

PRESS RELEASE

**Hypotenuse: A Project by Massimo Antonaci
From Black to Transparency / A Solitary Journey
across a Single Body. From East to West 33 Stations in
an Unknown Land / Opus**

13 May – 31 July 2012



From 13 May to 31 July, 2012 Collezione Maramotti presents an in-depth look on Massimo Antonaci's work; the Italian artist moved to New York in the 1990's.

Hypotenuse is a project that comprises three exhibitions displayed in different spaces within the Collection, one of which has never been opened before.

From Black to Transparency is a retrospective look cast on a series of works in glass and tar that the artist started in the mid '80's.

A Solitary Journey across a Single Body. From East to West 33 Stations in An Unknown Land is a series of Polaroid pieces composed of glass tiles and placed side by side that narrate Antonaci's pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

Opus is a project made specifically for Collezione Maramotti that comprises four triptychs (*Snake, Circle, Alchemic Doors, Stone*). Each piece in this work is fermented virgin papyrus marked by oil color touches.

The pieces displayed in the exhibition *From Black to Transparency* combine tar and glass. The two materials take on their mutual qualities: the hardness and depth of tar, like magma, welcome the images and melt into the pliability of glass through the action of fire. A transformation of shapes and material, which the artist calls “alchemic.” The exhibition presents black and white pieces, as well as works in which the color permeates deep down to the last transparent layers. In each piece, glass and tar follow a compositional rhythm marked by 60 x 60 cm modules. The modules create a surface, a virtual grid, a “white page”, a place where image takes form and formal signs encounter space.

In Antonaci’s work, each geometric sign is not creation, but the transposition of Ideas, the recreation of an Order which, through a process of intuition, is already outlined within. The play of forces that the signs engender makes glass and tar interact with each other. At times, the sign projects boundaries and closures resisting light, at others they open spaces where light itself can filter through, letting the eye perceive its depth. Antonaci’s sculptural work is meticulously defined, tying the light and the wall closely together, creating shadows as the work’s third dimension. The wall is a skin separating the inside from the outside and the nails are what glues all the parts together.

A Solitary Journey in a Single Body. From East to West 33 Stations in an Unknown Land

Antonaci made his pilgrimage when he was 33 years old. The Santiago trail, a reflection of the Milky Way on earth, is an inner journey, a key moment in a profound process of “self-recognition” and “transformation.”

The Polaroid pictures taken along the way are not merely photographs documenting the different places, but projections of inner images emerging from the “physical fatigue experienced during the trek. Once exhaustion loosens the mind, the eye is more able to catch the view of universal consciousness. The work is comprised of 33 stations corresponding to the stopovers made along the pilgrimage. Each station is captured in a 60 x 60 cm glass tile, held in place by nails. The Polaroid composition placed between the two glasses that comprise each ‘station’ follows particular formal and symbolic criteria.

The four papyrus triptychs in the work *Opus* were started by the artist toward the end of the glass production, when his earlier work reached complete transparency. They, too, express pure abstraction. Antonaci says “When I work on papyrus, I am surprised by the unity that ensues between mind and hand in the gesture of unfurling the sheath, then placing it on the wall, and finally rolling it up again and placing it back in its case. An action, more than a gesture, *still*, motionless, that every time surprises me as a deep insight.”

The gesture of «rolling and unfurling the papyrus corresponds to the two movements of involution and evolution, the alternating motion between secret and knowledge revelation». The thinking or mental tension turned into object through the use of hands which captures in reality the sensible manifestation of a level of consciousness.

Finally, the publication *Odos* (Danilo Montanari Editore) is an anthology of words and images that Antonaci has compiled over the course of twenty years. The fragments of text are Sutra by Raphael, whereas the images evoke the journey of iconographic cross-references that have accompanied the artist's work from its very beginnings. *Odos* is flanked by a text by Marco Belpoliti and a conversation on the subject of alchemy between Massimo Antonaci and Mario Diacono.

Private view by invitation: 12 May 2012 h. 6.00pm, with the artist

13 May – 31 July 2012

The exhibition, on free admission, can be visited during the opening hours of the permanent collection.

Thursday and Friday 2.30pm - 6.30pm

Saturday and Sunday 10.30am- 6.30pm

Info

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