

PRESS RELEASE

L'acqua di Talete Opere di José Molina/ Thales's water Works by José Molina

At the Bilotti Museum of Rome, an exhibition curated by Roberto Gramiccia,
on the origins of Western thought

**Carlo Bilotti Museum – Orangery of Villa Borghese
29 November 2018 – 17 February 2019**

Rome, 01 October 2018. Water is the archetype, primordial force from which life originates and to which everything will return. Water that sustains the world and water that feeds, similarly to the female universe. These are the themes confronted by the artist from Madrid José Molina in the exhibition **L'acqua di Talete. Opere di José Molina/Thales's water. Works by José Molina**, that displays **iconic works divided in paintings, drawings and sculptures, as well as never seen before ones.** From **29 November 2018 to 17 February 2019** for the first time in the exhibition space of the **Carlo Bilotti Museum** of Rome, in the evocative frame of the Orangery of Villa Borghese.

The exhibition is promoted by *Roma Capitale, Department for Cultural growth — Capitoline Superintendence of Cultural Heritage*, devised and curated by *Roberto Gramiccia*, with the patronage of the *Cultural Office of the Embassy of Spain in Italy* and of the *Cervantes Institute of Rome*, and is organized with the contribution of *Deodato Arte* gallery. Museum services by *Zètema Project Culture*.

As Roberto Gramiccia says, the exhibition is inspired by the importance of the creative water displays in the history of the Bilotti Museum, bringing about a reflection on the origins of Western thought. In order to host worldly events and celebrations, the building that hosts the venue of the present display was indeed expanded and decorated towards the end of the Eighteenth Century by Marcantonio IV Borghese, together with the refurbishing of the adjacent “Giardino del Lago” (lake garden), even before being designated to be the Orangery. Such intervention was considered so astonishing that the building took the name “Casino dei giuochi d’acqua” (small house of creative water displays), as per the chronicles of the time. This was in fact due to the presence of fountains and nymphaea in Baroque styles, which were particularly valued for entertaining and pleasing hosts and relatives.

Hence, the idea of setting-up **a solo exhibition of José Molina completely dedicated to the natural theme of water.** It is a theme investigated by the artist as the primordial element, source of life and archetypal basis on which stands the whole reality. The concept develops the philosophical thought of Thales of Miletus who, as reported by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*, is at the base of Western thought. Molina confronts himself with this thought, creating sculptures and paintings on canvas or paper where water itself dominates. Water is also evoked in the metamorphic and visionary features of the

characters there represented. Thus, as the curator points out, the artist creates a fantasy world endlessly reborn from itself.

For the exhibition at the Bilotti Museum, a selection of the most representative works has been chosen, works linked to the theme of water according to a cosmogonic vision, together with a series of works that refer to the artist's interest in the link between man and nature. Emblematic of the display is the work *Nafraghi nel proprio mare/Cast away in their own sea* (2005) that belongs to the series "Predatores/Predators". The image, packed with autobiographical hints, where a wide and rough stretch of water dominates, metaphorically represents the personal journey typical of most people and experienced by Molina himself. It is the journey of a man who dreams of flying or swimming in the wide-open sea, but who, however, often restrains himself creating his own inner prison that doesn't allow him to take off or leave land.

This theme then refers to the artist's investigation of human nature, that characterizes all of his production and it is quite obvious in the works on display from the series *Los Olvidados/The forgotten ones, Portraits, Beloved Earth*. Among these, the female figures - creators of life and repository of the ancestral force of nature - stand out as in *Dolce acqua/Sweet water* (2015), *La prima mattina/Early morning* (2015) and *Fiore di mare/Sea flower* (2016). Also oneiric and metaphysical subjects as in *Predatores/Predators*, from which *I Pesci che nuotano/The swimming fish* (2015) is a metaphor of facing life "against the current", as well as the self-portrait *Sangue!/Blood!* (2002) from *Morir para vivir/Dying to live*. **Three sculptures** complete the display, from the series *I feel* (2017), they are iconically titled *lo dubito/I doubt*, *lo ricordo/I remember* and *lo immagino/I imagine*, inviting the visitor to explore more and more the depths of the labyrinths of the human mind with its ancestral questions.

Especially created for the Roman exhibition, the artist made **two new works**, where the call to water is strong, meant as the element where life is created and as a precious resource, essential for every living thing. The two figures represented by grease pencil, namely a man and a woman immersed in the sea, witnesses to the fact that where there is water, there is life. However, instead of legs, the male figure has got walrus's tusks, while the female has the bill of a toucan, thus, evoking man's difficulties in living in harmony with nature and the necessity to reestablish a balance.

José Molina also made the frames for many works, providing more keys to interpretation of the works on display. The mixed-media creations are made by using wood or salvaged materials especially reprocessed by the artist.

For the display, an anthological catalogue is available, titled "Humanitas/Humanity" (2014), with interventions by Mariella Casile, Francesco Mattana, Deodato Salafia and Federico Scassa.

Biography

José Molina was born in Madrid in 1965; since he was eleven years old he had already attended several schools of art and later, while at the University of Fine Arts of Madrid, he worked in advertising up until he was thirty-five years old, when he decided to completely dedicate himself to painting. His first displays were held in Milan: in 2004, at the Rubin Gallery, between 2005 and 2010, at the Science and Technology Museum and the City Aquarium, later at the Ca' di Fra' and the Mc2 galleries, at the Stelline and the Mudima foundations, and in 2013, at the Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Spazio Oberdan and the Triennale. In 2014, in Rome at the Royal academy of Spain his first anthological took place. Between 2016 and 2017, he displayed at the Museum of the Sea in Genoa, at Palazzo Graziani in San Marino and at the Deodato Arte gallery of Milan with solo exhibitions. In 2017, he was the protagonist of the Royal Palace of Caserta with the solo

exhibition “Paesaggio dopo la battaglia/Landscape after battle” and in 2018, he was on display at the Able Fine Art Gallery of New York. José Molina is today still present on the international market, in both Europe and Asia. Presently, he lives and works on the Lake of Como.

www.josemolina.com

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Press Office

IBC Irma Bianchi Communication

Ph. +39 02 8940 4694 - mob. + 39 328 5910857 - info@irmabianchi.it

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FACT SHEET

Exhibition title	<i>L'acqua di Talete. Opere di José Molina/ Thales's water. Works by José Molina</i>
Venue	Carlo Bilotti Museum – Orangery of Villa Borghese, Viale Fiorello La Guardia 6, Rome
Public opening	29 November 2018 – 17 February 2019
Press Preview	Wednesday, 28 November 2018, at 11:30am
Grand opening	Wednesday, 28 November 2018, at 6:30pm
Opening hours	Tuesday to Friday, 10:00am - 4:00pm Saturday and Sunday, 10:00am - 7:00pm (Entrance allowed prior to 30 minutes before closing time)
Tickets	Free
Promoted by	Roma Capitale, Department for Cultural Growth – Capitoline Superintendence of Cultural Heritage
Curated by	Roberto Gramiccia
Exhibition info	Info 060608 (daily, 9:00am – 7:00pm) www.museocarlobilotti.it ; www.museiincomune.it
Museum services	Zètema Project Culture
With the patronage of	Cultural Office of the Embassy of Spain in Italy Cervantes Institute of Rome
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