
Sulla Croce

18 March – 29 May 2016

Spazio -1. Collezione Giancarlo e Danna Olgiati

Curated by Danna Olgiati

Under the Patronage of the Vicariato di Roma in occasion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy and Knowledge.

Initiative for the Jubilee of Members of the University and Centers for Research and Higher Education.



VICARIATO DI ROMA

Press conference: Friday 18th March, 11 am

Opening: Friday 18th March 2016, 6pm

Press release

Lugano, February 2016

For the exhibition realized under the Patronage of the Vicariato di Roma in occasion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy and Knowledge, the Collezione Giancarlo e Danna Olgiati presents, at Spazio -1, a thematic installation dedicated to the Cross, the universal symbol of suffering. A selection of works from the Collezione Olgiati, museums and other private collections, spanning from the 17th century to our day, through which to examine the complexity and the mystery of the symbol of the Cross in art.

Documented ever since Antiquity the Cross is, among geometric figures, the third basic symbol (after the circle and the square). In Christianity, it then took on various representations and meanings: the Crucifix, Christ, the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity. Based on a deliberately secular approach and, at the same time, respectful of the Sacred, the exhibition showcases the works of artists who, in different periods, according to different philosophical and religious beliefs, and in different languages have dealt with the theme of human suffering.

The works selected for the exhibition – paintings, photographs, bas-reliefs, and sculptures – are dated from the twentieth century to the present time, with the addition of two works that were created at a time when Catholic doctrine had a different interpretation: the early seventeenth century in Bologna, and a century later in Ticino. The wonderful painting by Ticino artist **Giovanni Orelli** *Jesus Sleeping on the Cross*, c. 1742, introduces us to a rather unique iconography, a Child gracefully placed on the Cross who has fallen asleep, an evident memento mori in which the drama of the event becomes even more graceful owing to the whiteness of the flesh. This image of suffering offsets the Saint Sebastian at the Column by the Bolognese painter **Ludovico Carracci**, dated to the early seventeenth century. This is a painting that represents the saint in his traditional iconography, prevalently focused on the torture of the arrows that the martyr was subjected to. Continuing along in the exhibition, a very special space hosts the



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dialogue between four major works by two twentieth-century masters, **Medardo Rosso** and **Lucio Fontana**. On view is Medardo Rosso's *Jewish Boy*, 1915, the heart-rending and poignant head of a child that is more of a mood than a portrait. Here is a child who represents the age of purity, but is at the same time the source of life and the image that contains within all the future suffering not yet experienced. Medardo Rosso's representation embodies and materializes a sentiment and a poetic vision of art.

Four of the works on view are by **Lucio Fontana**, perhaps the most original and complex artist of the twentieth century; these are the terracotta bas-reliefs *The Ascension*, 1950-55, *The Deposition*, 1956 and *The Christ*, 1959, as well as the ceramic sculpture *Head of a Boy*, made about a decade earlier and dated to 1948. In the latter work the meaning of the sacred is alluded to in a child's portrait, far removed from any religious theme, but nonetheless still moving, and perfectly in harmony with Medardo Rosso's *Jewish Boy*. Fontana's terracotta works invite us to go beyond the material itself, as if to liberate it from the inner forces that are thrust outwards, in the anxiety of infinity, of a possible unknown new life. These three works masterfully place before us the theme of man's suffering as the climax of a new potential, doing so not through an imposed and circumscribed religious vision, but rather by exploring the theme of such important material: for him as an artist, for the faithful as an element of doctrine.

Hanging on the wall and in dialogue with the sculptures of Fontana and Rosso is a *Crucifixion* by **Alberto Burri**, a small-scale combustion whose two-dimensional torn and burnt transparency expresses all the tragedy of the Crucifixion. To free space and at the same time free oneself from space by breaking and tearing forms strongly expresses the liberation of a new and possible existence via suffering and laceration.

