



PRESS RELEASE

Plamen Dejanoff
The Bronze House
curated by Gianfranco Maraniello

MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna
1 June – 9 September 2012

The Museum of Modern Art of Bologna (MAMbo) opens its spaces to *The Bronze House* by Plamen Dejanoff from June 1 to September 9, 2012. Curated by Gianfranco Maraniello, this spectacular exhibition is part of the lead-in to the largest and most massive bronze monument ever created in Modern and Contemporary Art.

The Bronze House is a long-term project by Plamen Dejanoff, representing **the most ambitious undertaking** in a career characterized by the artist's exploration of the bonds between art and economic processes, and the role of the artist and what he can actually do in contemporary society. This quest has made him an unconventional and controversial figure, perennially caught between the deft manipulation of aesthetic strategies proper to late-capitalistic globalized society and an ironic and disenchanting critique of the art system.

The artist began in 2006 to delineate and develop his monumental *Planets of Comparison* project for his birthplace, Veliko Tarnovo, a charming city of Medieval origin which still conserves traces of its glorious past as capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire. Dejanoff acquired a number of worksites in the city center with plans to build infrastructure made of bronze. The idea was to **create a public cultural center** featuring a library, a cinema, a theatre, an exhibition venue, and an artistic workshop. His original intention then expanded to the conception of a broader and more complex undertaking, in which the artist simultaneously plays the roles of **manager, curator, architect, designer, and collector**. The success of this venture depends on the **joint participation of a network of international partners** comprising artists, curators, collectors, museums, galleries, and publishing houses. To finance his idea, Dejanoff created a specific foundation that he promotes through a meticulous marketing strategy.

When the construction process has been completed, his house-sculptures will be composed of **bronze modules** embodying advanced engineering

principles but each entirely made by hand. They will comprise the elements of the façade, floors, doors, walls, stairways, and couplings holding the entire structure together.

The Bronze House is the first of these architectural installations, genuinely habitable sculptures, to assume concrete form in a **colossal villa measuring over 600 square meters**, which will be assembled in Bulgaria. Progress in the construction process is presented in a **traveling exposition** that has already visited a number of prestigious European museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, Ludwig Foundation of Vienna (MUMOK), the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art of Vienna (MAK), and the Kunstverein of Hamburg. After the Italian show at the Museum of Modern Art of Bologna (MAMbo), it will move on to the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain Champagne-Ardenne (FRAC) in Reims.

The extraordinary volumes of MAMbo's Sala delle Ciminiere exalt the monumentality of the sculptural work which is represented in the most advanced version ever made, composed of **160 elements** towering **5 metres** and weighing approximately **16 tons**. The artist works with an empty architectural grid as an ideal model, abstracting the decorations of historical buildings and translating them into an open structure. The choice of a material such as **bronze**, a classic medium in the arts but completely unconventional in architecture, represents a **challenge** both in terms of traditional construction methods and regarding the working of the individual elements, which are veritable works of art in themselves and only apparently identical to one another. The technique of assembling interlocking modular units is inspired by the pattern of decorative elements typical of the traditional wooden houses in the region, which are an expression of the organic vernacular architecture described by an enthralled Le Corbusier in his *Le Voyage d'Orient* [*The Voyage to the East*].

The repetition of the module in a vertical progression of identical units is inspired by the famous *Column of the Infinite* created by **Costantin Brâncuși** in 1938 and placed in a public park in the Romanian city of Târgu Jiu, not far from the artist's birthplace, Hobița. The sculpture—a structure in laminated cast iron over 30 meters high, symbol of the work of art as an inaccessible, ahistorical, and atemporal totem—is characterized by having neither a center nor a beginning or end. It mimics the forms of the old wooden pillars that support the traditional Romanian homes, symbolizing an ideal diagram of the infinite.

A second source of influence stated by Dejanoff in the conception of his work is **Donald Judd's** Chinati Foundation created in the 1970s in Marfa, Texas, one of the world's most spectacular collections of environmental

art. The American artist founded an artist colony there to promote the creation of works that are incompatible with normal exhibition venues and museums.

Plamen Dejanoff seems to want to undertake an analogously challenging venture with his decision to found **a surprising and unexpected cultural microcosm** in the outlying city of Veliko Tarnovo. In spite of its great historical importance (it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the city offers little in terms of attractions and appears not to have progressed in its urban design since the day when Le Corbusier made drawings of it. Dejanoff chose to conduct his experiments here, in this peripheral place, devoid of any meaning that could reasonably produce consensus legitimizing its existence within the contemporary system of art and culture. He undertakes **a sophisticated action of branding**, not lacking in irony, to make the city among one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Bulgaria under the slogan "Where the future meets the past".

