



COMUNE DI CARRARA
Decorato di Medaglia d'Oro al Merito Civile



con il patrocinio di



L'iniziativa è inserita nei progetti



Carrara, Cárdenas and Negritude

curated by Elena Cárdenas Malagodi and Eleonora Lombardi

11 July - 13 September 2015

press conference Friday July 10, 12 p.m. - CAP Centro Arti Plastiche di Carrara

inauguration Friday July 10, 6 p.m. - CAP Centro Arti Plastiche di Carrara

cocktail Friday July 10, 7 p.m.- Galleria Duomo

Carrara - Historic Center

Piazza Mazzini, Via Roma, Via Verdi

CAP Centro Arti Plastiche di Carrara

Via Canal del Rio

Galleria Duomo

Via Finelli, 22

press release, 08.07.2015

A **major retrospective exhibition**, *Carrara, Cárdenas and Negritude*, a tribute to the world-famous sculptor Agustin Cárdenas, will be held from July 11 to September 13 in the city of Carrara.

This event is curated by Elena Cárdenas Malagodi and Eleonora Lombardi, and is promoted and organized by the municipality of Carrara, the Galleria Duomo and the Associazione Culturale Carrara Artistica, under the patronage of the Regione Toscana. The exhibition has been included in the *Marble Weeks* exposition, to be held from June 19 to July 12 in the historic center of Carrara.

The exhibition features **monumental sculptures** situated in various parts of the historic center of Carrara (Piazza Mazzini, Via Roma, Via Verdi) and the Cárdenas exhibition, which will be held in the **Centro Arti Plastiche di Carrara** and the **Galleria Duomo** (which will be presenting this artist's works for the first time): **sculptures in marble, wood and bronze**, restored **plaster models**, and works in **tempera** and **drawings**.

This remarkable body of the artist's works is accompanied by substantial **documentation** that includes two heretofore unpublished photographic portraits of Cárdenas taken by the historic photographer from Carrara, Ilario Bessi, and printed on panels; many articles, catalogues and posters; and a screening of the video of the one-man exhibition that will also be held at the same time in the Aktis Gallery in London.

The compelling exhibition includes all the facets and forms of Agustin Cárdenas's artistic vocabulary and clearly shows how his art is rooted in **three different continents**: Latin America, Europe and Africa. In particular, 'negritude' refers to this artist's African heritage, which is explicitly expressed in such elements of his sculptures as totems and primitive symbols and is indicated implicitly in the references made to the myths, rituals and traditions of this great

continent. The bond with history and the past on the one hand and innovation on the other alternate in Cárdenas's skillful use of different materials, in his rendering of rounded forms or vertical thrusts, and in the plastic volumes and essential tension of his oeuvre.

The monumental sculpture pieces on exhibit in the historic center include the bronze work *Grande porte* (1975, 200 x 200 x 30 cm) and the white marble sculptures *Boîte à Musique* (1968), *Point Interieur* (1969), *La Question* (1973) and *La Grande Famille* (1980s) – all of which convey both strength and harmony thanks to their plastic synthesis and finely polished surfaces. The same features are to be noted in the monumental works on display at the Galleria Duomo. These include *Dogon* (1971), made of black Belgian marble; *Mon Ombre après minuit* (1963, 243 x 77 x 10 cm) in bronze; and *Le repos de l'oiseau* (1981, 192 x 60 x 60 cm) made of white marble. Then there are the medium-size and small works exhibited at the CAP or Centro Arti Plastiche of Carrara, examples of which are *La Famille* (1957), *Le repos du petit oiseau* (1981) and *Le Grande Tortue* (1982) – made respectively of gray marble, pink marble and granite – and in wooden sculptures like *Le bois Carrara* (1974) and bronze works such as *Bouba* (1974) and *Le Coq* (1974).

In Cárdenas the various impulses attract and repulse one another in a play of equilibrium. An example of this can be seen in *Le Baiser* (1974), in which the alternation of volumes and hollow spaces combine the essence of the male and female in a harmonious structure.

Thanks to his great creative gift the artist succeeded in rendering human and natural forms by means of non-representational elements of explosive vitality and intense expressiveness. His originality also lies in his piercing the sculptures so that they are in constant dialogue with the air, light, and shadow.

The exhibition catalogue has color photographs and critical articles by Abigail McEwen, art historian and professor at the University of Maryland; Elena Malagodi Cárdenas, the curator; and the sculptor Dominique Stroobant. It also features a selection of essays by important critics and poets who in the past wrote about Agustin Cárdenas and his art, as well as a fascinating photograph of the artist at the famous Carrara marble quarries taken by the world-famous photographer Martine Franck.

Biographic Profile

World-famous artist Agustin Cárdenas (1927-2001) was born in Cuba, where he lived until 1955, when he was awarded a scholarship from the Fine Arts Academy of San Alejandro and moved to France, where André Breton welcomed him into the Surrealist movement.

He lived and worked in Paris, and began to sculpt in Carrara from 1964 on. In 1962 he had a one-man show at the Galleria Arturo Schwarz in Milan. This important exhibition was followed by many others, for example at the La Bussola Gallery in Turin (1969) and the Galleria Lorenzelli in Bergamo (1971) and Milan (2004). In 1997 the Refettorio delle Stelline in Milan held a major anthological exhibition curated by Elena Cárdenas Malagodi. From the 1960s to the 1990s Cárdenas participated in many biennial shows in Carrara, the city where he created his marble works for more than 30 years.

Mention must be made of *The Legendary World of Cárdenas* exhibition held in 2012 in France: the sculptures were on display in the Château de Biron, while the artist's monumental works were exhibited in the splendid Manoir d'Erignac gardens.

Cárdenas participated in more than 100 group exhibitions and 40 one-man shows. His monumental sculptures are located in France, Austria, Switzerland, United States, Canada, Japan, Israel and South Korea.

Thanks are due to the following persons and galleries for having loaned the works on exhibit in Carrara: the Cárdenas family, Elena Cárdenas Malagodi; Galerie Mitterrand, Paris; Lorenzelli Arte, Milan.

Exhibition information

Title Carrara, Cárdenas and Negritude

Curators Elena Cárdenas Malagodi and Eleonora Lombardi

Venues Carrara - Historic center (Piazza Mazzini - Via Roma - Via Verdi) - CAP, Centro Arti Plastiche of Carrara (Via Canal del Rio) - Galleria Duomo Carrara (Via Finelli, 22)

Date July 11- September 13, 2015

Press conference Friday July 10, 12 p.m. - CAP Centro Arti Plastiche di Carrara

Inauguration Friday July 10, 6 p.m. - CAP Centro Arti Plastiche di Carrara

Cocktail Friday July 10, 7 p.m.- Galleria Duomo

Opening hours morning 9:30-12:30 a.m, 8 p.m.-midnight; closed Monday and Tuesday evening

Entrance CAP Centro Arti Plastiche di Carrara: € 2,00 - Galleria Duomo: free

Information Galleria Duomo tel. 0585-71839 - info@galleriaduomo.it - www.galleriaduomo.it

Comune di Carrara infocultura@comune.carrara.ms.it - www.comune.carrara.ms.it

Exhibition Press Office

IBC Irma Bianchi Communication

Tel. +39 02 8940 4694 - info@irmabianchi.it

the texts and photos can be downloaded at www.irmabianchi.it