

GALLERIA POGGIALI

MANFREDI BENINATI

Sunday 10 December 2039

Critical essay by Sergio Risaliti

Vernissage Saturday 22 October 6.00 p.m.

22 October 2016 – 13 December 2016

Via della Scala 35/A and Via Benedetta 3r, Florence

Galleria Poggiali is delighted to announce the opening of ***Sunday 10 December 2039***, the first solo show in Florence of **Manfredi Beninati** (Palermo, 1970), specially designed and created for the Florence gallery.

The corpus of the works on show is in fact the result of collaboration between the artist and the gallery that produced them, assisting Beninati at all stages, from the creation of the works through to their realisation.

The title of the exhibition is the expression of an **imaginary date, an impossible combination according to the Gregorian calendar of day and date**. Beninati is making reference to a formulation made in 1968 by the physicist Gabriele Veneziano, considered the father of “string theory” or the “theory of everything”, which posits the existence of parallel worlds extending in different dimensions. This realm of imagination, connected with the passage of time in a spatial dimension, is reflected in the works of the artist where time and space are combined with the power of imagination to create worlds that change depending on who is looking at them.

Manfredi Beninati has constructed the exhibition like a cinema set (he attended the Cinecittà school of film and set design) within which he creates instants of interiors, suspended rooms, imaginary situations, rendered through an itinerary that unwinds from the entrance to the gallery amidst **ten light boxes**, shots originating from the real reconstruction of an imaginary space physically recreated in a part of the gallery. He did the same thing at the **MAXXI in Rome** in 2003, for the **Venice Biennale** in **2005** and that of **Liverpool** in 2008 and, again in 2008, at the **Parrish Museum of Southampton**, at the **Quadriennale in Rome** and at the **Athens Biennale** and at that of Istanbul in 2009, at the **Hammer Museum of Los Angeles** and at the **Thessaloniki Biennale** (2011), and then again in **2012** at the **Shanghai Biennial** and in the same year at the **Mardin Biennial** in Turkey.

In this case, the set recreated in the Poggiali gallery represents in every respect a visionary version of the laboratory adjacent to it.

The exhibition project also comprises a series of sculptures: **one in marble, half-busts, horses, deer and masks in bronze and bas-reliefs in bronze and resin** to which Beninati transfers the lightness of drawing and the delicacy of the light and the oil paints with the brightness of the felt-tips, bringing them to life through the use of different patinas.

The half-busts are striking for their elusive, roughed-out profiles, describing a space of several dimensions in which the figures at times emerge clearly defined, while at other times they are sketched by light, indefinite touches, like faces emerging from memory inspiring comfort or evoking bewilderment.

Also on display is a **marble sculpture** in which the artist “photographs” and immobilises the state of his studio in Palermo: in the open notebook resting on the white marble plinth we can see

sketches of his next work. Engraved in the marble, these become indelible, along with a coffee cup, scattered sheets of paper and a pencil sharpener. As **Costantino D'Orazio** writes, in this image "furnishings and objects are blocked in the limbo between two fractions of a second, in the interstices between before and after, carving out in time the instant that we can only imagine. He has captured it through an image, revealing all its fragility."

The 9 bas-reliefs in the show – 3 in bronze and 6 in resin – are installed horizontally almost as if they told a story. Instead, they are unconnected, lines from different screenplays speaking of memories, dreams, enchanted forests and characters of the purest fantasy.

Also displayed within the layout of the show are a series of paintings that speak of the **worlds imagined by Beninati** populated with fantastic objects, vegetable elements, living creatures, children, groups of people, animals and interiors that recall childhood or travels, where the light is delicate and the pastel shades are muted. These works are pervaded by the sensation of an evanescent atmosphere, light as air or like a gentle wind that allows the air to be filtered, creating tones and sensations that hark back to enchanted landscapes.

As **Sergio Risaliti** writes, the "medley" created by Beninati's works "is that of the language of the unconscious which insists on selecting and emphasising visions exactly as it pleases, following imaginary rules and principles that are not those of the rational, everyday world."

Approaching the works of the Sicilian artist, again according to **Risaliti**, the observer has the impression that "the image as a whole appears to generate or regenerate itself, moving from one level of depth to another, as if there were different levels of consciousness. It is not possible to identify a single central or dominant subject, but rather a constellation of signs and figures that exist within an oneiric space-time dimension. As if life were a dream and the dream life."

Catalogue available at the show with a critical essay by Sergio Risaliti and a conversation between Lorenzo Poggiali and Manfredi Beninati.

MANFREDI BENINATI

Manfredi Beninati was born in 1970 in Palermo, where he lives and works. After having abandoned first law and then film studies, and working with several famous Italian directors, he launched his artistic activity, initially devoting himself to drawing. From 2002 he dedicated himself to sculpture and to a figurative painting drawing directly on the recollections of childhood, both real and – very frequently – imaginary. With a fluid brushstroke he plays upon nuances and layers of colour to recreate a rarefied atmosphere, sometimes unreal, describing figures that appear to emerge slowly from an often dreamlike background in no apparent order. Intrinsically bound up with Beninati's pictorial production is the realisation of installations which look like uninhabited sets. These are often inaccessible spaces that reveal themselves to the spectator only through slots or darkened glass (Venice Biennale 2005, XV Quadriennale of Rome 2008), soliciting a sort of voyeurism that violates the private dimension and the indistinctness of memory.

In 2003 he was featured in the "Le collezioni - Recenti acquisizioni" at the MAXXI - Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo in Rome. In 2004 he took part in the group show "Wall Paper" at the GAMeC of Bergamo; he then displayed at the "Summer show" of the Lorcan O'Neill gallery in Rome and took part in the group show "Expander" at the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

In 2005 he was selected for the Venice Pavilion in the Gardens at the 51st Venice Biennial and won the prize of the public. In 2006 he received the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome.

In 2008 he displayed at the Parrish Museum, Southampton (NY), USA and took part in the Liverpool Biennial, while in 2009 he was at the Istanbul Biennial and that of Athens and also participated in the Italian Pavilion with "Collaudi" at the 53rd Venice Biennale.

In 2011 he was at the Hammer Museum of Los Angeles with "When in Rome" and at the third Thessaloniki

Biennial in Greece, while in 2012 he took part at the 9th Shanghai Biennial and presented "Double Take" at the 2nd Mardin Biennial in Turkey.

In 2013 he received an award from the Inside-Out Art Museum in Beijing and in 2014, again in Beijing, he presented his solo show "Manfredi Beninati. Nature is a Theater", at the Miniature Museum. In 2015 he took part in the "Logo" project with Enzo Cucchi and the Laboratorio Saccardi at the Galleria Poggiali in Florence. Finally, in 2016 he took part in the group show "Dall'oggi al domani. 24 ore nell'arte contemporanea", at the MACRO in Rome, in the show "La torre di Babele" at the Pecci in Prato and in "Contemporary Curated" at Sotheby's in London; in the summer he exhibited at the Galleria Poggiali in Pietrasanta.

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