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STUDIO MUSEO FRANCESCO MESSINA
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L'ECO DEL CLASSICO

La Valle dei Templi di Agrigento allo Studio Museo Francesco Messina di Milano

ECHO OF THE CLASSIC

The Valley of the Temples of Agrigento at Francesco Messina Studio Museum of Milan

curated by Maria Fratelli, Giuseppe Parello and Maria Serena Rizzo

20 July - 21 October 2018

press release , 25.07.2018

The Francesco Messina Studio Museum hosts an extraordinary group of more than 150 recent finds from the **Valley of the Temples**, next to pieces from the Pietro Griffo Museum of Agrigento, the collections of the Culture Department of Agrigento and the collection of ancient art pieces of **Francesco Messina**, preserved by the Archaeology Department of Milan, in **connection** with the classic works by the Sicilian sculptor.

The exhibition - titled "L'ECO DEL CLASSICO. La Valle dei Templi di Agrigento allo Studio Museo Francesco Messina di Milano/ECHO OF THE CLASSIC. The Valley of the Temples of Agrigento at Francesco Messina Studio Museum of Milan" - is on display from 20 July to 21 October. It is curated by Maria Fratelli, Giuseppe Parello and Maria Serena Rizzo, and stands out for its **scientific** and **cultural approach**, due to the support of important research institutes.

The event is **made** by the Council of Milan, Culture Department – Francesco Messina Studio Museum, and the Landscape and Archaeological Park of the Valley of the Temples, in **cooperation** with the Regional Archaeological Museum "Pietro Griffo". Also in cooperation with the Culture Department of Agrigento, the Landscape Archaeological and Heritage Department for the provinces of Como, Lecco, Monza-Brianza, Pavia, Sondrio, and Varese. The event is devised by the director of the museum Maria Fratelli.

The exhibition "L'eco del Classico. La Valle dei Templi di Agrigento allo Studio Museo Francesco Messina di Milano/Echo of the Classic. The Valley of the Temples of Agrigento at Francesco Messina Studio Museum of Milan" lights up with the light and breath of Sicily the works by the Sicilian sculptor, to whom the museum is dedicated. It underlines the permanence of the Classicism of the Twentieth Century, by juxtaposing his works with the ancient artefacts. It is the idea and form of a vision that remains a necessary model for contemporaneity, due to open thinking and clarity of mind.

As per Giuseppe Parello's words: "*The masterpieces of the past, in connection with the works by Francesco Messina, are able to establish contemporary dynamics of communication and reveal how the examination of the classic world - within its full potential - can generate new artistic expressions*".

The layout of the exhibition presents archaeological finds dated from 6th century BC to 14th century AD, in nave of the former Church of Saint Sisto. Among them there are statues of small size in terracotta, terracotta busts, heads in marble, porphyry and clay, terracotta vases

decorated with black and red figures, oil lamps, fragments of various nature in coloured opaque glass, mother of pearl, and bone, bronze coins and amber seals.

Next to them, there are precious fragments of the recent and extraordinary **discoveries of the theatre and sanctuary** of the ancient *polis Akragas*, today's Agrigento, as well as some artefacts that Francesco Messina has been collecting during his life.

The sculptor, who was always interested in the past and had a connection with Sicily, his homeland, has often taken his inspiration in creating his sculptures from archaeological works, sometimes quite overtly. For example, among others, in *Efebo/Ephebe* of 1959, linked with the ancient archetypes, and in the plaster cast of the *Guerriero di Agrigento/Warrior of Agrigento* that reveals a strong formal affinity and confirms the innate classicism of the artist.

In the **lower ground floor**, the visitor can admire the **reconstruction** of part of an **archaeological excavation**, which disclosing the lower part of an **oven** from late antiquity, reveals the room of a house used for the **making of bread**. It offers a fascinating glimpse of the everyday life in the ancient town of *Akragas*. The recreation is oriented according to the basic lines of the Roman urban layout in correspondence with the crossing between the *cardo* and the *decumanus* of *Mediolanum*. Ideally, it connects the location of the Messina Museum, at the heart of the Roman Milan, to the millennial large city *Akragas* and highlights the long history of both cities. **Milan and Agrigento** are in fact **bonded in the same historical and cultural stratification**, combined in the sign of myth and classicism.

Filippo Del Corno, Council Member responsible for the Culture Department of the Council of Milan, says, "*The centrality of Milan is obvious in this exhibition that takes one of the most well-known archaeological places of the planet, the Valley of the Temples of Agrigento, inside the deconsecrated church of Saint Sisto within the heart of the Roman Milan. The exhibition, which takes inspiration from the classicism of the great Sicilian master, is set up in his Studio Museum, a place of research and study that is dedicated to sculpture*".

The evocative layout, designed by Maddalena D'Alfonso and made by Easy Holidays, immerses the visitor in a museum archaeological-like environment, thanks to its **showcases** in the nave, which offer a vertical scenery. They are supported by a detailed cataloguing and by some **panels** of analysis, as well as a table with **documents** regarding the finds of the spectacular Hellenistic theatre and of the sanctuary. The **planting of citrus**, typical of the Sicilian territory, contributes to the creation of a sensory path that culminates with the view from above of an element of the ancient citadel.

The marvellous *Akragas* has been emerging in the past few years thanks to the excavation campaigns in the Valley of the Temples, coordinated by the director Giuseppe Parello and the archaeologists of the Park, Valentina Caminneci, Maria Concetta Parello and Maria Serena Rizzo.

A contemporary view of the Valley is proposed by some artists who have experienced staying at the Archaeological Park of Agrigento. There will be on display a selection of watercolours by the Greek painter Pavlos Habidis, as part of the project "Spring in the Valley", and the large oil painting "I Dioscuri di Agrigento/The Little Temples of Agrigento" by the artist Giuseppe Colombo. At the end, the photographs by Annalisa Marchionna will tell of the life in the Valley through the stories of its own inhabitants, and describe encounters among men and cultures.

Maria Fratelli says, "*The Valley of the Temples is a vision that lays the foundation in the reality of the underground city, without which the strength to rise to the sky of such beauty wouldn't exist. How much importance ancient cities have, in the wider meaning of civitas, is what this exhibition is about, welcoming in the heart of the Roman city of Mediolanum the relics of the ancient Akragas*".

A **catalogue**, co-produced by the Archaeological Park of the Valley of the Temples and the Council of Milan - Francesco Messina Studio Museum, with the images of the setting and the texts will be presented in autumn during the opening period of the exhibition.

Thanks to



Exhibition details

Title L'ECO DEL CLASSICO. La Valle dei Templi di Agrigento allo Studio Museo Francesco Messina di Milano/ECHO OF THE CLASSIC. The Valley of the Temples of Agrigento at Francesco Messina Studio Museum of Milan

Curated by Maria Fratelli, Giuseppe Parello, Maria Serena Rizzo

Venue Studio Museo Francesco Messina, via San Sisto 4/A - Milan

Dates 20 July - 21 October 2018

Opening Hours Tuesday - Sunday, 10am - 6pm. Monday closed

Entrance free

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