

MAXXI L'AQUILA PRESENTS
A NIGHT DIARY
OF DREAMS, NIGHTMARES AND IMAGINARY BESTIARIES

Works by **Bea Bonafini, Thomas Braidà, Guglielmo Castelli, Giulia Cenci, Caterina De Nicola, Anna Franceschini, Diego Marcon, Valerio Nicolai, Numero Cromatico, Wangechi Mutu, Agnes Questionmark, Jon Rafman and Alice Visentin.**

Together with the special project *Giuseppe Stampone and photographs of Scanno from the Franco and Serena Pomilio Collection* by **Henri Cartier-Bresson, Mario Giacomelli, Hilde Lotz-Bauer, Gianni Berengo Gardin, Mimmo Jodice and Ferdinando Scianna.**

Open to the public 3 December 2023 – 3 March 2024
Opening Saturday 2 December 2023

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L'Aquila, 2 December 2023 – MAXXI L'Aquila is inaugurating *Diario notturno, Di sogni, incubi e bestiarì immaginari* (A night diary, of dreams, nightmares and imaginary bestiaries), a group exhibition curated by **Bartolomeo Pietromarchi** together with **Chiara Bertini and Fanny Borel**, featuring works by **Bea Bonafini, Thomas Braidà, Guglielmo Castelli, Giulia Cenci, Caterina De Nicola, Anna Franceschini, Diego Marcon, Wangechi Mutu, Valerio Nicolai, Numero Cromatico, Agnes Questionmark, Jon Rafman, Alice Visentin**, and a special project by **Giuseppe Stampone** in dialogue with Scanno's photographs from the **Franco and Serena Pomilio Collection**. The set-up project is by **Benedetto Turcano**.

The exhibition, whose title pays homage to *Diario notturno* (i.e. Night diary, 1956), one of Ennio Flaiano's literary masterpieces, houses the works of thirteen international artists born in the last thirty years of the last century, as part of an itinerary that invites visitors to inhabit dreams and explore the nightmares of the present. Within a contemporaneity characterised by constant transformations, the artists involved propose a common imaginative, ironic or perturbing approach, which, borrowing a term referring to artificial intelligence, could be defined as 'generative'.

In continuity with the dreamlike, visionary atmosphere of the works exhibited in the first rooms, the exhibition includes a special project by **Giuseppe Stampone**, which reinterprets some significant places in the region of Abruzzo through drawings on paper and wood. The works then establish a dialogue with the photographs of the picturesque village of Scanno from the Franco and Serena Pomilio Collection, as taken by **Henri Cartier-Bresson, Mario Giacomelli, Hilde Lotz-Bauer, Gianni Berengo Gardin, Mimmo Jodice and Ferdinando Scianna**. Said images provide a glimpse of the daily life of one of the most representative villages in Abruzzo, with particular attention to the industriousness of the women, whose traditional clothes are clearly recognisable.

In the words of curator **Bartolomeo Pietromarchi**, "In *Diario notturno. Di sogni, incubi e bestiarì immaginari*, we have brought together artists who stand as the vanguard of a new aesthetic understanding of the increasingly complex dynamics of today's world. Their art is profoundly influenced by the digital environment but is not necessarily technological; it questions the transformations and anthropological and cultural changes taking place. The result is works in which unprecedented scenarios are pervaded by visionary, perturbing forms and situations, in which animal and plant species are grafted with fossil, digital and technological ones, creating new hybrids, and in which dreamlike migrations overturn the planes between reality and fiction. Lastly, the exhibition pays

homage to Abruzzo and its narrative capacity, which can be appreciated in the work realised by Giuseppe Stampone.”

Until 7 January 2023, the dreamlike atmosphere of *Diario Notturmo* will interact with the works of honorary L’Aquila citizen **Tiziana Fusari** (1951-2012) and her imaginary, ironic, magical works, which are populated by fantastic creatures, word games, memories and recollections, in the Museum’s Project Room. The set-up is part of *La Comédie Humaine di Tiziana Fusari* (Tiziana Fusari’s *La Comédie Humaine*), a diffuse exhibition resulting from the collaboration between MAXXI L’Aquila and Fondazione Giorgio Bonanni Onlus in L’Aquila.

