

GIUSEPPE PENONE

MATRICE DI LINFA

PALAIS D'ÎÉNA – CONSEIL ÉCONOMIQUE, SOCIAL ET ENVIRONNEMENTAL (CESE), PARIS

15 – 24 OCTOBER 2019



Exhibition view, Palais d'Îéna, Paris, October 2019. GIUSEPPE PENONE, *Matrice di linfa*, 2008, Fir tree, resin, terracotta, leather, metal, 131 x 4500 x 212 cm
Photo credit: Rebecca Fanuele © Palais d'Îéna, architect Auguste Perret, UFSE, SAIF, Courtesy Archivio Penone and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris, London

During FIAC this year, the Palais d'Îéna – the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council has invited Giuseppe Penone to exhibit his work in its great hypostyle hall. For his first exhibition in Paris since 2013, organized in collaboration with Marian Goodman Gallery, the artist is presenting his monumental work *Matrice di Linfa* accompanied by two new sculptures created especially for the exhibition. In the making of *Matrice di Linfa* Penone intervened in the history of a fir tree by removing eighty rings of its growth. This work is emblematic of the CESE's commitment to the environment and celebrates the 80th anniversary of Auguste Perret's architectural masterpiece.

Giuseppe Penone considers *Matrice di Linfa* as a shape with an animal force, it also evokes an open book, a "long sacrificial altar" or "a long and thin boat sailing back and forth in the space, pushed by the strength of its branches." This outstanding sculpture of two parts, each 20 meters long, made from a fir tree found in the Vallée des Merveilles in the French Alps, results from a multiplicity of gestures, typical of Penone's practice. After having cut the fir tree in half length ways Giuseppe Penone removed wood from the trunk, and following the growth rings, extracted part of the tree's memory. A red vegetal resin, resembling the tree's sap, was poured into the central cavity, in which the artist placed terracotta elements bearing imprints of his own body. The fir tree's branches, which grew season by season, now support the trunk, resting on large carpet of leather.

Matrice de Linfa, a work so emblematic of Giuseppe Penone, embodies the connection between the artist and the tree. The sculpture becomes a "matrix" condensing the essence of his sculptural practice. It was first exhibited 10 years ago at the Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts in Paris.

At the Palais d'Iéna, *Matrice di Linfa* is exhibited for the first time with two sculptures from the *Pensieri di Foglie* series (2014 - 2017). The works are installed either side of the central columns, near the space between the two parts of the tree where visitors are invited to walk. The branches and leaves in bronze created by the artist combined with naturally sculpted stones from a riverbed, form together an anthropomorphic silhouette. As with *Matrice di Linfa*, the works *Pensieri di Foglie* reveal the history preserved within the materials and evoke the interdependence of man and nature.

Penone's work is part of a process that is closely linked to nature, from which he has drawn much inspiration since the late seventies and his early works. His simple gestures, interventions or formal explorations on natural materials such as wood, bronze, marble, stone, acacia thorns and leaves are often associated with body fragments or imprints, which connect man to nature. "*What interests me, says the artist, it is when humans' work starts to become nature.*" A short documentary-film created for the exhibition and screened every day in the auditorium of the Palais d'Iéna, documents the creative process employed in the making of *Matrice di Linfa* and other works.

Giuseppe Penone will be in conversation with Germano Celant on Thursday 17th October at 5:30PM in the auditorium of the Palais d'Iéna (free admission).

Giuseppe Penone was born in 1947 in Garesio in Piemonte region, Northern Italy. He studied sculpture at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Turin; his early work was associated by Germano Celant with the *Arte Povera*. As a sculptor, he received the prestigious Praemium Imperiale award in 2014. In 2007 he represented Italy at the 52nd Venice Biennale. The Centre Pompidou in Paris organized a major retrospective show of his work in 2004. Giuseppe Penone lives and works in Turin, Italy.

His work has been shown in numerous major museums, such as the Saarländmuseum, Moderne Galerie Saarbrücken (exhibition still on view); the Palazzo della Civiltà, Rome (2017); the Museum of Contemporary Art of Trento and Rovereto (MART) (2016); the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2015); the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, in Lausanne (2015); the Beirut Art Center (2014); the Musée de Grenoble (2014). Recently he has also installed monumental sculptures in prestigious public gardens or sculpture parks such as, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield (2018 - 2019); the domaine du Château La Coste in Le Puy Sainte Reparde, France (2017); the gardens of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (2016); the park of Venaria Reale near Turin (2015); the Giardino di Boboli in Florence (2014) and the gardens of the Château de Versailles (2013).

The exhibition *Matrice di Linfa* is organized by the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE in French) in collaboration with Marian Goodman Gallery. The French Economic, Social and Environmental Council, one of the three constitutional assemblies of France, would like to underline, through its work as well as through the exhibitions it organizes, how culture should play a central role in the public debate and continue to broaden the necessary dialogue among citizens within the organized civil society.

The exhibition will be open to the public, free of charge, from the 15th to the 24th October, every day from 11AM to 6PM. An exhibition booklet as well as a signed and numbered artist's book (edition of 35) accompany the exhibition. Concurrently, a selection of drawings and a *Pensieri di foglie* sculpture directly related to this exhibition, are on display in the viewing room of Galerie Marian Goodman, 79 rue du Temple, Paris 3e, from the 15th to the 24th October.

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MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY