

MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO

A GREAT EXHIBITION IN THE EIGHT VENUES OF GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO - I QUADRI SPECCHIANTI
 HABANA - AMAR LAS DIFERENCIAS
 LES MOULINS - 60 ANS D'IDENTITÉS ET D'ALTÉRITÉS
 ROMA - COLOR AND LIGHT
 PARIGI - SEGNO ARTE
 SAN PAOLO - IL CASO
 BEIJING - QR CODE POSSESSION
 DUBAI - IL TEMPO DEL GIUDIZIO

HABANA

AMAR LAS DIFERENCIAS

SATURDAY, MAY 27TH, 2023

Galleria Continua Habana is pleased to present Michelangelo Pistoletto's solo exhibition *Amar las Diferencias*. On the occasion of the artist's 90th birthday, Galleria Continua has organized a major project that spans the globe. This intercontinental project involves the gallery's 8 venues and aims to highlight Pistoletto's art in all its forms, from its genesis to the present day. It will be the story of a journey through time: the milestones of his career and the long collaboration with the gallery.

Our gallery celebrates him as one of the most important representatives of Arte Povera and contemporary art with a series of solo exhibitions worldwide: from May 27th at Galleria Continua / San Gimignano; from May 27th at Galleria Continua / Havana; from June 3rd at Galleria Continua / Les Moulins; from June 22nd at Galleria Continua / Rome; from June 23rd at Galleria Continua / Paris; from October 28th at Galleria Continua / São Paulo; from November 15th at Galleria Continua / Beijing and from November 18th at Galleria Continua / Dubai.

Flanking the mirrored table of Pistoletto's *Mar dei Caraibi* (2003-2005), there are two large-scale representations of the two performances where the symbol of the Third Paradise has been recreated. One of them took place on Havana's Malecon on December 16th, 2014. That day, the Rebirth-Day embassy in Cuba staged an event of great symbolic significance: a number of fishing boats in small and medium sizes constantly moved in circles, coordinated by the artist Kcho and curator Laura Salas, forming the symbol of the Third Paradise on the sea near Havana. This performance was the first one made with this symbol in the city and featured in Havana's Biennial in May, 2015 as well as a few more later on. The other performance was held in Ariana Park, in front of the United Nations Palace in Geneva, Switzerland. On the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the birth of the UN celebrations, the Third Paradise by Michelangelo Pistoletto was inaugurated: *Rebirth 70* represented the hope that a revival of the main values of the Nations League, established in 1945, will be ushered in. In the garden of the UN Palace in Geneva, a space was dedicated to this installation which featured: a symbol of the Third Paradise, created with stones coming from countries that are part of the UN. Each stone attests a member of the group.

The symbol of the triad of the Third Paradise is the reconfiguration of the mathematical symbol of infinity; it is made up of three consecutive circles. The outer circles represent opposing elements, while the central one represents the harmonious union between these elements, symbolizing the creation of a new space to converge and give rise to a new society. In keeping with this concept of addition and creation, we show in the exhibition some symbolic representations of the dynamics of the number 3. This figure represents birth; the combination of two units that gives rise to a third, new and distinct unit. To this, the artist attributes the name *Theorem of Trinamics*.

Included in the exhibition are some of Pistoletto's paradigmatic *Mirror Paintings*. The turning point leading to the *Mirror Paintings* occurred in 1961. After having spread on the canvas a black background and a thick layer of transparent varnish, the artist, preparing to paint his face on it, suddenly realizes that he can reflect himself directly on the canvas, without the need to use the mirror to observe himself. Impressed by this discovery, during that year he creates

several works with this technique, portraying himself sitting, standing, from the front and from the back. A number of factors are fundamental to understanding his *Mirror Paintings*: the dimension of time, which is not only represented but also active; the inclusion in the work of the observer and their environment which converge to form a "self-portrait of the world"; the encounter between opposites and the fact of being not only an illusory window open to the world, but a unique moment where two perspectives are shown - the one right in front of us and the one behind us- thus creating an opening that extends into the virtual space of the piece, a door that connects art and life.

