

RACCOGLIERE PAROLE

14.09.2024 – 26.01.2025

Opening Saturday 14 September 2024 | 18.00 – 24.00

Galleria Continua is pleased to host in its San Gimignano spaces the exhibition by Sabrina Mezzaqui titled *"Raccogliere parole"* (Collecting words). Held on the ground floor of the former cinema theater where the gallery is located, the exhibition features a substantial number of works, mostly new and created over the past year.

Sabrina Mezzaqui draws inspiration from the evocative and symbolic power of words, translating them into plastic forms. Her artistic practice involves cutting, recomposing, and returning shards of life, fragments of thoughts, and visions, aiming for a natural harmony. Her work is characterized by a dialogic, interpretive approach that generates partial epiphanies for sharing. Her pieces crystallize the passage of time through a manual process fueled by repeated gestures; they often include writing, small texts, memories, and literary references. Her gestures and marks are immersed in the temporal suspension of ritual: *"I use writing, both mine and others', as a tool for meditation, description, and planning. Writing and reading are practices that nourish my life and work. They are ways to organize the vortex of thoughts, focus attention, promote coherence, seek truth, and let go"* the artist affirms.

In Sabrina Mezzaqui's artistic practice, words become the plot, moving in and out of the paper pages, building a dense relationship between literature and daily practice, manual and intellectual work, and the inner and outer worlds. The book, a symbolic element around which her research revolves, is a doubly precious object: both a container and a tool

for acquiring knowledge, as well as a crafted artifact resulting from specific artisanal skill. *"Practice"* the artist explains, *"is a word with its own concreteness, almost material. It indicates possibilities for realization. It pertains to action, to doing. Putting into practice requires consistency and is nourished by routine. My work is based on simple, repetitive practices such as folding, rolling, cutting, sketching, perforating, threading, marking, underlining, writing, tracing, copying, shading, erasing, cutting out, tearing, walking, embroidering, knotting, photographing, counting, waiting, doodling, reorganizing, annotating, flipping through, noting, making mistakes, repeating (...). These are exercises in attention that I also share with others. Practice fosters knowledge, develops skills, induces meditative silence. Practice transforms thought into experience."*

For Sabrina Mezzaqui, time is both a space of solitude that accompanies the creative act and a space of shared gestures to be performed together, where the repetitive, domestic and silent actions that characterize her research define the sense of the necessary encounter with the other. *"EN - Plotinus's Table"* the work displayed on the stage of the former cinema, contains thousands of cut-out words (from various collective work sessions held in San Gimignano and Maccastorna) from small groups of people interested in sharing with the artist the reading of some pages from Plotinus's *Enneads* and experiencing a research and work method based on slowness, patience, repetition, and silence. Behind the table are black-and-white images captured by Paolo Carraro's camera during the meetings, and from the ceiling hang nine

threads made of paper and beads.

The transience of what surrounds us and the fragility of the human condition are themes that frequently emerge in Sabrina Mezzaqui's works, such as in *"C'è un tacito accordo tra le mie matite e gli alberi là fuori"*, a series of drawings titled after a poem by Nina Cassian on solitude, reproducing partially erased mandalas. *"In Buddhist and Tibetan practice, mandalas are created with dust, resulting from patient and slow actions, but the associated ritual is completed in an instant and leads to the destruction of what was carefully made. In this work, the act of erasure is integrated into the artwork with the same dignity as the artistic gesture, representing the contrast between the slowness of careful preparation and the immediacy of the end, a metaphor for life where everything is impermanent"* explains the artist.

The installation Sabrina Mezzaqui has conceived for the auditorium seems like an image stolen from the pages of a fairy tale: three swings and five books by Mariangela Gualtieri (*Senza polvere senza peso, Bestia di gioia, Le giovani parole, Quando non morivo, Ruvido umano*) bound in red fabric and decorated inside are anchored to the ceiling of the large theater. Under each swing is inscribed a word: non; niente; poco (none; nothing; little).

A few days before the exhibition opening, Sabrina Mezzaqui, accompanied by a small group of friends, will walk a stretch of the Via Francigena from Pistoia to San Gimignano. The words, thoughts, silences, images, and wonders they encounter on their journey, combined with a poem by Mariangela Gualtieri, will contribute to an evolving work placed in the gallery, *"Raccogliere parole/ Il tavolo della poesia"*. During the exhibition, spontaneous composition workshops will also be held monthly. Participants, using phrases and words provided on the table, will create compositions that, once embellished with beads, thread, and small colored cutouts, will be added to the installation in progress.

About the artist:

Sabrina Mezzaqui was born in Bologna in 1964. She lives and works in Marzabotto (BO). Recent exhibitions include: *"Di punto in bianco,"* Galleria Continua, Paris, France (2023); *"L'incorruttibile ricamo,"* Fondazione Luigi Rovati, Padiglione d'arte, Milan (2023); *"Fare piano"* Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Stockholm, SE (2022); *"L'abilità di mutare con le circostanze"* Fondazione del Monte, Oratorio San Filippo Neri, ART CITY Bologna (2021); Terravecchia - Toccacieloscolora, *"Una boccata d'arte"* Pisticci (MT); *"Della morte e del*

morire: La vulnerabilità delle cose preziose" Tenuta dello Scompiglio, Vorno (2019). She has exhibited in public spaces in Italy and abroad, including: Museo Civico d'Arte, Modena; Triennale, Milan; MAXXI, Rome; Museion, Bolzano; Mambo, Bologna; Istituto Italiano di Cultura - MOCA, Buenos Aires, Argentina; GAM - Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin; Bengal Art Lounge, Dhaka, Bangladesh; PS1, New York; INOVA, Milwaukee - WI; Musée Art Moderne, Saint-Etienne; One Severn Street, Birmingham; RAID Projects Gallery, Los Angeles.

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About the gallery:

Founded in 1990 in San Gimignano, Italy, GALLERIA CONTINUA has expanded its locations to Beijing, Les Moulins, Havana, São Paulo, Rome, Paris and Dubai. GALLERIA CONTINUA represents a desire for continuity between times and a desire to write a current history. Thanks to its investment in forgotten and unconventional sites, the gallery has always chosen unexpected locations, developing a strong identity and an original positioning in over thirty years of activity. The home of Galleria Continua, an ex-cinema, has hosted many prolific exhibitions and installations over the last 34 years. It is a unique and exciting space for artists and the gallery to have to consider when planning and executing exhibitions.

GALLERIA CONTINUA / San Gimignano

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From Monday to Sunday: 10 AM-1 PM | 2 PM-7 PM;
Starting from 03.11, from Monday to Sunday:
10 AM-1 PM | 2 PM-6 PM

For further information about the exhibition and photographic material:
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