

STUDIO MUSEO FRANCESCO MESSINA

Via San Sisto 4/A - Milano

Maria Cristina Carlini
Geologie, memorie della terra*Curated by Chiara Gatti*
*based on a project by Raffaella Resch***10 July – 8 September 2020**from Thursday to Sunday 11 am-6pm
(last admission 5.30pm)*press release 13.07.2020*

An ideal dialogue between masters of sculpture. The monumental works of Maria Cristina Carlini inhabit the spaces that once belonged to Francesco Messina (1900–1995) and which still preserve his waxes, bronzes and works in clay in the silence of the former church of San Sisto. Here, among the great twentieth-century sculptor's portraits of women and athletes, Carlini's woods grow, and her imprints, craters and burnt pages multiply. Signs, traces and memories of a landscape evoke geographies and geologies inspired by the earth's moods, by the wild places of an archaic and sublime nature.

From 10 July to 8 September 2020, the exhibition Maria Cristina Carlini: Geologies, Memories of the Earth, curated by Chiara Gatti and based on a project by Raffaella Resch, will be housed in Studio Museo Francesco Messina, the former San Sisto church.

Promoted and organised by the Municipality of Milan | Culture and by Studio Museo Francesco Messina, the exhibition is included in the programme 'Women's Talents', which is dedicating 2020 to the world of women and to the contribution they provide in all areas of collective life. It is also part of 'Aria di Cultura', the calendar of cultural events that will accompany summer in Milan.

'Conserved in the evocative spaces of the former church of San Sisto are the works of a great Italian sculptor and the memory of his creative gesture,' – states councillor for culture Filippo Del Corno – 'a perfect place to collocate the work of a sculptress who is able to "play" with space and materials; one whose artistic talent enriches the wide variety of initiatives dedicated to "Women's Talents".'

The large sculptures are located in the nave of the church with its double-height ceilings. Legni is a horizontal forest looming in the perspective fire of the apse: a visionary place of events where Messina's heads emerge between tree trunks, creating a lyrical and dreamlike theatrical effect. Like 'portals', through which simple matter is transfigured into something symbolic by the sculptor's hand and the active, perceptive presence of the viewer, works such as *Origine* and *Libro dei morti* represent the creation phase, the passage from inert to vital.

The theme of the germination of an infinite module nurtures climbing columns of

knowledge in the side chapels. Sheet metal and lead distil energy and semantic power into pages that unfold in the air like a stele or a rock cavern. *Fantasm del lago*, a totem in sheet metal, is shaped into vertical prismatic sections made opaque by a surface treatment, as if they were evanescent and insubstantial.

The crypt contains a sequence of *Impronte* bearing alphabets engraved into the material, a vestige of a past presence spread out on the ground. Visible from the nave, like archaeological remains buried in the earth, environmental installations in the rooms that were Messina's former studio distil two of Carlini's major cycles: *Crateri* and *Libri bruciati*. Here, the sense of material and colour, the vibrant skin of the sculpture and the enamel paint and oxides form elements extracted from nature, from human history, from the orography of the area and ancestral culture.

As Maria Fratelli comments: 'The works of Maria Cristina Carlini transport to the nave of San Sisto the international experience of twentieth-century masters, a group which includes her own sculpture, juxtaposed with the work of Francesco Messina. This comparison releases the force of sculpture as a living language. By a woman's hand, the hand of a great Milanese sculptress who deserves this tribute, the Messina Museum becomes landscape, memory and earth.'

Outside, in dialogue with the baroque façade, stand the imposing Samurai, the symbol of the exhibition: armour made from wood and Corten steel in one linear and condensed volume in which the harmony and rhythm of the three-dimensional elements evoke a weave, a mesh, chainmail traversed by air and wind. Calligraphic perfection pays tribute to the absolute synthesis of Eastern culture.

When the exhibition closes, the Samurai installation will remain on display during Art Week and the MiArt art fair.

The exhibition also features a film produced by Storyville and directed by Stefano Conca Barizzoni, dedicated to the artist's studio and the works on display.

A book in Italian and English will be published at the end of the exhibition. Edited by Chiara Gatti and with critical texts by Chiara Gatti and Paolo Campiglio, it contains images of the exhibited works and a core of other major works from recent years.

Biographical notes: Maria Cristina Carlini began her career as an artist in Palo Alto, California, where she created and exhibited ceramic artworks. She subsequently continued her practice in Brussels then later returned to Milan. At this juncture, in addition to stoneware and terracotta, she began to use materials such as iron, sheet metal, Corten steel, resin, recycled wood and occasionally paper.

Carlini's work ranges from large to small scale, and her career is studded with important awards. She has taught abroad, held solo exhibitions, and taken part in group shows in a variety of public and private, national and international venues. Her monumental sculptures are on permanent display in three continents: Europe, America and Asia.

She was the first female sculptor to exhibit in the Forbidden City. The Municipality of Milan appointed her ambassador for relations with China during Expo 2010 in Shanghai, where she presented monumental sculptures.

Maria Cristina Carlini currently lives and works in Milan, where her studio is the centre of her creative practice. She continues to exhibit worldwide.

www.mariacristinacarlini.com

thanks to



Exhibition details

Title Maria Cristina Carlini. Geologie, memorie della terra

Curated by Chiara Gatti, based on a project by Raffaella Resch

Venue Studio Museo Francesco Messina, via San Sisto 4/A – Milan
MM1 Cordusio / MM3 Missori

Dates 10 July - 8 September 2020

Opening Hours from Thursday to Sunday 11 am-6pm (last admission 5.30pm)

Entrance free

booking (recommended) – <https://museicivicimilano.vivaticket.it>

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