

GALLERIA RAFFAELLA CORTESE

PRESS RELEASE

FRANCESCO ARENA sette, uno, quattro



Francesco Arena

via a.stradella 1-4-7

opening reception thursday, september 24, 7.00 - 9.00 pm
september 24 | november 21, 2015
tuesday - saturday 10.00 am-1.00 pm | 3.00-7.30 pm and by appointment

Galleria Raffaella Cortese is proud to open the new season with a solo show by Francesco Arena. For his first exhibition at the gallery, Italian artist will realize three new projects conceived and designed for the three exhibition spaces, whose street number gives the exhibition its title: *sette, uno, quattro* (seven, one, four).

In the space at n. 1 Arena shows three sculptures in polished bronze, self-portraits in which the artist emphasizes the length of his beard after 57, 110 and 210 days of growth. The passing of time is a recurring element in Arena's practice and it refers often to the imaginary of the artist or to historical events that have marked our recent past. In this case, 57 are the days between the massacres of Capaci and Via D'Amelio; 110 days is the duration of the last stay of Nietzsche in Turin; 210 are the days corresponding to the duration of the First Gulf War.

The space at n. 4 is divided by a new wall into two separate rooms. Each room hosts only a granite slab, set at a height of 2 m and 30 cm. On the slab is an inscription coming from a thought by Susan Sontag (unremitting banality and inconceivable terror). In this definition American intellectual sums up and predicts the description of our era. Francesco Arena gives physical shape to Sontag's concept through this sculpture that divides and connects at the same time the two rooms in the exhibition space.

Finally, at n. 7 is an installation composed of numerous sculptures handmade by Arena, made of DAS, which represent the 71 corners and 80 edges of his house in Puglia. Each corner or edge is composed of three segments. The sum of the length of these segments multiplied by the number of corners and edges is 91 meters, which correspond to the sum of the heights of the two Bamiyan Buddhas that were destroyed by the Talibans in 2001. The use of DAS, a material that is modeled with hands and that doesn't need to be cooked, is a reference to the ruins of the Afghan sculptures, built and destroyed by men.

The three works conceived for the exhibition, though seemingly different, present both formal and conceptual contact points.

In all the works is the concept of cut (in the notch that marks the length of the beard in the bronze sculptures, the cut in the wall where the plaque is installed and the idea of splitting the spaces, which is proper of edges and corners) and a constant reference to time (the days that the beard takes to grow; the time described by Sontag and the eternity, unfortunately destroyed, of the Buddhas).

In addition, the three works are a reflection on the concept of monument, which has always interested the artist, a reflection on its essence and function, starting from the materials used and the continuous references between his personal history and the world history that we all know.

Francesco Arena was born in Torre Santa Susanna, Brindisi, in 1978. Lives and works in Cassano delle Murge, Bari.

Among his solo exhibitions we have: 2014, *3 Ludwig reflections and 1 horizon*, NoguerasBlanchard, Madrid; 2013, *Onze mille cent quatre-vingt sept jours*, Frac Champagne-Ardenne, Reims; 2012, *Trittico 57*, Project Room, Museion, Bolzano; *Orizzonte con riduzione di Mare*, Monitor, Roma; 2011, *Com'è piccola Milano*, Peep Hole, Milano; 2010, Art Statement, Art Basel, *Cratere*, De Vleeshal, Middelburg NL; 2008, *3,24 mq*, Nommas Foundation, Roma.

He also took part in several group exhibitions among which: 2015, Triennale, Milano; *Nero su Bianco*, American Academy, Roma, *Anche le sculture muoiono*, Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozzi, Firenze; 2014, *Liberdade em movimento*, curated by Jacopo Crivelli Visconti, Fundação Iberê Camargo, Porto Alegre, Brasil; 2013, *Vice Versa*, Italian Pavillon, 55 Biennale di Venezia, Venezia; 2012, *La storia che non ho vissuto. Testimone indiretto*, curated by Marcella Beccaria, Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli (TO), *Sotto la Strada la Spiaggia*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino, *Lanza una roca y a ver que pasa / Throw a Rock and See What Happens*, curated by Juan Canela, La Casa Encendida, Madrid; 2011, *Pleure qui peu rit qui veut* – Premio Furla 2011, Palazzo Pepoli, Bologna.

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