A small object instead places us before an artist, **Yves Klein**, whose religiosity, in his short yet intense career, influenced all his work: the extraordinary *Ex Voto to Saint Rita of Cascia*, the fruit of several pilgrimages taken by the French artist to the sanctuary of the Saint of the Impossible.

The exhibition continues beyond any chronological distinction with two bronzes by **Marino Marini**: the *The Juggler*, 1946 and *The Prisoner*, 1943. Those were the years of the artist's refuge in Locarno, Switzerland, and in the works he made in that period, the artist intended to express the ridiculous exaltation of a man who wants to command. Humankind was fearful and the artist shows this in works such as these, where the material dismantles the proportions and takes the field, inflicting unexpected tensions on the forms. *The Prisoner*, a melancholy, heartbreaking bronze sculpture, the witness to the cruel and inhuman events that took place on European territory disorients us, almost causing us to feel embarrassment if we think back to the date, 1943, when all of humanity finally became aware of the unexplainable act of human deprivation that were the Nazi concentration camps and the horrors of the war. The Juggler, 1946, still bears the weight of those dark years, and emerging from the sensibility expressed by the form is the sense of tragedy that is manifested in a figure echoing the lacerated bodies of the crucified Christ in the style of the Late Middle Ages. Marino himself defined the works he made during that period as *the architectures of an immense tragedy*.

Also on view is *Lying Man* made by the German sculptor **Paloma Varga Weisz** in 2014. Although the work was made five centuries later, it ideally converses with Carracci's martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, whose naked body is pierced with arrows. The effigy of the martyr's suffering surprisingly liases with Weisz's sculpture: a life-size male figure made of wood lying on his back, and abandoned on a coarse blanket. An image that tragically recalls the destiny of so many migrants and refugees, the icon of suffering who sadly belongs to the chronicles of the new global world.

The exhibition ends with three artists from the present time: **Adrian Paci**, **Jannis Kounellis** e **Roberto Ciaccio**. Albanian artist **Adrian Paci** has contributed a series of photographs entitled *Via Crucis* taken in 2011. The essential theme of the story from the Gospel is portrayed by the artist in photographic prints on metal that smack of the prosaic, and in which the presence of the

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sacred is spread and embodied by family relations, i.e. the artist's choice to ask the members of his family and his friends to be the protagonists of the scenes. This *Via Crucis* is also an evident nod to Pasolini: the iconography of formal origin is rooted in the great tradition of Giotto, and in the dry and solemn humanity reminiscent of the work of Masaccio. These two great names were as dear to Pasolini as they are to Paci.

Jannis Kounellis and **Roberto Ciaccio** have developed the symbol of the Cross according to their own personal codes. Both artists, although starting out from different propositions, organize the surface of the work according to an essential articulation of lines, vertical planes, and diagonals. In *Cross Point*, 2013, Kounellis positions diagonally a large Cross on a crude metal surface dramatically embellished with filaments. The iconography arrests the symbol of torture in a powerful and direct image that leaves no room for anything but the suffering that is evoked. Last but not least, is the work of the Milanese artist Roberto Ciaccio, who died prematurely in 2014, and who inspired a part of this project. In *Triptych for the Cross*, 2001, the artist evokes the ghost-like nature of the apparition, and the presence-absence of the image clearly expresses a climate of suspension on the Cross. The serial nature that is typical of graphic reproduction is eradicated here via the choice of the non-reproducible monoprint series.

In occasion of the exhibition it has been published a magazine by Alberto Salvadori with texts by Remo Bodei, Luigi Fassi and Giovanni Leghissa.

