

AGAINST SUN AND DUST: ANTI HISTORIA
IV EDITION, 2023
CURATED BY CORNELIA MATTIACCI AND ALESSANDRA CASTELBARCO ALBANI

Exhibition highlight:
STUART MIDDLETON
UNTITLED
CURATED BY ATTILIA FATTORI FRANCHINI
VILLA IMPERIALE, PESARO
AUGUST 12TH-OCTOBER 7TH, 2023

The conflict between the processes of individual memory and collective narrations is the occasion for further experiments on the concept of history, the theme chosen for the fourth edition of *Against Sun and Dust: Anti Historia*, presented by Il Teatro degli Artisti and curated by Cornelia Mattiacci and Alessandra Castelbarco Albani.

Exploring the history of Villa Imperiale, the artists were invited to react to the critical issues of reconstructions and their methodology doubts, to generate expressive energy. The historical narration presents the tendency to adopt a univocal definition of a fact, omitting latent perspectives; *Anti Historia* is the will to disorient it, to unveil its paradoxes and contradictions.

On the day of the opening, August 10th, the path developed from the indoors to the outdoors of the roveresca wing, built in the sixteenth century by architect and scenographer Girolamo Genga from Urbino. The worksite was originally managed by duchess Leonora Gonzaga; Leonora dedicates an eloquent epigraph to his husband Francesco Maria Della Rovere: a space-project for enjoyment and for the expression of the arts “in compensation of the sun and the dust, and the sleepless nights in battle...” (that “pro sole, pro pulvere...”, which gives the name to the project).

The installation and video by Stuart Middleton conceived for the edition, curated by Attilia Fattori Franchini, are sited in the chambers of the Duch and Duchess; *Untitled (2023)*, a piece made from scraps of nuptial dresses gives shapes to the remnants of a choice – an institutional union that is manifested in an iconic piece of clothing - that exclude many other options; while *Untitled (2023)* a short film which set is a doll house owned by the artist in his childhood, alludes to possible mnemonic reconstructions, at the alteration and referral of childhood memories.

By taking advantage of the scenographic potential of the Villa, Ivan Cheng conceived a new performance named *Oil Rig Elision (tempesta d'amore)*, curated by Niccolò Gravina and produced by INCURVA. The show took place just before dusk, declining historic time through the depth of spaces, in a style that merges informal interactions with lyrical singing, blurring the boundaries between performers, technicians and public. At night, a DJ set by PLO man, curated by Ruggero Pietromarchi, concluded the path. Under the effect of the temporal vertigo perceived in the bodily encounter with the proofs of history, the techno performance re-activated the scenographic potential latent within the roveresca facade, conceived as a theater backdrop, made of large passing cavities, but historically - that is, based on the documents found - never used.

Mino Luchena is the author of the drawing that illustrates the booklet, printed in collaboration with Litografia R. Bulla; in his drawing, the entity of Villa Imperiale reacts to his own historic conscience fusing architectural, botanical and human proportions into a scorching, horrific magma.

No Text Azienda in collaboration with author Edoardo Totaro and music and sound design studio A Teardrop Sound, along the next months will expand the journey in Villa Imperiale to the digital realm, through the production of content that gives shape to the virtual expressive potential of the journey itself.

Until October 7th, 2023, artworks by Stuart Middleton will be on view during Villa Imperiale opening days.

As curator Fattori Franchini argues, “characterized by transdisciplinary and site-sensitivity Stuart Middleton’s practice, which intuitively flutters between installation and sculpture, is often conceived in relation to other media such as animation, drawing and writing. Taking places, history(es), industries and infrastructures as observational points, Middleton uses given conditions to understand the complex net of relationships that define our surroundings. Employing the biography of the Villa Imperiale as initial input, its proprietary passage through nuptial communion as well as its economic and temporal layers, Middleton has specifically

responded to Girolamo Genga's architectural scenographies originally conceived for Francesco Maria Della Rovere and Leonora Gonzaga.

A textile intervention composed of scraps gleaned from bridal dressmakers and seamstresses in Italy and the United Kingdom *Untitled (2023)*, challenges the pristine architecture of the Duchess's room leading viewers to a new short film *Untitled (2023)* located in Duke's apartment. Spread across two dichotomic spaces, one uncorrupted and the other layering different temporalities, Middleton's work plays with binary differences blurring the limits between the work and the site. Devised as a negative representation of a body, *Untitled (2023)* uses remnants and leftovers, affective waste usually guarded with care, to alter the physical and sensory experience of space. Approaching waste as creative material, the remnants become a tool to reflect on structures, measurements, and standards, as well as history and our need to preserve the past through materiality. Tempus fugit.

By passing through the biabsid hall, viewers reach the Duke's room, usually closed to the public. Dusty furniture, mattresses, books and a long bookshelf unveil the domestic character of the Villa presenting us with the remnants of its lived history.

The short film *Untitled (2023)* projected against an old bookshelf offers us another domesticity, a homemade doll's house, partially reconstructed. Made by the artist as a playful set during his childhood and recently found again, the readymade contains small toys and fantasy objects that might populate a fictional home. Filmed on a mini action camera that offers a first-person POV we move through doorways, curiously observing decorative features and personal belongings. Juxtaposing fact and fiction, the imagination of the past gleans into the present, speculatively forming a possible future."

VISIT:

Until October 7th, 2023, every Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning, and by reservation only.

For information and reservation:

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LIST OF EXHIBITED WORKS:

Stuart Middleton

Untitled, 2023

bridal remnants, stones

variable dimensions

Courtesy the Artist and Carlos/Ishikawa Gallery

Stuart Middleton

Untitled, 2023

HD video, sound, infinite loop

Courtesy the Artist and Carlos/Ishikawa Gallery