

Pirelli HangarBicocca presents the exhibition

Giorgio Andreotta Calò
CITTÀDIMILANO
Curated by Roberta Tenconi

Press Conference 12 February 2019, 11.30 AM
Opening 13 February 2019, 7 PM
From 14 February to 21 July 2019



Wreck of the steamship *Città di Milano*, Filicudi, Italy. Photo: Global Underwater Explorers.

Pirelli HangarBicocca presents *CITTÀDIMILANO*, the solo show by Giorgio Andreotta Calò. Combining artworks from earlier stages in his career with more recent pieces, brought together for the first time, the show transforms and radically reconfigures the space. The exhibition flows in a way that generates stories and perspectives on a variety of different times and places, from Venice to Milan, from the depths of the sea to those of the subsoil.

Giorgio Andreotta Calò (Venice, 1979; he lives and works in Italy and the Netherlands) is one of the most remarkable Italian artists of recent years and represented Italy at the 57th Venice Biennale (2017). His works include sculptures, large-scale site-specific installations and spatial works that transform both fragments of buildings and entire landscapes; they are often designed to be included in a rich patchwork of self-referencing connections, in part through the use of natural elements dense with symbolic meanings, such as water, light and fire. His work is rooted in conceptual and processual practices typical of artists of the Sixties and Seventies but it also evolves into new directions. It always comes as the result of a long process of research into materials—from the more classical, such as bronze and wood, to the more unusual, such as *caranto* clay, the submarine layer beneath the city of Venice—, processing techniques and their origin. His interest in organic materials links his works to current international debates on the use and dispersal of raw materials and themes of socio-ecological change.

The constant re-elaboration and reconfiguration of his works based on the geographical and cultural context in which they are exhibited is an integral part of his artistic methodology. For

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CITTÀDIMILANO the artist focuses on his sculptural practice, displaying works created since 2008, and here conceived as part of a single landscape that transforms the perception of the environment and highlights the links existing between the artworks in a close dialogue. Visitors are thus invited to make their own connections and create their own route through the exhibition. Giorgio Andreotta Calò has also carried out research into the history of the Pirelli Company, creating new works that bring to light previously unknown stories from the past, linked to the city of Milan but similarly related to themes and locations already present in the artist's work. With this exhibition, Pirelli HangarBicocca yet again confirms its commitment to supporting experimentation in the arts and the production of new works.

The exhibition

The visitor is welcomed into the exhibition space by the projection of underwater images of the submerged shipwreck of the *Città di Milano* [City of Milan], from which the exhibition takes its name. Used at the beginning of the last century by the company then known as Pirelli Cavi to lay underwater cables in the depths of the Mediterranean Sea, the ship sank close to Capo Graziano on the island of Filicudi, near Sicily, on 16 June 1919. The artist extrapolated video footage from archive material filmed on the wreck at a depth of 100 meters in 2015. He then assembled this into a work that serves as a prelude and leitmotif to the exhibition that is linked to ideas of navigation, immersion and surfacing, and stratification, in a physical, symbolic, historical and geographical sense. One further reference to this story is provided by the presence in the exhibition of a damaged section of cable, over 30 meters in length, used for the underwater transmission of data. Dating from the 1990s, it was recovered last summer near Ischia, in Italy, during maintenance work; and suspended from the Shed ceiling, the cable takes on an organic and zoomorphic appearance. Both works reflect the artist's interest in the connection and transmission of information, particularly between distant or separate locations.

Works on display in the Shed include some of Giorgio Andreotta Calò's largest sculptures; their layout, designed by the artist, deconstructs the architectural symmetry of the space and transforms the setting in a way that "presents visitors with the chance to glimpse something that lies *beyond*," as he himself explains. "Transfiguring a place is first and foremost about capturing an unexpressed potential within it, an expressive quality defined by a past history, one created by individuals, before it can be given a possible new function" (from an interview with *Flash Art*, issue 294, 2011).

Interested in the representation of the passing of time and processes of transforming material, Andreotta Calò occupies the entire surface area of the Shed with his **Produttivo** [Productive], (2019), a new installation forming part of a series of sculptures begun in 2014, and consisting of samples of rock and sediment taken from the subsoil of the Venice Lagoon (2014) and the Sulcis Iglesiente mining area in Sardinia (2016 and 2019). The placement of the samples on the ground reflects their original location and depth, highlighting the various stratifications and chromatic features but overturning the vertical dimension of these geological extractions in the horizontal and linear exhibition space. In particular, the extensive new series of core samples includes over a thousand linear meters of samples of coal and various minerals from the archive at the Carbosulcis, Italy's last active coal mine that is located in Sardinia and is in the process of being closed. These works are linked both geographically and thematically to the 16mm film **In girum imus nocte** [We go into the circle at night] (2016), which was made in the Sulcis Iglesiente, where the artist spent long spells researching and working between 2013 and 2015. The film shows a dreamlike night-time journey undertaken by the artist inside the Carbosulcis mine and, on foot, with the workers, to the nearby island of Sant'Antioco.

