

Press Release

Kimsooja

To Breathe / Respirare

Chiostri di Sant'Eustorgio

10 March – 15 June 2018

Opening reception
11:00 AM, March 10th 2018
Museum of Sant'Eustorgio
Piazza Sant'Eustorgio 3, Milan

On Saturday, March 10th, the fascinating museum complex of the Chiostri di Sant'Eustorgio welcomes the site-specific installation *To Breathe / Respirare* by acclaimed Korean artist Kimsooja. It's part of an organic project that aims to display contemporary art inside one of Milano's oldest basilicas, built in the 4th century.

The Portinari Chapel is a square space surmounted by a spectacular lantern-shaped dome and was designed as an independent space in the second half of the 15th century. The frescoes are by Vincenzo Foppa and include paintings made of polychrome slivers that allude to divine light and, probably, also Heaven. The Solarian Chapels date back to the second half of the 15th century, and in the chapel on the left side (facing the Portinari Chapel) there are frescoes by Daniele Crespi (executed 1620-21). One of the more striking is his *Saint Paul Taken to Third Heaven by the Angels*, which shows the saint wrapped in the veils of the Evangelists. At the far left of the fresco there is a sort of supernatural light as well as light from the "third heaven," which, as Dante wrote in the *Divine Comedy* and dedicated to "spiritual lovers," still retain something of human inclinations, and also physically the shadow cast by the Earth when lit by the sun.

Kimsooja's installations in the Portinari Chapel and two of the Solarian Chapels bring to light an original dialog between architecture and pictorial decoration within the history of art. Her work is perfectly contextualized and grounded by re-creating, beyond the scope of time, a new and original spacial experience. *To Breathe / Respirare* swings between the practice of contemplation and the induced experience of revelation, as did her shows (with the same title) which took place at the Korean Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2013, at the Pompidou Center in Metz in 2015, and at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul Korea in 2016.

To Breathe / Respirare plays with the sunlight that comes in through the chapel's seven windows and oculi, and uses special translucent film to diffract the rays and color spectrum, creating an experience of revelation for the spectator. Daylight moves slowly from the southeast to the northwest, through a variety of color changes, creating a space, a sort of "third heaven," for the viewer in these consecrated and spiritual spaces. The human body, memory, and theatricality are fundamental elements of Kimsooja's pictorial practice, going all the way back to her peculiar "Bottari" pieces from 1992, and now find themselves completely merged.

The concepts and revelations of the human condition in a multicultural and religious context, as well as the expression of oneself or the other, find space and praxis (in terms of pictorial and performative activity) in these *spaces*, these “third heavens” which welcome us and reveal themselves to us from sunrise to sunset.

Kimsooja was born in Daegu, Korea, in 1957. She lives and works in New York and Seoul. She has shown her works in important museums and institutions such as: PICA Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (2018); Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (2017); MMCA Seoul (2016); EMST National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, Greece (2016-2009-2005); Centre Pompidou Metz (2015); Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2015); Collection Lambert en Avignon (2014); Vancouver Art Gallery (2013); Museum of Modern Art St. Etienne (2012); Kunsthal 44 Møen (2012); Perm Contemporary Art Museum (2012); Miami Art Museum (2012); Feldkirch Church and Kunstmuseum Lichtenstein (2010); National Museum of Contemporary Art Korea for the Yeong Gwang Nuclear Power Plant (2010); Atelier Hermes, Seoul (2009); Baltic Center for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2009); Hirshhorn Museum (2008); Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa & La Fenice Theatre, Venice (2006); Crystal Palace of Reina So a Museum, Madrid (2006); Kunsthalle Wien (2002); Kunsthalle Bern (2002); Palazzo delle Poste, Trieste (2001); MoMA PS1 (2001). Ha partecipato a Kassel Documenta 14: ANTIDORON - The EMST Collection (2017) e a numerose Biennali: Busan (2016), Venice (2013, 2007, 2005, 2001, 1999), Gwangju (2012, 2001, 1995), Thessaloniki (2010), Moscow (2009) Whitney Biennial (2002), Lyon (2000), São Paulo (1997) and Istanbul (1997).

Cloisters of di Sant'Eustorgio

From 10 March to 15 June 2018

Monday – Sunday 10 am – 6 pm

Ticket entrance: 3 euro

Museum of Sant'Eustorgio

Curated by Giovanni Iovane

In collaboration with Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan