to allow the viewer to "feel" the *genius loci* (meaning the "protective spirit") of the space hosting it, together with the human history that gave it shape, through light, dust and the stratification of memories.

"Feeling" the space and material, "the body as energy not form, weightless, massless, being not doing".

The work is not representative in nature. Instead, it serves simply as a catalyst that invites the viewer to observe while taking part, so to speak, in the work and in the space.

The Chinese artist and activist **Ai Weiwei** presents a complex video installation display created specifically for the "Grasce" Hall. The work consists of 12 monitors, compelling the viewer to establish, firsthand, that thin and evasive barrier between reality and fiction, between commentary and history.

The work is titled "258 Fake" and chronicles a titanic documentation project created by Ai Weiwei, consisting of 7677 images taken between 2003 and 2011 and depicting the artist's daily life: work, meetings, leisure time, political and social commitments. For the artist, photography serves as an advanced storage mechanism; yet also as an alienating and dangerous medium resulting from its inability to present and express reality in an unconditional and objective way.

However, documentation and archiving both serve as fundamental actions in re-establishing a name, a timeframe or a historic reference to things or people, reaffirming their dignity and value, as the author's all-encompassing artistic catalogue gives testimony to.

Marina Abramovic – protagonist showcasing works both in Pietrasanta and at the Serpentine Gallery in London until the end of August with the performance of "512 Hours" – presents "Balkan Baroque", the photographic testimony of the performance with the same name, awarded the Golden Lion during the 1997 edition of the Venice Biennale.

The unforgettable performance of a poetic drama, "Balkan Baroque" saw the artist sitting on a pile of bloody animal bones for days on end, cleaning the bones without rest while softly singing lullabies, in a process of personal and collective atonement inspired by the dramatic events of the war that devastated the Balkans.

Mona Hatoum, one the one hand depicts on precious silk velvet the confines of the world – in accordance to the 'Peters' projection – freeing herself from the western perspective. On the other, the artist characterises her work with an intense propensity focused on the search for identity, for traces of memory, elements which this case recall the tragic events of the war that ravaged her homeland of Lebanon (Bourj/the Tower).

Michelangelo Pistoletto brings together "Walking Sculpture" and the diptych titled "Vortex", two works that perfectly articulate the artist's poetry. On the one hand, the perceptual engagement of viewer and physical space, in a game of mirrors that distort the traditional perspective and the conventional perceptive dynamics. On the other, a parodic perspective of the celebratory and monumental aspects of sculpture, bringing into focus a metalinguistic reflection on art, as well as an intercultural vision of the world.



The Anglo-Indian artist **Anish Kapoor** uses his work "Ghost," a sculpture crafted in exquisite black marble from Belgium, to draw and engage the viewer in an immersive perceptual pursuit, where the void becomes the driving force that gives meaning alongside the material, establishing a mystical atmosphere substantiated by the "*fantasmic*" reflections of the surface.

With his project titled *Jardin Mémorable*, the artist **Chen Zhen** denounces a distinctly sad and tragic page of history, in reference to the events that took place in October of 1860 in China, when Anglo-French troops and European allied forces plundered and burnt the grounds of Yuanmingyuan

Between 1644 and 1911, the Park of Yuanmingyuan covered an enormous area of around 350 acres, consisting of over 50 independent gardens. During the period in question, the most substantial architectural projects focused on garden structures, while the decades that followed saw the collaboration of architects and craftsmen from China and Europe, working together in the construction of European palaces located inside the park.

Through the five bas-reliefs realised in bronze, the artist is on a quest to revive the lost beauty that one day, could transform the world into a "human garden".

Info: pressoffice@cavpietrasanta.it or +39 0584 792658