Exhibition itinerary

Starting from the staircase leading to the main floor of Palazzo Ardinghelli, enigmatic figures welcome visitors: witness **Anna Franceschini’s** *The Stuffed Shirt Chorus*, an ‘anthropomorphic shirt ironer’ central to a choreography programmed by the artist through an algorithm, and **Giulia Cenci’s** *The oldest* and *Macello*, two sculptures with biomorphic forms grafted into artificial prostheses that animate the windowed corridor and introduce the large Baroque rooms with their rich fireplaces. The first room houses **Valerio Nicolai’s** ironic, cryptic, melancholic universe with the three paintings *Castello in corridoio* (i.e. Castle in the corridor), *Due battitori e un pollo bis / Pollo in acquario* (i.e. Two batters and a chicken bis / Chicken in the tank), *Poveri fichi* (i.e. Poor figs), all rebuses without clear solutions in which fantastic architectural elements are immersed in a general nonsense context. The canvases are in dialogue with photographic works by **Caterina De Nicola** and two surreal sculptures from the series *Yet Another Unrealistic Standard*, in which the elements made by the artist constitute an expedient to reconfigure a mannequin, generally the expression of a standardised body canon.

In the second of the Baroque rooms, visitors enter a marine dimension inhabited by **Bea Bonafini’s** work *I Carry You Inside Me* – a whale skeleton alluding to mythological elements accompanied by details of the human body, a reflection on the sharing of ecosystems between different species and the cycles of nature – and the sculpture *Draco Piscis*, an alter ego of artist **Agnes Questionmark**, which bears witness to her research on *homo aquaticus*, an aquatic creature with a changing identity and fluid form.

In the central hall of the Museum, **Numero Cromatico** presents the new interactive and traversable work *Resterai con me per tutta la notte* (i.e. You will stay with me all night), produced and conceived for this exhibition – a large tent featuring 80 ‘anthropomorphic pictograms’ recalling cave paintings, the archetype of every expressive language, and alluding to shadows as projections of the unconscious.

The room adjoining the Aviary is inhabited by the figures of **Guglielmo Castelli**, who evokes an existential, solitary, puerile, dystopian world that we find in the sculpture *Childhood shows the man*, in the highly refined canvas *Dressage* and in *Truth diminishes and illusion increases*. A soft voice draws visitors into the next room: it is *Ludwig* by **Diego Marcon**, a blond-haired child trapped in a short, obsessive loop that repeats itself endlessly.

Yet another video animation, *The End of Eating Everything* by **Wangechi Mutu** welcomes visitors to another of the small rooms adjoining the Aviary, proposing a reflection on the theme of the unregulated exploitation of the Earth’s resources, starring singer Santigold. The work’s disturbing sounds introduce the surreal and ironic bestiary of **Thomas Braidia’s** dreamlike drawings.

It is right in the middle of the *Diario Notturmo* exhibition itinerary that the special project **Giuseppe Stampone and the photographs of Scanno from the Franco and Serena Pomilio collection** is inserted, which brings together a series of new works by the artist from Abruzzo conceived and produced for this occasion, as well as a selection of historical photographs of Scanno from the Pomilio collection, as taken since the beginning of the last century by internationally renowned photographers such as **Gianni Berengo Gardin**, **Henri Cartier-Bresson**, **Hilde Lotz-Bauer**, **Mimmo Jodice** and **Ferdinando Scianna** and **Mario Giacomelli**. Giacomelli’s *Scanno Boy*, which has become part of the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, is also present.

The photographs provide Stampone with the pretext for a metaphysical and surreal dialogue that,

taking elements and characters from those images, freely re-contextualises them in his famous domestic interiors, as reproduced in the manner of 17th-century Flemish painting. Inspired by facts, chronicles, history and popular culture of the profound transformation that took place in the Fucino plain, the artist from Abruzzo proposes a new narrative that attempts “to annul the didactic sequential space-time of history” and establish new and surprising connections of meaning.

Diario notturno returns with its suggestions in the last rooms: visitors are projected into the deep web with **Jon Rafman**'s immersive video installation ***Counterfeit Poasts***, and then led, through **Alice Visentin**'s installation ***Planète***, into an original constellation in which reality is magically in motion and takes on different identities through the combination of images and words.

Closing the exhibition itinerary are the three kinetic sculptures ***The Lady Vanishes In A Triangular Reflection, The Witness, and Smooth Operators n.4*** by **Anna Franceschini**, who animates common objects, giving substance to a reflection on the hybridisation of man and machine, the natural and the artificial, and evokes the great tradition of celibate machines and automata.

Opening Hours

Diario Notturmo can be visited on Thursdays from 9 am to 1 pm and from Fridays to Sundays from 11 am to 7 pm. For the Christmas period, i.e. from 21 December 2023 to 7 January 2024, MAXXI L'Aquila will be open every day from 11 am to 7 pm, with the exception of 24 and 31 December (open 10 am to 1 pm) and 25 December (closed).

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