



ALTRI MONDI - OTHER WORLDS

Curated by Enrico Mascelloni

Catalogue essays by Enrico Mascelloni, Jonathan Salina and Federico Piccari

Opening Saturday 6 May 2023 from 4 to 8 p.m.

7 May - 25 June 2023 • Saturday - Sunday from 2 to 7 p.m.

Fondazione 107 presents *Altri Mondi - Other Worlds*, a place where three artists meet: **Seni Awa Camara**, **Paola Mattioli** and **Marcovinicio** all work with their own techniques, of sculpture, photography and painting.

The Other Worlds cited in the exhibition's title set out to explore worlds unknown, among them the world of the soul, that of the emotions and that of fantasy and imagination. In a society that's projected towards the virtual dimension and augmented reality, we are invited to step along paths already trodden, where our decisions can only be made within the bounds of tracks imagined and built by others. This route accompanies the future adult already when he takes his first steps with children's games and then, when he grows, as he progresses to video games and virtual reality. Playing the role of the shaman, the artist is tasked with inviting us to free our minds and with coaxing us to venture along alternative, unexplored roads.

Along one of those roads we encounter **Seni Awa Camara**, a sculptress from Casamance, a region of Senegal. Her name was first heard on the international circuit in 1989, when she was invited by Jean-Hubert Martin to take part in the ground-breaking exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre*, organised at the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Seni Camara's sculptures are made of terracotta in burnished, ochre and reddish colours, against which burn marks sometimes stand out more clearly. Tradition and continuity meld together in a message where the family nucleus is an underlying part of our present and of our future. These are sculptures that represent the structure of society, fertility, family, children and the community: they are the children that the artist has not born. The sculptures are sometimes totemic monoliths populated by animals: the close interchange between man and nature is a vital condition of continuity for the species and is placed in the heart of the artist's statement of intent.

Paola Mattioli photographed Seni Camara and her sculptures while traveling through Africa in 2003, generating images that offer to us, as we observe, a reportage of a narrative from a world far away, ancestral and with distant, profound origins. As Fabio Cavallucci states, Paola Mattioli employs her photography to aspire to touch the depth of reality, to grasp things' souls and to overcome the surface veil, so as to brush lightly against her subject's secrets. And so does Paola Mattioli offer us her skilful portrait of the sculptress absorbed in her everyday world. The exhibition will also feature the *Signares*, portraits that testify to a world that no longer exists, yet is perpetuated by tradition in the city of Saint Louis, Senegal's original capital. In the days of French colonial domination, the Signares were women of great beauty who would dress in European styles and who married French functionaries according to local rites. When their husbands left Senegal, they maintained the social status they had gained, together with their homes, their luxurious clothes and their jewellery.

Marcovinicio is presenting a new cycle of his Vanitas works, paintings in yellow and black arrayed all along one wall, each with the same image repeated obsessively, with only the slightest of variations. They are still life paintings, raised so that his fruit is transformed into an unlikely atomic mushroom. The black hues in these his latest paintings are achieved with glossy enamels, so vigorous as to engulf observers within the painting, drawing them in to achieve a meeting with the world of the soul.

Together with his Vanitas, Marcovinicio is also presenting a series of paintings in oil on recycled mirrors with frames in different styles. The supports are transformed into containers whose purpose is to hold in an explosive scene, so as to consolidate a slice of reality: the reality of every day, of life that goes on and, by means of the reflection, is embedded in the painted subject, becoming a constantly changing integral part of it, as in a film sequence. The artist's typical subjects are painted in the foreground: African masks, religious symbols, divinities, still life, epic characters, self-portraits and landscapes all set the scene in a kaleidoscope of images that display continuous mutation when they come into contact with the reflection of the real world, so that when reflected reality meets the scene they propose a constant stream of different images.

Sharing the common denominator of a shamanic approach, the three artists induce different worlds to communicate in a quest for a common point of reference, which is identified as the urge to employ imagination as a route for exploration. Already at the dawn of the twentieth century, artists of the calibre of Picasso, Gauguin and Modigliani would draw on African art to breathe new life into the art of Europe, which needed to go back to its roots. Since Marcovinicio's yardsticks are the great artists of the twentieth century, he distances himself from today's technological world. One way in which he does this is by searching for his roots in a comparison with the sculptress Seni Camara, who has crossed international borders despite never actually setting foot outside her own country. The invitation expressed by the artists in this exhibition is to experiment with novel paths and set out on them, since they are of use for generating independent thinking during learning processes. The interactive games that I would describe as constrictive have stolen away our imagination, our ability to construct our own choices and to free our minds and take to the wing. To go back to our roots means to reassert ownership of an uncontaminated state in which everything is possible, even using our imagination to dream.

FONDAZIONE 107

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Full rate 8 euro – reduced rate 5 euro (students 13-18)

Guided tours on Saturdays and Sundays

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