List of artists:

Alberto BURRI (Città di Castello, 1915 – Nizza, 1995)

Ludovico CARRACCI (Bologna, 1555 – 1619)

Giovanni Antonio Felice ORELLI (Locarno, 1706 – 1776)

Medardo ROSSO (Torino, 1858 – Milano, 1928)

Lucio FONTANA (Rosario di Santa Fé, Argentina, 1899 – Comabbio, 1968)

Yves KLEIN (Nizza, 1928 – Parigi, 1962)

Marino MARINI (Pistoia, 1901 – Viareggio, 1980)

Jannis KOUNELLIS (Pireo, Atene, 1936)

Roberto CIACCIO (Roma, 1951 – Milano, 2014)

Paloma Varga WEISZ (Mannheim, Germania, 1966)

Adrian PACI (Shkodër, Albania, 1969)

Spazio -1. Collezione Giancarlo e Danna Olgiati

The Giancarlo e Danna Olgiati collection is part of the museum circuit of MASI, Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana. The Spazio -1 is located nearby LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura and hosts more than 200 masterpieces spanning from the '50s to the present. The Giancarlo and Danna Olgiati contemporary art collection, loaned to the City of Lugano in 2012, is presented to the public in different displays each year together with temporary exhibitions whose purpose it is to delve further into the works of the artists already included in the collection.



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Informazioni

Location

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Opening hours

Friday - Sunday: 11 am – 6pm

Closed Mondays

Special openings: from 18th March to 3rd April open every day, except Monday 21st March 2016

Free admission

Cultural mediation

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The Ermenegildo Zegna Group is a leading luxury menswear brand and one of the most renowned businesses in Italy. Founded in 1910 in Trivero, in the Biella Alps, by the young entrepreneur Ermenegildo, whose vision was to ethically create the world's finest textiles through innovation and the sourcing of the noblest fibers directly from their markets of origin, the company is managed today by the fourth generation of the Zegna family with Gildo Zegna as CEO. Since the late 1980s, the company has implemented a comprehensive strategy of verticalization, creating a global luxury brand which now ranges from fabric to clothing to accessories, is focused on retailing, pioneering early entry in emerging luxury markets, BRIC and Asia in particular, and was the first luxury brand to open a monobrand store in China in 1991. Ermenegildo Zegna celebrated 100 years of excellence in 2010. Today there are 523 Zegna stores (303 company-owned) in over 100 countries around the world. The total Group revenues in 2015 reached € 1.260 bn.

In 2012 the Group launched ZegnArt, an independent commitment focused on international collaboration in the field of visual arts and in February 2014, the Group announced the Ermenegildo Zegna Founder's Scholarship, a 25-year project named for its founder with an annual investment in education of €1 million.



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Medacta International is a Swiss company developing, manufacturing and distributing orthopaedic and neurosurgical medical devices worldwide. Medacta International was founded in 1999 with a vision of creating a better patient experience for people needing joint replacement. The mission of the Group is to allow patients to regain a healthier and more active lifestyle through products and services which make surgery and rehabilitation simpler, faster and more effective. To achieve this goal as well as conceive and develop new and better performing products, Medacta International is constantly working together with surgeons all around the world.

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Corriere del Ticino

“Corriere del Ticino” Reporting the News for 125 Years

Founded by Agostino Soldati, then president of the Canton, in 2016 “Corriere del Ticino” celebrates its 125th anniversary. The first edition was published on December 28, 1891, during Ticino’s transition phase from the ferment and violence between the conservative and liberal parties in the nineteenth century, to the political harmony following the so-called Liberal Revolution of September 11, 1890. “We are liberals. We are conservatives. We are liberal-conservatives”, were Soldati’s words in the first editorial he penned. An independent newspaper owned by the eponymous Foundation (with Fabio Soldati as president, and Matilde Bonetti Soldati as honorary president), managed by the Società Editrice Corriere del Ticino, with a print run of over 36,000 copies, it is the leading newspaper in the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland. In the course of its long history the newspaper has had 12 directors. It is currently directed by Fabio Pontiggia, who on January 1 of this year took over from Giancarlo Dillena. The editorial board is staffed by five reporters including the editors of the online version. Its headquarters are in Muzzano, with local offices in Lugano, Chiasso, Bellinzona and Locarno. “Corriere del Ticino” is a major shareholder in the publishing group MediaTI; the CEO for both companies is the journalist Marcello Foa.

