

MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

For Immediate Release

Giuseppe Penone: *A Question of Identity*, 2017

November 14 - December 22, 2017

Opening Reception: *Tuesday, November 14th, 6-8 pm*

Opening on November 14th in Marian Goodman Gallery's Third Floor Project Space, we are pleased to host a special exhibition by Giuseppe Penone, which features a unique installation, *A question of identity*, (*Una questione di identità*), 2017, one of the most meditative works created by the artist to date. The exhibition will be on view through Friday, December 22nd.

Consisting up of multiple works from 1981 to the present to create a whole installation, *A Question of Identity* crystallized in the artist's mind over three decades ago, but was realized just this past year. With its incarnation here, Penone refines to a stringent purity his search for the expression of the elemental identity unique to all of us which defines the essence of his work, the unity between man and nature, and the search for our place within the incomprehensible magnitude of the natural world. In this exhibition, the artist offers us a glimpse of arrested time and of eternity through essential works which ask us to contemplate the identity of an imprint, the identity of a river stone, the identity of a grain of sand molded by the wind.

At the center of the gallery space stands *Essere vento (To be the wind)*, 2014. A tree trunk of petrified wood suggests physically incalculable time, standing at a height which enables the viewer to peer down onto the top of the tree to see an impression of a hand carved into the wood. Penone writes:

The void of the imprint of a hand dug out in the silicon dioxide of a fossilized trunk, an imprint that can duplicate the hand and the identity of the man to whom it belongs, an imprint that holds the identity of a grain of sand, eroded, cracked, carved, polished, scratched by the wind, duplicated in a grain of sand by a photonic wind.

Looking more closely, in the void of the palm of the hand sit two grains of sand, representing two opposing images of unity and of infinity: *A grain of sand taken from the desert, repeated perfectly in its specific form in another larger sized grain of sand capable of containing it.* Poised next to each other, one echoes nature and the other is man-made, carved by lasers to replicate sand's physical qualities, with the artist working closely with researchers in physics and geomechanics at the Institut Néel and Laboratoire 3SR in Grenoble to achieve this microscopic sculpture.

Set side by side on top of the severed trunk of a fossilized tree-plant becomes mineral-these two identical grains of sand, poised between unity and infinity, mark human presence. Because of their perfect twinship they suddenly appear in this cycle of universal metamorphoses, the constant movement continues to modify the nature and appearance of things, just like those two grains of sand which have, for the moment, stalled the machine. - Guy Tosatto

Nearby, a work amplified in scale and relative to the above, titled *Essere fiume (To be the river)*, 1981, echoes the physical qualities of the previous, consisting of two large stones - one a found and natural river stone and the other its identically carved doppelgänger.

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To extract a stone sculpted by the river, to travel upstream and discover the exact point from which the stone came and extract another piece of rock from the mountain and duplicate exactly the stone taken from the river is to be the river; producing a stone of stone is perfect sculpture, it reenters nature and is cosmic heritage, a pure creation. -GP

In conjunction with these works, *Propagazione*, 2006, a drawing on a scroll containing the artist's single fingerprint in ink radiating in successive rotations of dense concentric rings, hangs on an adjacent wall. Beginning with an impression signifying our cultural index of individuality—the imprint of the skin—it evolves into a landscape of the body, with its expanse and its limits. Nearby, *Albero di 3,50 metri*, 1985, a sculpture hand-carved from the trunk of a tree, bears the whittled twigs and intrinsic knots of its existence. Resting on its side on a large plinth it preserves its memory as a young sapling while also displaying the mark of time of growth in the forest.

Giuseppe Penone's recent solo exhibitions include *Des Corps de Pierre*, Chateau La Coste, Le Puy-Sainte-Réparade (2017); *Matrice: An exhibit by Giuseppe Penone*, Palazzo della Civiltà, Rome (2017); *Germination*, Louvre Abu Dhabi, UAE (2017); Giuseppe Penone: Sculpture, MART, Rovereto (2016); *Penone in the Rijksmuseum Gardens*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (2016); *Giuseppe Penone: Being the River, Repeating the Forest*, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2015); *Giuseppe Penone: Deseins*, Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland (2015); *Giuseppe Penone - Breath Is A Sculpture*, the Beirut Art Center, Lebanon (2014); *Giuseppe Penone*, the Musée de Grenoble, France (2014); *Penone Versailles*, the Château de Versailles, France (2013); *Giuseppe Penone*, Kunstmuseum Winterthur (2013); *Giuseppe Penone: Ideas of Stone*, Madison Square Park, New York (2013) and *Giuseppe Penone: Spazio di Luce* Whitechapel Gallery, London (2013). Penone recently received the McKim Medal (2017) and the prestigious Praemium Imperiale International Arts Award for Sculpture in 2014. Giuseppe Penone has exhibited at *Documenta V* (1972), *VII* (1982), *VIII* (1987) and *XIII* (2012) and at the Venice Biennale in 2007, 1995, 1986, 1980, and 1978.

Please join us at the opening reception for the artist on Tuesday, November 14th, from 6-8 pm.

For further information please visit www.mariangoodman.com or please contact the Gallery at: 212 977 7160, or Linda Pellegrini, Director of Communications at: linda@mariangoodman.com.