

Galleria Raffaella Cortese
022043555 F 0229533590

via A.Stradella 7, 20129 T

artist: Miroslaw Balka
opening: Wednesday, december 3, 2003. 6.00 – 9.00 pm
location: **Raffaella Cortese Gallery. Via A.Stradella 7, 20129 Milano**
exhibition period: december 3 – february , 2004
time: Tuesday – Saturday , 14.30 – 19.30 and by appointment

"Contemporary time does not exist, we cannot catch the continuous. As we move ever into the future we are always based in the past. This is the state of my sculpture, there is heat from this pillow, and it's impossible to catch this continuous flow. As soon as you touch it it's colder than it was at its source. Everything we touch is coming from the past, it's our access to death. For me the important thing is my art is to try to catch that consciousness of life" (Miroslaw Balka)

The Raffaella Cortese Gallery is pleased to announce Miroslaw Balka's first Italian exhibition, a Polish artist who is known world wide, who best reflects the culture and history of his country. The re-elaboration of personal and collective memories, the relationship with the body and that between art work and space are the central themes of his research.

He was born in 1958 in Warsaw and grew up in catholic Poland during the socialist regime. He began his career in the mid-80's with figurative sculptures. "Souvenir of First Communion" is an emblematic work of this period and refers to a crucial event in the life of the artist, his holy communion, which marks the transition from childhood to adolescence. During the important exhibition of 1990, "Good God", Balka chooses to renounce the human representation, to devote himself to everyday objects, austere and poor. The installations are very bare, the rarefied and melancholy atmosphere is sometimes pervaded by a religious feeling. Later, as has happened in the solo shows titled "My body cannot do everything I ask for", abstract metal objects the same size as the body of the artist become traces which are able to evoke and immerse him in an atmosphere of desire and impotence. Later he introduces even more fragile and precarious materials, such as ash, salt and soap, to highlight the perishable nature of his work which, like our life, is marked by the passage of time. In the exhibition created specifically for the new space, the artist offers a complex and involving video installation titled: Element die Exaktheit, element of the exactness.

A few of the most significant solo shows have been presented at the National Museum of Art in Osaka (2000); Museet for Samtidskunst of Oslo (1997); IVAM Centre del Carme in Valencia (1997); Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst of Ghent (2001); Documenta IX Kassel (1992); Tate Gallery London (1995); and he has represented Poland at the Venice Biennial (1993).

In Italy we can remember his recent installation in the courtyard of the ex-prison of San Domenico in San Gimignano and at Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena.

The artist lives and works in Warsaw and will be present at the opening.

For further information and photographic material please call the gallery.