The exhibition includes some of his early experiments such as *Questo spazio non esiste* (1976), as well as other works such as *1+1=3* or *Selfie* (both from 2018). In one of the most recent works, a man and a little girl in arms are incorporated into the reality of whoever is reflected, and together, they make up a new piece: *Uomo con bimba in braccio* (2021). In another paradigmatic piece, *Venere degli stracci* (1967), the artistic master questions the concept of art by establishing a dialogue between an icon of classical beauty and a mountain of clothes consumed by wear and tear, thus adding a more humanized and commonplace face to what was once the concept of the sublime. Other iconic works can be contemplated in the space, among them *Il giro del mondo* (1976) and *Amar las Diferencias* (2010). The latter is highlighted by a large red neon on the second floor of the gallery that stands as an urgent, necessary and inherent call to the artist's thought and work.

Michelangelo Pistoletto was born in Biella in 1933. He began to exhibit his work in 1955 and in 1960 he had his first solo show at Galleria Galatea in Turin. An inquiry into self-portraiture characterizes his early work. In the two-year period 1961-1962 made the first *Mirror Paintings*, which directly include the viewer and real time in the work, and open up perspective, reversing the Renaissance perspective that had been closed by the twentieth-century avant-gardes. These works quickly brought Pistoletto international acclaim, leading, in the sixties, to one-man shows in important galleries and museums in Europe and the United States. *The Mirror Paintings* are the foundation of his subsequent artistic output and theoretical thought. In 1965 and 1966 he produced a set of works entitled *Minus Objects*, considered fundamental to the birth of Arte Povera, an art movement of which Pistoletto was an animating force and a protagonist. In 1967 he began to work outside traditional that exhibition spaces, with the first instances of "creative collaboration" he developed over the following decades by bringing together artists from different disciplines and diverse sectors of society. In 1975-76 he presented a cycle of twelve consecutive exhibitions, *Le Stanze*, at the Stein Gallery in Turin. This was the first of a series of complex, year-long works called "time continents". Others are *White Year* (1989) and *Happy Turtle* (1992). In 1978, in a show in Turin, Pistoletto defined two main directions his future artwork would take: *Division and Multiplication of the Mirror* and *Art Takes On Religion*. In the early eighties he made a series of sculptures in rigid polyurethane, translated into marble for his solo show in 1984 at Forte di Belvedere in Florence. From 1985 to 1989 he created the series of "dark" volumes called *Art of Squalor*. During the nineties, with *Project Art* and with the creation in Biella of Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto and the University of Ideas, he brought art into active relation with diverse spheres of society with the aim of inspiring and producing responsible social change. In 2003 he won the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion for Lifelong Achievement. In 2004 the University of Turin awarded him a laurea honoris causa in Political Science. On that occasion the artist announced what has become the most recent phase of his work, *Third Paradise*. In 2007, in Jerusalem, he received the Wolf Foundation Prize in the Arts, "for his constantly inventive career as an artist, educator and activist whose restless intelligence has created prescient forms of art that contribute to fresh understanding of the world." In 2010 he wrote the essay *The Third Paradise*, published in Italian, English, French and German. In 2012 he started promoting the Rebirth-day, first worldwide day of rebirth, celebrated every year on 21st December with initiatives taking place all around the world. In 2013 the Louvre in Paris hosted his personal exhibition *Michelangelo Pistoletto, année un – le paradis sur terre*. In this same year he received the Praemium Imperiale for painting, in Tokyo. In May 2015 he received a degree honoris causa from the Universidad de las Artes of Havana in Cuba. In the same year he realizes a work of big dimensions, called *Rebirth*, situated in the park of the Palais des Nations in Geneva, headquarters of the UN. In 2017 the text written by Michelangelo Pistoletto *Ominitheism and Demopraxy*. Manifesto for a regeneration of society was published. In 2021 the *Universario*, an exhibition space in which the artist presents his most recent research, was inaugurated at Cittadellarte, and in December 2022 his latest book, *La formula della creazione*, in which he retraces the fundamental steps and the evolution of his entire artistic career and theoretical reflection, was published.

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