In **CITTÀDIMILANO** the body of works known as **Clessidre** [Hourglasses] (1999–in progress) is a formal representation of the passing of time. These bronze sculptures are made using a technique typical of Andreotta Calò's art, the lost wax casting, from *bricole*—Venetian mooring piles that are often corroded by water in their midsection. Both the action of water and that of the artist therefore contribute to determining the shape of the sculpture—not by chance that of an hourglass—which is then fixed in time by means of a material that cannot be corroded. **Clessidre**

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is linked technically to another series begun in 2013, the **Meduse** [Jellyfishes], in which the artist works directly on the same types of wooden poles; these are transformed into sculptures that resemble jellyfish, or *meduse*, marine organisms consisting primarily of water, from which further bronze works are cast. This process of transfiguring the material and natural elements emerges in other works on display at Pirelli HangarBicocca, such as the two **Pinna Nobilis** (2014–in progress) and **DOGOD** (2014–in progress) series. The title and shape of the former derive from the shell of the mollusk of the same name, an organism endemic to the Mediterranean and to the locations touched upon by the exhibition in particular, such as Sardinia, Venice, and Filicudi; while the latter series is rooted in bone elements from the island of Sant’Antioco in Sardinia, reassembled by Andreotta Calò to create a new shape, the face of a dog.

The work that represents the thematic and narrative starting point of the *CITTÀDIMILANO* exhibition for Giorgio Andreotta Calò is **Volver**, a sculpture generated by an action carried out in Milan in 2008 on the occasion of his first solo exhibition at the Galleria Zero: in his boat used on the Venice Lagoon, the artist flew in a circle over the rooftops of the Lambrate district suspended from a crane before landing on the gallery terrace, where the boat was cut in half and exhibited above a thin mirror of water. Ten years later, symbolically marking his return to Milan, the artist re-exhibits **Volver** but this time with a new configuration: the boat has been put back together in a sculptural form reminiscent of the shells of the *Pinna Nobilis* series, while the original event is documented by the projection of a carousel of slides.

The reference to Milan returns in the work that closes the exhibition: the pinhole print measuring over 10 meters—a large piece of photographic paper exposed to natural light—of the city seen from above, specifically the east area, which is also home to the Lambrate district and over which Andreotta Calò had flown in his boat in 2008. The artist has located this piece in a way that mirrors the projection of the wreck of the *Città di Milano* at the start of the exhibition, creating a sort of theatrical backdrop to frame the exhibition space. Calò made the print at the Pirelli Tower—historically the Company’s headquarter, now home of the Lombardy Region—where he turned the top floor of the building into a camera obscura to create a reversed image of Milan, captured as if it were a dreamlike horizon.

Giorgio Andreotta Calò

Giorgio Andreotta Calò’s works have been exhibited at internationally renowned sites and institutions, including Oude Kerk, Amsterdam (2018); SMART Project Space, Amsterdam (2012); MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo in Rome—on the occasion of him receiving the Premio Italia Arte Contemporanea (2012)—and the Galleria Civica, Trento (2009). Giorgio Andreotta Calò has taken part in numerous group exhibitions and institutions, including the 16th Quadriennale d’Arte, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2016); High Line Art, New York (2016); Triennale di Milano (2015); 54th Venice Biennale (2001). In 2017, he represented Italy at the 57th Venice Biennale. Between 2001 and 2007, he was assistant to the artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov. In 2008, he moved to the Netherlands, where he was artist-in-residence at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam (2009–2011).

Exhibition Program

The *CITTÀDIMILANO* exhibition is part of the 2019–2020 artistic program conceived by the Artistic Director Vicente Todolí together with the curatorial department: Roberta Tenconi, Curator; Lucia Aspesi, Assistant Curator; and Fiammetta Griccioli, Assistant Curator. The program will continue with exhibitions by Sheela Gowda (4 April – 15 September 2019); Daniel Steegmann Mangrané (September 2019–January 2020); Cerith Wyn Evans (October 2019–February 2020); Trisha Baga (February–July 2020); Chen Zhen (April–September 2020); Neïl Beloufa (September 2020–January 2021); and Steve McQueen (October 2020–February 2021).

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Pirelli HangarBicocca is a non-profit institution dedicated to the promotion and production of contemporary art that reflects the corporate culture of Pirelli and its commitment to research, innovation and the dissemination of contemporary languages. Pirelli HangarBicocca stages a rich program of solo exhibitions by major international artists that have made their mark through research and experimentation, in addition to a calendar of cultural events and insights, guaranteeing visitors free access to the space.

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Info Sheet

Institution	Pirelli HangarBicocca
Artist	Giorgio Andreotta Calò
Title	<i>CITTÀDIMILANO</i>
Curated by	Roberta Tenconi
With the support from	Regione Lombardia (for the realization of the artwork <i>Città di Milano</i> , 2019)
Press Conference	12 February 2019, 11.30 AM
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Opening hours	Thursday-Sunday, 10 AM –10 PM
Admission	Free
Workshops	During the week for schools At the weekend for families
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