

PRESS RELEASE

Arte Essenziale

November 4, 2011 – January 1, 2012

Press Preview: Thursday, November 3, 2011, 11am

Opening: Thursday, November 3, 2011, 7pm

The exhibition “Arte Essenziale” presents sculptures and large-scale installations by eight international contemporary artists from Italy, Great Britain, Georgia, and the US. All artists were commissioned by the Italian Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia to produce new works for the exhibition. They explore the potential and characteristics of the materials employed as well as address philosophical concepts concerning the relationship between material, space, and time. “Arte Essenziale” was first shown at the Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia and subsequently will be presented at the Frankfurter Kunstverein from November 4, 2011 to January 1, 2012.

Italian philosopher Federico Ferrari’s thoughts on the essential in art serve as the exhibition’s conceptual framework: “Arte Essenziale” attests to the need to identify at the end of the postmodern era a gesture of a new beginning in contemporary art. Central to Ferrari’s considerations is the search for the origin of artistic practice, with particular regard to the essence of the artistic gesture, its necessity, and meaning. For Ferrari, the artistic medium and the particular materiality constitute a definite approach: the essence of the artwork is manifested at the point where the material emerges out of itself to become what it is. Many participants in the exhibition present works using everyday materials such as plaster or skin cream, situating them in relationship to symbolically charged materials such as bronze or marble. When expressed sculpturally, this interplay of contrasting substances is heightened and richly sensual.

“Arte Essenziale” does not attempt to define a group, but presents individual positions that have developed over the past decade and which appear to share a common understanding of art. Karla Black (*1972) often combines in her works building materials such as plaster powder, Vaseline, or sawdust with everyday cosmetic supplies. The surface of “Persuader Face” (2011) – a fragile floor work of makeup powder – looks so soft it inspires the urge to touch it. It fits with a delicate, half-transparent cellophane work that has been dusted in chalk and appears to be floating weightlessly in space. The Scottish artist’s interest in the transitoriness of form is manifested in a process-oriented handling of materials.

Gianni Caravaggio (*1968) also deals with exposing working methods in his sculptural works. His constellations of objects are either in a constant state of flux or carry traces of previously executed actions. An example of this is the work “Seed image” (2011), which the Italian artist created by rubbing plaster off the wall, allowing it to then trickle onto a marble slab propped against the wall underneath. The build up of plaster dust provides the slab visual depth.

Francesco Gennaris' (*1973) experiments also have a similar focus: how materials are transformed when subjected to external factors such as temperatures or when dissimilar materials are combined.

In his model-like installations British artist Ian Kiaer (*1971) questions utopian architectural designs, constructing complex reference systems situated between architectural history, literature, and philosophy. Alice Cattaneo (*1976) creates large-scale installations. The Italian artist's delicate sculptures are created from elements such as tape strips or foam panels. Despite their fragility they are capable of transforming space. In her installations Thea Djordjadze (*1971) combines cool-toned materials, such as glass or steel, with warm, homey objects like rugs or abstract geometrical forms. Her constellations of objects form invisible rooms that are inspired by Le Corbusier's human-scale system of proportions. However, the Georgian artist subverts their usefulness, pushing the architect's strict models to the point of absurdity.

Jason Dodge (*1969) titles most of his installation-based works with text fragments. Notwithstanding, the connection to the objects they describe remains obscured. The American artist combines in unexpected ways everyday items such as fleece blankets and kitchen scales, producing constellations of objects recalling abandoned film sets. In her series of works American artist Helen Mirra (*1970) uses photographs and objects to visually depict abstract accountings of experiences or investigations. In looking for and making connections the viewer draws the fragments together again.

Participating artists: Karla Black (UK), Gianni Caravaggio (IT), Alice Cattaneo (IT), Thea Djordjadze (GE), Jason Dodge (US), Francesco Gennari (IT), Ian Kiaer (UK), Helen Mirra (US).

Curator: Federico Ferrari, Professor of Philosophy of Art, Accademia di Brera (Italy)

A bilingual catalog (Italian/English) published by Collezione Maramotti and featuring an essay by Federico Ferrari is available for the exhibition. Price: 30 Euro (20 Euro for members of Frankfurter Kunstverein)

“Arte Essenziale” is produced by Collezione Maramotti in collaboration with the Frankfurter Kunstverein.

LOCATION: Frankfurter Kunstverein, Steinernes Haus am Römerberg, Markt 44, 60311 Frankfurt am Main

INFORMATION: Phone: +49 (0) 69.219314-0, E-Mail: post@fkv.de, www.fkv.de

OPENING HOURS: Tues., Thurs. and Fri.: 11 am–7 pm, Wed.: 11 am–9 pm, Sat. and Sun.: 10 am–7 pm, closed on Monday

ENTRANCE FEE: 6 € (reduced: 4 €)

GUIDED TOURS: Every second Wednesday at 7:30 pm and every second Sunday at 4:30 pm, fee: 2 € plus entrance fee

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