

MARINELLA SENATORE PER NAPOLI IO CONTEGO MOLTITUDINI

Naples, Rotonda Diaz
from 25 July to 24 October 2024
edited by Vincenzo Trione

Press release

On 25 July, in Naples the first event open *Napoli Contemporanea 2024*, the programme of exhibitions and installations promoted by Mayor Gaetano Manfredi and curated by Vincenzo Trione, the mayor's advisor for contemporary art and museum activities.

The programme promoted by the Municipality of Naples in 2023 had as its protagonists Antonio Marras at the Rampe del Salvatore and Vico San Pietro a Majella, Michelangelo Pistoletto in Piazza Municipio and Francesco Vezzoli in the prisons of Castel Nuovo. Now, for the 2024 edition, it is being financed by the Campania Region with funds from the Complementary Operative Programme.

Aimed at strengthening the city's vocation for contemporary art with projects designed specifically for public spaces as protagonists of the art of our time, the *Napoli contemporanea* programme creates a direct relationship with the citizens. Thanks to works by outstanding artists, both national and international and of different generations, and their works in squares, streets, cloisters and neighbourhoods of the city, the project has helped trigger processes of urban redevelopment and a rethinking of the identity of some parts of the city through the "irregular weapons" of art and the visionary gazes of some artists.

The organisation and communication are by the publisher Electa.

Senatore for Naples

Marinella Senatore has been invited to intervene in another symbolic location of the city, the **Rotonda Diaz** on the Neapolitan seafront, with the installation entitled *Io contengo moltitudini*.

It is a luminous diptych conceived in dialogue with the square, overlooking the seafront. **Two light sculptures united by a dancefloor, a space inviting collective participation.**

The first sculpture reproduces the structure of a choir inspired by ephemeral Baroque scenes; the second, at the base, has a square platform, on which stands a tree-like construction consisting of 16 signs arranged in a cone. Recovering expressions from the vernacular tradition, some signs display phrases selected together with associations and school groups. The two works are connected by a platform composed of a dance-carpet crossed by footprints and dance steps.

The installation insists on some recurrent themes in **Marinella Senatore's** poetics, such as the use of light as an activating and cohesive element and the involvement of communities, celebrating the close



Organizzazione e comunicazione

Electa

Si ringrazia



connection with the Neapolitan area in partnership with institutions such as the Accademia di Belle Arti and the Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Melissa Bassi of Scampia.

Like Pistoletto's monumental *Venus of Rags*, which the artist chose to donate to the city, the choir designed by Marinella Senatore for Naples will also become part of the city's heritage.

"Thanks to the project by Marinella Senatore, *Napoli Contemporanea* confirms itself as an exhibition built up out of the dialogue between great Italian artists and citizens, redeveloping our urban spaces in the name of art," says Mayor Manfredi.

"My research into illuminations," Senatore declares, "stems from their more social and political significance. Even before being used as decorative elements during religious festivals, illuminations in their most pagan significance embodied the idea of assembling, of gathering."

"Marinella Senatore sees making art as a way of engaging in politics by other means. A policy inspired by the idea of the *vita activa* as represented by Arendt in a now classic book, in which action is described as the original character of human life," says Trione.

Biography of the artist

Trained in music, fine arts and cinema, Marinella Senatore (1977) is a multidisciplinary artist, whose practice rests on the centrality of public involvement and the dialogue between history, culture and the social structures. Characterised by a strong participatory dimension, her work merges forms of resistance and local dialects with popular culture, dance, music, mass events and activism. Through various moments of encounter, Senatore reconsiders the political nature of collective formations and offers the public an opportunity to generate possible social changes.

In 2012 Senatore established the School of Narrative Dance (SOND), a nomadic, free and non-hierarchical academy, which offers an alternative educational system based on self-education. With SOND, the artist creates platforms that invite non-professional members of the community to form collective movements and *site-specific* storytelling activities, in line with the rituals of public festivals and protests. The school's activities vary according to the spaces that host them. So far, they have been held in over 23 countries, involving some 7 million people.

The artist has taken part in the following contemporary art biennials: São Paulo Biennial, Venice Biennale, Lyon Biennial, Thessaloniki Biennial, Liverpool Biennial, Athens Biennial, Havana Biennial, Gothenburg Biennial, Cuenca Biennial, Pune Biennial, South Tyrol Biennial, Bangkok Biennial and Manifesta 12 in Palermo.

Senatore has received numerous accolades, including: the Premio ACACIA 2021, the Premio Cantica 21 Italian Contemporary Art Everywhere, the Premio Cinello Unlimited, the prize of the Italian Council (4th and 7th editions) Premio MAXXI and AMACI (Associazione dei Musei d'Arte Contemporanea Italiani), American Academy in Rome, Fellowship 2012 and Castello di Rivoli Fellowship in 2013.

Since 2021 she is the only European artist to teach at The Alternative Art School (TAAS).

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The art work

An art installation that is neither finished nor museum-like, but alive and open, waiting to be inhabited, lived by us. A diptych in dialogue with the Rotonda Diaz, overlooking the Naples waterfront. Two luminous sculptures connected by a dance floor, inspired by the ephemeral scenography of baroque festivals and the tradition of illuminations widespread in Southern Italy.

A choir, with vague religious references. And a square platform, on which stands a tree composed of signs arranged in a cone, with phrases selected together with associations and schools (among others, the Academy of Fine Arts and the Melissa Bassi High School of Scampia): quotations and words reported in various languages, alluding to the multicultural richness of the city.

The two parts of this work are connected by a platform. A carpet marked by dance steps: the imprints that have survived the experiences matured within the School of Narrative Dance, the important participatory project initiated in 2012 by the artist, promoting emancipation, self-learning, and empowerment.

Taken from a famous line by the great American poet Walt Whitman – "I contain multitudes" – the title of this installation refers to a precise philosophy of art.

Aiming to safeguard a narrative dimension, Marinella Senatore conceives her work as a hybrid space in which sculpture, theater, music, dance, poetry, performance, history, cultures, and social structures converge. An engaging public ceremony, born from the exchange with local communities.

A civil rite, founded on the intertwining of art and activism. Inscribing herself in the cartography of "artivism," attentive to combining testimony and commitment, Senatore conceives her craft as the "written language of reality," to quote Pasolini. A highly militant moment: a way to engage in politics using the unconventional tools of art.

Whitman's line, however, seems to evoke something else as well. It refers to the plural soul of Naples, wonderfully contradictory. Culture and Nature. Beauty and Hell.

Harmony and Dissonance. Avant-garde and Nostalgia. Distant terms that, by magic, in this city, meet, blend, and fade into each other. Like in a Rubik's cube, caught a moment before being solved.

vincenzo trione