

Bestiario contemporaneo (A contemporary bestiary).
Between art and science,
Italian artists from the ACACIA collection—
Venice, Natural History Museum
31st May – 24th October 2013
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Continuing to the 24th October at the Natural History Museum in Venice is the sensational exhibition "Contemporary bestiary. In between art and science, Italian artists from the ACACIA collection" by Gemma De Angelis Testa and Giorgio Verzotti, scientific management by Gabriella Belli.

The exhibition is included in the program MuveContemporaneo - which the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venice has organized on the occasion of the Biennale Internazionale of Art 2013 - in cooperation with the ACACIA Association.

On show about thirty pieces from 15 Italian contemporary artists establish a dialogue between the permanent collection of natural science exhibits and the current works of art, realized through different means of expression: painting, sculpture, photography, videos and installations.

Walking through the rooms of the museum takes the audience towards a constant comparison between past and present, whose combination creates interest and astonishment.

The artists on show: Mario Airò, Rosa Barba, Vanessa Beecroft, Gianni Caravaggio, Maurizio Cattelan, Roberto Cuoghi, Lara Favaretto, Francesco Gennari, Sabrina Mezzaqui, Marzia Migliora, Adrian Paci, Paola Pivi, Luca Trevisani, Nico Vascellari e Francesco Vezzoli, they share a common love and curiosity for nature and her processes, in a tension that leads to reflection, provocation, irony.

Of striking effect is the work of Vanessa Beecroft, *White madonna with twins*, a Mother Nature which feeds and protects her kids regardless of the colour of their skins, where they are from, their ethnicity or religion; a work where it is clear the call of the generating force of maternity and the African origin of the human species. Other photographic images can be seen in the showrooms, among which those by Adrian Paci and by Paola Pivi: the image by Paci portrays the parallel walk of a naked woman's legs and the legs of a horse, to symbolically represent the exploration of the relationship between art and nature; a metaphor of culture which, stripped of any artificiality, goes back to the pristine purity of the natural world. Paola Pivi instead proposes an image endowed with a strong ironic charge obtained by irrationally combining latitudes and habitats: two zebras have been taken on a snowy mountain, photographed and exhibited in the Galleria dei Cetacei [cetacean mammals' gallery], thus creating a sense of disorientation.

They are "beasts" also the main characters of Maurizio Cattelan's work, *Love saves life (I musicanti di Brema)*, that integrates well in the De Reali Collection, where embalmed animals can be encountered: the piece hints at a act of revolt, at the possibility of deliverance by love.

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Information for the press

Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia
Ufficio Stampa e Relazioni Esterne
Riccardo Bon
T +39 0412405225 / 32
M +39 346 0844843
press@fmcvenezia.it

T +39 0415904893
M +39 3357185874
a.lacchin@villaggioglobale.191.it

T +39 0287334224
adele.bandera@aemedia.com
spazia.fiori@aemedia.com



**Fondazione
Musei Civici di Venezia**
—
Piazza San Marco 52
30124 Venezia
T +39 041 2405211
F +39 041 5200935
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A similar key of interpretation can be found in the video by Sabrina Mezzaqui, *Case Gialle* (yellow houses), which placed beside the embalmed animals opens an excerpt of life, thanks to a flock of swallows who move in a delicate and poetic dance. Still by Mezzaqui it strikes the installation *Mettere a dimora...* (to bed out), where a dictionary open at the definition of plant/to plant, surrounded by illustrations of flowers and plants which fills freely showcases and walls, conveys the importance of respect for nature, of her defense and preservation.

Among the winged animals what catches the attention are two luminous winged ants by Marzia Migliora, who, taking inspiration from Northern African blind flying ants, releases them from their blindness by making them out of neon lights. Also the piece recalls cooperative individuals in supportive and hard-working communities.

Perfectly integrated among the stone finds of the paleontologic gallery there are two works by Francesco Gennari: *Microcosmo*, a gilded clump of earth that the artist used as an abode for a worm and a spider, and *Mausoleo per un verme* [mausoleum for a worm], picture that portrays a funeral monument made up of wood, meringue and sugar, in which a worm has been inserted.

Colors Clocks, the sculpture by Rosa Barba, leads to the room where there are on show the ethnographic exhibits gathered by Giovanni Miani, a Venetian explorer who between 1859 and 1861 went on two expeditions in search of the springs of the Nile. This bizarre time machine, where the mechanism is made from photographic film, takes you back to almost two centuries and makes you relive the past.

Miani's wonderful adventures in unknown territories and the configuration of the lands are strongly related to the pictorial work by Roberto Cuoghi: a series of maps put on top of each other whose continent outlines, in continuous movement and change, don't overlap due to some mistakes of interpretation which underline the difficulty of a univocal knowledge of Planet Earth in time.

Luca Trevisani too lingers on the concepts of time and movement as it can be deduced from *Partiredall'acqua* [to start from the water], where a resin bubble encloses and holds in a horizontal position a sand clock, preventing the pink sands from running and so metaphorically the time from passing.

In the room dedicated to the "cycle of life" Francesco Vezzoli displays all its phases, including death, with the installation *Flower Arrangement (Homage to Bruce Nauman)*: a bunch of red roses naturally withers next to a display board with the photographs that record its life chronologically.

ACACIA is a private association, attentive to the cultural problems of our Country for years; the promotion and support of the art and work of young Italian artists are among the main goals of the association which works to create a collection of contemporary Italian art pieces. Today the public commitment of ACACIA weds the proposals of the Fondazione dei Musei Civici of Venice, supervised by Gabriella Belli, who is especially sensitive to the collaboration between public and private, and able to endorse qualities and peculiarities of both.



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GENERAL INFORMATION

Venue

Natural History Museum, Santa Croce 1730, Venice

Press-preview

29th, 30th and 31st May from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Opening

29th and 30th May from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

(entrance exclusively by invitation only, subject to availability)

Open to the public

31st May – 24th October 2013

Opening Times

10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (ticket office 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

Closed on Monday

TICKETS

Full price 8 €

Reduced price 5,50 €

children from 6 to 14 years old; students under 25 years old; 65 years attained; Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali members; leaders of groups of young people or students (max. 2); Rolling Venice Card holder; FAI members*

Free

residents or people born in the Comune di Venezia; children from 0 to 5 years old; disabled people with a companion; authorized guides; tour leaders accompanying groups; 1 free entry for every 15 tickets by prior booking; I.C.O.M. members; MUVE Friend Card holder

School Offer 4 euro per person

(valid from September 1st to March 15th) for students of all schools levels accompanied by their teachers; a list of the students' names must be provided by the school

**a document is required*

INFORMATION

nat.mus.ve@fmcvenezia.it

info@fmcvenezia.it

call center 848082000

(from Italy)

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