The conceptual process that led the artist to design a model of the political economy of art, mirroring society and current artistic conventions, is resolved in the creation of a highly evocative **total work of art**. It sparks reflection on issues such as the mechanisms and purposes of museums in occupying ideological spaces, and the implications of an artist hosting a museum rather than vice-versa.

We will not know if Plamen Dejanoff's gamble on bringing about a process to create recognized value in the current world art system can ultimately be successful until this revolutionary project is complete and functional.

The exhibition concludes with architectural **models and prototypes, sketches, drawings, and collages** that provide an in-depth illustration of the various preliminary phases of development of the work, as well as a number of **installations** that lie somewhere **between conceptual and hyper-pop** imaginary art: toys, dogs, vacuum cleaners, flowers, wheels, and furnishings bearing the "Dejanoff" trademark and appearing more like a typical sales display than an exhibition of works of art in a museum.

To mark the exhibition an **Instant Book** has been published by Edizioni MAMbo in a bilingual edition (Italian / English) containing an essay by Gianfranco Maraniello with excerpt's from Plamen Dejanoff's letters, accompanied by an extensive iconographic apparatus.



During the entire period that the exhibition is open, the **MAMbo Educational Department** will offer guided visits and dedicated activities. For information or reservations: ph. (+39) 051 6496652 (Monday-Friday, 10 am – 1 pm) or (+39) 051 6496611 (Saturday-Sunday, 10 am – 5 pm).

The exhibition dedicated to Plamen Dejanoff is part of the program titled *Criticism* that MAMbo has conducted since 2006. Embodying study and critical thinking on artistic practices and the role of the contemporary museum, the program has involved such artists 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 Haghighian, Trisha Donnelly, Sarah Morris, Seth Price, Matthew Day Jackson, and Marcel Broodthaers.

The exhibition will be open to the public on Thursday, May 31 in a **free opening day** from 12 pm to 6 pm. This will be followed by a free-admission **vernissage** event from 7 pm to 9 pm.

For further information:
www.mambo-bologna.org

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LIST OF WORKS

The Bronze House, 2012
cardboard and wood
urban model
120 x 120 x 20 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

The Bronze House (collage I), 2012
bronze on paper
21 x 29 cm
MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

The Bronze House (collage II), 2012
bronze on paper
21 x 29 cm
MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

The Bronze House (collage III), 2012
bronze on paper
21 x 29 cm
MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

The Bronze House (collage IV), 2012
bronze on paper
21 x 29 cm
MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

The Bronze House (collage V), 2012
bronze on paper
16 x 20 cm
MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

The Bronze House, 2012
bronze
facade elements
100 x 70 x 10 each
Studio Plamen Dejanoff & The Bronze House Foundation

The Bronze House, 2012

bronze
facade elements
100 x 70 x 10 each
Studio Plamen Dejanoff & The Bronze House Foundation

The Bronze House, 2007-2012

bronze
160 facade elements
h 500 x 630 x 490 cm (total dimension of the installation)
Studio Plamen Dejanoff & The Bronze House Foundation

New Works (Flower), 2007

marble
4 pz 10 x 100 x 100 cm each
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Pinksummer, Genova

The Bronze House, 2012

bronze
facade elements
100 x 70 x 10 cm each
Studio Plamen Dejanoff & The Bronze House Foundation

The Bronze House (collage VI), 2012

bronze on paper
16 x 20 cm
MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

New Works (Flower), 2007

marble
3 pz 10 x 100 x 100 cm each
Private collection, Savona
Courtesy Pinksummer, Genoa

The Bronze House, 2011-2012

bronze
4 floor elements
120 x 120 x 7 cm each
Studio Plamen Dejanoff & The Bronze House Foundation

The Bronze House, 2012
bronze
20 facade elements
300 x 40 x 280 cm
Angermaiz Collection, Wien

New Works (Wheel I), 2007
bronze
22 x 47 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

New Works (Wheel II), 2007
bronze
22 x 47 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Pinksummer, Genoa

New Works (Dog), 2007
bronze
58 x 64 x 35 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Wien

New Works (Dog), 2007
marble
58 x 64 x 35 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Pinksummer, Genoa

Neue Arbeiten (Hoover), 2007
bronze
90 x 60 x 30 cm
Ernst Ploil, Wien

Neue Arbeiten (Hoover), 2007
bronze
100 x 60 x 30 cm
Hainz Collection, Wien

The Bronze House (Study a), 2007 – 2012
sandstone
100 x 80 x 12 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Wien

The Bronze House (Study b), 2007 – 2012
sandstone
100 x 80 x 12 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Wien

The Bronze House (IX), 2006
bronze on paper
71 x 54 cm
Private collection, Genoa

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronze on canvas
43 x 43 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronze on canvas
80 x 60 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronzosu tela
30 x 40 cm
Collection Karla M. Valdés Rodríguez & Gerald Pail

