



PRESS RELEASE

Matthew Day Jackson

In search of...

Curated by Gianfranco Maraniello

MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

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MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna opens its 2011 programme with *In search of...*, the first solo show hosted by a European museum of the work of leading American emerging artist **Matthew Day Jackson**.

Taking his cue from our fundamental questions concerning human existence - who we are, where we come from, what lies ahead - the artist enacts an exploration of personal and collective myths through a selection of works spanning from 2007 to 2010.

The exhibition's rich display wholly transforms MAMbo's venue, making it vibrate with colors by applying a layer of special film on the lighting fixtures, which then reverberate with the whole chromatic spectrum; questioning it with the ambiguous presence of a special Foucault pendulum, hanging from 16 meters of height; animating it with machine-driven works powered by solar panels mounted on the museum's terrace.

The red thread running through *In search of...* is Jackson's video with the same title (2010), based on the format of a popular American TV show aired between 1976 and 1982 and hosted by Leonard Nimoy (*Star Trek's* famous Dr. Spock), investigating paranormal phenomena and mysteries. The film, divided into three parts by the interpolation of faux Audi commercials, includes footage from stock archives and from the Getty archives, staged interviews with intellectuals such as David Mindell (historian and engineer at MIT) or Alexander Dumbadze (writer and art historian), with a half-solemn, half-ironic background storytelling by David Tompkins. In the first part, anthropomorphic forms found in clouds moving around the Earth as seen from the moon raise questions on the myths traced in terrestrial landscapes. In the second part, the mysterious disappearance of Matthew Day Jackson is an opportunity to underline the complex nature of the objects we leave behind as witnesses to our existence. In the last part, some artifacts found in archaeological excavations reveal the existence of *Eidolon*, an ancient, now extinct civilization.

The situations narrated by the video reference the ways in which humans participate to contemporary culture and define themselves through the

objects around them: both themes can be found in all the other works displayed at MAMbo.

This is true, for instance, of *Study Collection VI* (2010), a monumental steel shelf teeming with artifacts (some of which are also featured in the video), which collectively generate a sort of figurative sculpture, through which the artist challenges a linear vision of history by juxtaposing disparate elements on the same plane.

The same holds of *The Tomb* (2010), a large work inspired by the *Tomb of Philippe Pot* (15th century), attributed to Antoine Le Moiturier and exhibited by the Paris Louvre. The hooded monks carrying Pot's effigy in the original version are replaced by Jackson with astronauts, carved into wood and plastic scraps compressed in a single block and later cut with a CNC (computer numerical control) process. The astronauts carry on their shoulders a steel and glass casket protecting a sort of skeleton based on the artist's body measurements. Seen through a one-way mirror that allows the viewer to simultaneously see his own image and the effigy's content, Matthew Day Jackson's skeleton offers an autobiographical anchor while linking together disparate forms and narratives.

The Way We Were (2010), a work composed of seven skull-shaped sculptures (made of titanium, lead, bronze, copper, aluminum, iron and steel) once again researches the origins of mankind, while *Meet Me Dead at 35* (2009) and *Meet Me Dead at 36* (2010) – two large format photographic prints – are variations, as in every exhibition, on the simulation of the artist's death, his absence, his existence only through his work's substance. The idea of passing away is also present as a new birth and a palingenesis in the big sculptural group *The Tomb*.

The exhibition in Bologna will also include another series of important works, with a display specifically conceived for the museum's spaces by the curator and the artist: *Everett Coleman Jackson* (2009), *Foucault Pendulum* (2010), *Reflections of the Sky* (2010), *J. Robert Oppenheimer (I am Become Death, Destroyer of Worlds)* (2010), *Chariot II (I like America and America likes me)* (2007/2010).

With Matthew Day Jackson's *In search of...* MAMbo traces another step in *Criticism*, a research project ongoing since 2006: a reflection on, and an investigation of, artistic practices and the role of contemporary museums, which has involved artists such as Ryan Gander, Paolo Chiasera, Markus Schinwald, Giovanni Anselmo, Christopher Williams, Bojan Sarcevic, Adam Chodzko, Eva Marisaldi, Diego Perrone, Ding Yi, DeRijke/De Rooij, Guyton\Walker, Natasha Sadr Haghghian, Trisha Donnelly, Sarah Morris, Seth Price.



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After its MAMbo premiere, Matthew Day Jackson's exhibition will travel to two important European institutions such as **Kunstmuseum Luzern** (Lucerne, Switzerland) and **Gemeente Museum den Haag** (The Hague, Netherlands).

MAMbo wishes to thank for their invaluable cooperation: Peter Blum, New York; Hauser & Wirth, London; GRIMM, Amsterdam.

Matthew Day Jackson was born in 1974 in Panorama City, California (USA) and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Among his solo shows: Peter Blum Gallery Soho, New York (2010); Peter Blum Gallery Chelsea, New York (2010); Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2009); MIT List Visual Art Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2009); Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, Texas (2009); Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas (2007); Cubitt Artists Space, London (2006); Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, Portland, Oregon (2006).

Jackson's work has been included in group shows all over the world, including: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2010); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (2009); Hayward Gallery, London (2009); Punta della Dogana, Venezia (2009); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands (2008-9); Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, Washington (2008); Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas (2008); *Whitney Biennial*, New York (2006) and *Greater New York*, PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (2005).

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