

GALLERIA RAFFAELLA CORTESE

PRESS RELEASE

MIROSLAW BALKA *In Bezug auf die Zeit*

via a. stradella 7 - 1 - 4

opening reception with the artist wednesday may 3rd, h. 19.00 - 21.00
may 4th | july 29th 2017
tuesday – saturday h. 10.00-13.00 | 15.00-19.30 and by appointment

Galleria Raffaella Cortese is pleased to announce Miroslaw Balka's fourth show in the gallery's three exhibition spaces, at a time of great attention towards the Polish artist's work thanks to his first Italian retrospective, curated by Vicente Todolí, currently on view at Pirelli HangarBicocca, until July 30th.

Miroslaw Balka initiated his artistic research in the 80s and immediately began an intimate observation and investigation of the deep meaning of human existence, starting from himself and his own body, placing himself in relation to mankind and its history. The memory of his own experiences, from catholic rituals to family traditions, is intertwined with a highly evocative consciousness, suggestive of an intimate and social path that tells us of revelations and oblivion, of wounds and healing. The materials used by Miroslaw Balka, wood, salt, ashes, iron, soap and wine, place themselves in a precarious balance between daily life and rituals; at the same time his body becomes a critical measure of his works.

The exhibition is conceived as a journey in stages spanning across three decades of Balka's artistic production, from the works created in the 90s to those realized specifically for the gallery's venues. The title of the show, *In Bezug auf die Zeit*, in German, is by no chance based on the definition of acceleration in physics, which is the increment of velocity in relation to a time interval. The artist extrapolates only the second part of the definition, which we can translate as "in relation to time".

Through the exhibition's itinerary the artist decided to highlight some fundamental moments of his research. In via Stradella 7 the viewer can witness the artist's transition from figurative to abstract, which characterizes the group of works realized between the end of the 80s and 1990. Among them, a special highlight is the work *Blue Wave* (1990), his first work to ever feature salt as a component. Since then, salt has often been used in his sculptures for its symbolic reference, as an *extremely beautiful* material that is also *capable of producing pain* when it touches an open wound.

The space n.4 will feature the two works *61 x 59 x 31* (2006), a cylindrical speaker assembled by the artist himself, and *215 x 135 x 60* (2005), a monumental chandelier-shaped installation, which together create an intimate and elegiac atmosphere endorsed by the presence of steel and sound. With a rhythmic cadence, the motive of the song 'Serenò è' by Drupi comes out from the speaker and start vibrating in the space. The singer reached success in Poland in the 70s and his presence in the exhibition manifests Balka's aim to dig in the past giving new life to personal memories while at the same time extending a whispered tribute. The collaboration with artists from other fields is something that often occurs in Balka's practice – he involved writers, musicians, poets before – and it eventually stratifies the tight relation with memory.

The space n.1 features three new works produced in 2017 in his studio in Otwock/Warsaw. The works are based on the juxtaposition of materials and objects that have been hanging around him for years, laying in his garden, resting on his desk or dangling from the wall. Between them, *250 x 14 x 13* is made of a granite base holding a glass pipe filled with red wine. While the works are surely informed by the minimalist lexicon, they also show a gestural side rooted in the necessity of both a dialogue between the materials – granite and glass, in this case – and of physically engaging with the viewer.

The solo shows dedicated to the artist are: 'CROSSOVER/S' at Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, 'Fragment' Akademie Der Kunst, Berlin and CCA Warsaw, 'Between Honey & Ashes', Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2011), Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid (2010), Modern Art Oxford, Oxford and Tate Modern, London (2009) Museum of Contemporary Art, Rijeka and Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2007), K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2006), Museum of Contemporary Art, Strasbourg (2004), Kroller - Muller Museum, Otterlo (2001) Dundee Contemporary Arts, Scotland (2002) and Stedelijk Museum voor Actuelle Kunst (SMAK), Gent (2001). Balka has also taken place in a number of group shows, such as: 'Building Memory' CCA, Tel Aviv, HMKV, Dortmund and Museum Stzuki, Lodz (2010), Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius (2009) SITE Santa Fe 6th Biennale, New Mexico (2006) the Sydney Biennale (2006), Venice Biennale (2013, 2005, 2003, 1993 and 1990) and Documenta IX (1992).

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