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronze on canvas
70 x 60 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronze on canvas
40 x 40 cm
Alexander Serda Collection

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronze on canvas
10 x 10 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronze on canvas
40 x 95 cm
Collection Aldo & Trude Milli, Salisburgo

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronze on canvas
40 x 40 cm
Collezione Palmieri

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronze on canvas
30 x 50 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

The Bronze House (Alloying), 2010–2011
bronze on canvas
110 x 50 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

Planets of Comparison (Lights), 2010
ceramic and glass
60 x 30 cm
Private collection, Wien

The Bronze Theatre, 2011
pencil and bronze on paper
41 x 28 cm
Mora Art Foundation, FL

The Bronze Theatre (I), 2011
wood and tempera
model
16 x 68 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Wien

The Bronze Library, 2011
pencil and bronze on paper
41 x 28 cm
Mora Art Foundation, FL

The Bronze Library (I), 2011
wood and tempera
model
26 x 60 x 40 cm
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Courtesy Galerie Emanuel Layr, Wien

Planets of comparison (Bricks), 2011
bronze, ebony and surrogate crystal
variable dimensions
M. Kamler Collection

The Bronze House (Cover), 2010
bronze on photographic paper
25 x 23 cm
Private collection, Berlin

Planets of Comparison (Bricks), 2007
bronze, chestnut wood and marble
variable dimensions
Palmieri Collection

The Bronze House (Schöwel), 2010
lava
study model
70 x 100 x 70 cm
Private collection, Berlin

The Bronze House (I), 2010

lava

study model

59 x 90 x 60 cm

Artelier Collection, Graz

The Bronze House (I), 2011

bronze

study model

13 x 90 x 65 cm

Kontakt. The Art Collection of Erste Bank

The Bronze House (b&gg), 2011

bronze

study model

70 x 90 x 65 cm

Private collection, Wien

The Bronze House (Hainz), 2010

lava

study model

73 x 97 x 65 cm

Hainz Collection, Wien

The Bronze House, 2011

pencil and bronze on paper

41 x 28 cm

Mora Art Foundation, FL

SHORT BIO

Plamen Dejanoff was born in 1970 in Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria). He currently lives and works in Vienna.

He has held solo exhibitions in such venues as: Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna (2012); Kunsthal Antwerp (2012); Kunstverein, Hamburg (2011); Hafencity, Hamburg (2011); MAK Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art of Vienna (2010); Pinksummer, Genoa (2010); MNAC National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest (2009); Galerie Nicola Von Senger, Zurich (2008); Jan Winckelmann, Berlin (2007); MUMOK Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation, Vienna (2006); Gallery Space, Bratislava (2005); La Salle de Bains, Lyon (2004); Quarantine Series, Amsterdam (2003); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2002).

His works have also been featured in a number of collective exhibitions, including: *Deutsche Geschichten*, GFZK Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig (2007); *Shanghai Biennale*, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai (2006); *FASTER! BIGGER! BETTER!*, ZKM, Karlsruhe (2006); *Who's to follow?*, De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam (2004); *Prague Biennale*, Prague (2003); *Berlin Biennale*, KW, Berlin (2001); *Encounters*, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo (2001); *The Constructing of an Image/Germany*, Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena (2001); *Expanded Design*, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (1999); *Dream City*, Kunstverein München, Munich (1999); *After the Wall*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1999).



MAMbo is supported by:



Partnership with:



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Galerie Emanuel Layr, Wien
Pinksummer, Genoa
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CMS Reich-Rohrwig Hainz, Sofia e Wien
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Kontakt. The Art Collection of Erste Group
Mora Art Foundation, FL
The Bronze House Foundation
Studio Plamen Dejanoff
Angermair Collection, Wien
Artelier Collection, Graz
Hainz Collection, Wien
Collection Aldo & Trudi Mili, Salzburg
Karla M. Valdés Rodríguez & Gerald Pail Collection
Collezione Palmieri
Ernst Ploil, Wien
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together with all the other lenders who have preferred to remain anonymous



TECHNICAL SHEET

Title:	Plamen Dejanoff. <i>The Bronze House</i>
Curator:	Gianfranco Maraniello
Exhibition venue:	MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna via Don Minzoni 14 – Bologna
Exhibition dates:	1 June – 9 September 2012
Opening hours:	Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 12 pm – 6 pm Thursday, Saturday, Sunday, holidays 12 pm – 8 pm
Admission:	full price € 6; reduced price € 4
Information:	ph. +39 051 6496611 – fax +39 051 6496600 info@mambo-bologna.org www.mambo-bologna.org
Guided Visits Educational Department	for groups booking is obligatory ph. +39 051 6496652 / 611 mamboedu@comune.bologna.it special guided visit € 4 for person guided visits for groups (max 30 people) € 80 visits in other languages € 100
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