

PRESS RELEASE

Cesare Pietroiusti

Un certo numero di cose / A Certain Number of Things

Curated by Lorenzo Balbi, curatorial assistant Sabrina Samori

Istituzione Bologna Musei | MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

October 4 2019 - January 6 2020

Opening: October 3 2019 6.30 pm

Bologna, October 1 2019. From October 4 2019 to January 6 2020, the Sala delle Ciminiere at **MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna** hosts a new exhibition, opening Thursday October 3 at 6.30: *Un certo numero di cose / A Certain Number of Things*, is a project by **Cesare Pietroiusti**, curated by **Lorenzo Balbi** with the curatorial assistance of **Sabrina Samori**, and promoted by MAMbo. The project is the winner of the 4th edition of **Italian Council** (2018), a competition conceived by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Art and Architecture and Urban Peripheries (DGAAP) - a division of the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, to promote Italian contemporary art in the world.

The idea for the exhibition (the first survey on the Italian artist in a museum institution) originated in a reflection on the very notion of the retrospective - whether it is possible to represent the evolution of an artist's research in such a format. This examination led to the provocative idea of Cesare Pietroiusti: a self-narration, not just through the artworks he created, but also including objects, suggestions, episodes, gestures, actions, behaviours, and memories related to his own life, starting from the year of his birth, 1955.

The visitor itinerary in the Sala delle Ciminiere is organized as a display of what the artist refers to as **'oggetti-anno'** (year-objects), arranged in approximate, but not strict, chronological order. It starts with a photo of baby Cesare in the lap of his wet nurse, as he reaches for a bunch of grapes (1955), and continues until the year 1976 with documents, photos, music records and cassettes (complete with period players), letters, sketchbooks, essays, stories, school reports, cards, books, travel memories, and poems that outline the growth of Cesare as a child, an adolescent and a young man. Since 1977, the types of objects change, as we move from his private sphere to his life as an artist, with works that Pietroiusti created over a 40-year span: drawings, photographs, videos, magazines, material documenting different performances, publications, websites www.pensierinonfunzionali.net / www.nonfunctionalthoughts.net and documents related to shows, courses and lectures. Each year-object is accompanied by a story that puts it in context, connecting it to those that precede and follow it.

The objects that represent the years from 1955 to 2018 are displayed around the **last year-object, relating to 2019**, placed in the middle of the room, inside a structure that could be compared to a 'ring', completely visible and occasionally accessible to the public: this is a work in

progress, made as part of a workshop held by Pietroiusti in two locations, the MAMbo museum itself and the **Grazer Kunstverein** in Graz (Austria). The workshop is held with a group of students and young artists and the aim is to reproduce the objects on view, with the help of the artist, physically or through performance and narrative devices, by applying a mechanism of *mise en abyme* of the exhibition itself, a form of co-authorship that also includes the ideational stage. A key role is played by the visual exchange between the original objects, displayed around the 'ring', and their reproductions inside it.

The institution that will receive the work produced during the workshop will be the **Madre · museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina** in Naples.

The work carried out during the workshop will be made visibile on different occasions over the course of the exhibition, which will see the participation of Pietroiusti and of the young artists involved: the public is invited to participate in activities that take place in the exhibition space and in other areas of the museum. These range from the days of creative drawing, inspired by object-year 1972, *Carlo's School Diary* (Saturday 12 and Sunday 13, October 2019) to real chess tournaments (Saturday 9, November 2019), from "palletta" ("super-ball") games (Saturday November 23, December 7 and 14, 2019) to the collection of personal requests for *In what can i be useful to you?* (October 1-31 2019, followed by a presentation on January 6, 2020).

Ever since 1977, the artistic research of Cesare Pietroiusti has developed in a radically independent way, outside the logic of galleries, museums and the market. A unique interpreter of performance and relational practice, the artist has operated between the fields of linguistic experimentation and conceptual reflection and, probably due to his educational background in psychiatry, has shown particular interest in apparently inconspicuous, paradoxical situations and objects, which are normally not considered worthy of being observed, studied or represented.

The theme of relation in artistic practice, viewed as a bilateral or multilateral exchange, as opposed to a one-sided notion of authorship, is therefore a cross-cutting theme in Pietroiusti's oeuvre. Accordingly, his actions are always social, interactive, and aimed at building networks: this is the case, for example, with the Oreste experience, to which MAMbo recently devoted a show in its Project Room. Starting from the 2000s, Pietroiusti's work has increasingly focused on an analysis of market mechanisms, the money/goods exchange, and the paradoxes that arise across the capitalist-based Western social system: for instance, the artist irreversibly changed the appearance of banknotes belonging to other people; donated thousands of his original, signed drawings; organized shows in which his works can be obtained in exchange for ideas; sold stories; and even ingested banknotes, only to give them back to their owners after defecation. Some of these actions took place at the MAMbo in 2008, where the artist, along with Stefano Arienti, was the protagonist of the project *Regali e Regole. Prendere, dare, sbirciare nel museo*, which explored the features of the contemporary art museum, and the practices through which a museum would be able to adequately address issues such as authorship, the

value of a work of art, its distribution and preservation, and its relationship with collectors and public participation.

A book published by NERO (in Italian with English annex) is issued in coincidence with *Un certo numero di cose / A Certain Number of Things*, with texts by Cesare Pietroiusti that go over, and expand, the complex contents of the year-objects exhibited at MAMbo, complete with images and an afterword by Lorenzo Balbi.

For a deeper visiting experience, the exhibition includes mediation activities organized by MAMbo's Education Department.

The Italian Council competition, thanks to which Cesare Pietroiusti's project received the support of the Directorate-General for Contemporary Art and Architecture and Urban Peripheries of the MiBAC Ministry, provides for the funding of activities that promote the production, knowledge and diffusion of Italian contemporary creation, with the purpose of expanding the public collections of national, regional and municipal museums. The winning projects, which in the fourth edition (2018) have been assigned financing of over 1 million euros, feature the work of artists from all over Italy, and include the production of works conceived in close connection with their hosting places, or inspired by ongoing socio-cultural changes, and ranging from photography to sculpture, from installation to video art. Within this framework, MAMbo was awarded a 145.000 euro contribution, given a total project cost of 200.000 euros.

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TECHNICAL SHEET

Exhibition title

Cesare Pietroiusti

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Curated by

Lorenzo Balbi, curatorial assistant Sabrina Samorì

Promoted by

Istituzione Bologna Musei | Area Arte Moderna e Contemporanea

Venue

MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna
via Don Minzoni 14 | 40121 Bologna - Italy

Dates

October 4 2019 - January 6 2020

Opening

October 3 2019 6.30 pm

Opening hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Festivities h 10 am - 6.30 pm; Thursday h 10 am - 10 pm

Ticket

Temporary exhibition full € 6 | reduced € 4

Card Musei Metropolitani Bologna reduced € 3

Full cumulative ticket exhibition + MAMbo/Museo Morandi Permanent collection € 10

Reduced cumulative ticket exhibition + MAMbo/Museo Morandi Permanent collection € 8

Publishing

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General information:

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