

THE REGGIA DI CASERTA HOSTS MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO

From November 27 to June 30, the "Metawork" exhibition in the Gran Galleria will explore the artist's revolutionary reflections on art and society, offering a journey through his visionary concepts of "metamorphosis" and "interconnection."

Over sixty works by Michelangelo Pistoletto (Biella, 1933) will invade the rooms of the Gran Galleria at the Reggia di Caserta for the next seven months.

From November 27 to June 30, the museum, managed by the Ministry of Culture and a UNESCO World Heritage site, will host one of Italy's most prolific and influential contemporary artists, a key figure in the radical renewal of artistic language and a protagonist of the Arte Povera movement.

The exhibition, entitled *Metawork*, takes its name from the piece *Metawork-United Portraits*, which will be presented for the first time at this event. Created using photographic portraits of eight citizens of Cittadellarte, the work recombines these portraits through artificial intelligence, enabling the shift that defines Pistoletto's work, from the individual dimension to the collective one, a theme already present in his *Mirror Paintings*.

The exhibition is produced by the Museo Reggia di Caserta and Opera Laboratori, in collaboration with Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto and Galleria Continua, and provides a profound exploration into the visionary concepts of "metamorphosis" and "interconnection" that characterize the artist's work.

"This is a significant exhibition that, through its multiplicity, enhances several themes consistent with our museum's mission," states Tiziana Maffei, curator of the exhibition and director of the Reggia di Caserta. "The common thread with *Terrae Motus* continuously brings the Reggia into the realm of contemporary art, through the artists involved at the time. Attention to dialogue and art in this space, which serves as a platform for international diplomacy based on cultural exchange, the circulation of ideas, reflections, experimentation, and innovation, finds here a persistent reference. Finally, it is a metaphorical tribute to the work the Reggia carries out with dedication, generating creative, technical, and material energy every day. I thank Maestro Michelangelo Pistoletto and the various contributors to this project for having accepted the invitation of the Reggia. The Gran Galleria continues its journey of building meaningful content, expanding its cultural offerings within a rich network of relationships."

Among the themes explored is the relationship between art and spirituality, with *Il Tempo del Giudizio* (The Time of Judgment). Displayed in the west wing of the Royal Palace, this work presents a temple that brings together the principal monotheistic religions—Christianity, Islam, and Judaism—and Buddhism. Each religion is symbolized by an object placed in front of a mirror: a prayer bench, a prayer rug, a statue of Buddha.

Michelangelo Pistoletto's art is open to dialogue and exchange. It is a continuous, evolving research aimed at restoring the connection between the artistic experience and the external world. Encounter and dialogue are the focus of many of his works, which emerge from an aesthetic based on relationship and participation. The intent is to push the boundaries of the work, bringing art into life and life into art.

In 2003, Pistoletto presented the *Love Difference* project at the Venice Biennale—a large mirror table shaped like the Mediterranean basin, surrounded by chairs donated by the countries bordering the Mediterranean. This became the symbol of *Love Difference*.

Two years later, he created the first installation of *Love Difference*, in which the slogan was displayed in various languages using neon tubes of different colors on the facade of a building that housed the popular multi-ethnic market in Piazza della Repubblica in Turin. This installation was later re-proposed on several other occasions.

"*Love Difference* is a name, a slogan, a programmatic statement. The movement unites the universality of art with the idea of transnational politics, focusing on the Mediterranean area as it reflects the issues of global society. On the one hand, the differences between ethnicities, religions, and cultures today cause terrible conflicts; on the other, there is a dramatic situation created by the supremacy of powers that produce uniformity and the leveling of differences... Uniformity and difference are the two antagonistic terms that represent the greatest tension in today's planetary reality. A politics that leads us to love differences is vital for the development of new perspectives within the entire social fabric." (Pistoletto, *Love Difference Manifesto*, 2002)

Also featured at the Reggia di Caserta is the 2020 series *Messa a Nudo* (Undressed), in which the subjects are shown without clothes—different and unique. Free from preconceived notions, the human figure is depicted in its full aesthetic form and is used by the artist to reflect a segment of society. Each individual is shown as equal in the face of the beauty of diversity, whether ethnic, cultural, or religious. Overcoming the borders defined by the pictorial dimension represents, for Pistoletto, an opening to a landscape that connects to the contemporary human condition.

Divisione Moltiplicazione - Terzo Paradiso (Division Multiplication - Third Paradise) is part of the series *Divisione e Moltiplicazione dello Specchio* (Division and Multiplication of the Mirror), which originated from the observation that a mirror can reflect anything except itself. On the eight pairs of mirrors that form the work, the symbol of the Third Paradise is depicted—an altered version of the mathematical symbol for infinity. Between the two circles that represent the opposing poles of nature and artifice, Pistoletto inserts a third circle, representing the generative womb of a new humanity. This is seen as the ideal overcoming of the destructive conflict between nature and artifice in contemporary society.

Also included in the exhibition are works from the *Mirror Paintings* series, including *QR Code Possession - Autoritratto* (Self-Portrait) and *ConTatto*. In the first, twelve QR codes are tattooed onto a frontal image of the artist's body—technology Pistoletto has employed since 2019. These codes link to images and texts related to various moments of his artistic research. In the second, a famous scene from Western art, *The Creation of Adam* by Michelangelo, is reinterpreted in silkscreen. However, in Pistoletto's version, it is not the touch of God's hand that generates Adam's creation, but the process of mirror division and multiplication, which creates life solely from the human hand. In *QR Code Possession - The Formula of Creation Meetings* (2023), twenty

MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO MetaWork ALLA REGGIA DI CASERTA

GRAN GALLERIA DAL 27 NOVEMBRE 2024 AL 30 GIUGNO 2025

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QR codes, painted on twenty large canvases resembling abstract paintings, link to video recordings of twenty meetings in which Pistoletto discussed his book *The Formula of Creation* with representatives from the worlds of art, politics, science, and religion.

Also on display in the Gran Galleria is *Il Labirinto* (The Labyrinth), an iconic work of Arte Povera, particularly for its use of cardboard. It was first presented at Pistoletto's solo exhibition at the Boymans Museum in Amsterdam in 1969.

"The labyrinth is a highly symbolic place. The legend of the Minotaur represents the monster that lives within us, and the possibility that at certain points in our personal or collective lives, we will be forced to confront ourselves. My labyrinth is made of corrugated cardboard, a flexible material that allows it to take any form and adapt to any space. In a sense, it is like the mirror, which accepts any image. It presents itself as a physical element that is also strongly connected to imagination." (Pistoletto, interview with G. Celant in *Michelangelo Pistoletto. The Mirror of Judgement*, exhibition catalog, Serpentine Gallery, London, 2011)

Visiting the exhibition is included in the price of admission to the Museo Reggia di Caserta. Tickets are available for purchase at the ticket office located in Piazza Carlo di Borbone or online via Ticketone.

For further information, please visit the museum's official website:

<https://reggiadicaserta.cultura.gov.it/mostre>.

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