

# Mimmo Paladino

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## MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to announce Mimmo Paladino's first exhibition in the spaces of Casa Corbellini-Wassermann.

Dark figures against luminous grounds, symbols that come from far back - from Etruria, from Campanian folklore, from a Mediterranean imaginary that is at once personal and collective - and arrive, unmistakably, now. Paladino's language is not archaic in the nostalgic sense, but in the original one: ancient because primal, essential because necessary.

The exhibition unfolds like a visual score. Paladino thinks of his work as a composition of fragments - one moment passing into the next, intention giving way to the accident that transforms it. "The day after is always a surprise," he has said, and that is where the meaning lives: not in the original plan but in what happens along the way. The unforeseen is not a mistake to correct but a direction to follow. The exhibition moves with this logic, chromatically: from muted tones to full saturation, all the way up to the light of gold leaf - an orchestra bringing its instruments in one by one.

The gallery's spaces - their proportions, their tactile weight - become something more than a container. The exhibition is conceived room by room, in dialogue with the light and materiality of each environment: the idea is not to place works inside a space but to let something happen between the two. In 1995, Paladino occupied Piazza del Plebiscito in Naples with *Montagna del sale* - a cone of sea salt thirty metres in diameter, black wooden horses sunk into it like the remnants of a battle - turning one of the city's most lived-in squares into something ancient and estranging. Four years later, in the underground vaults of London's Roundhouse, he laid out the terracotta figures of his *Dormienti* in the half-light, wrapped in music Brian Eno had written for the occasion. In both cases, the architecture was as much a presence as the work itself.

This same sensibility runs through the current show, where the works seem to truly inhabit Casa Corbellini-Wassermann. A table set with

sculptures - thirty-three small forms in bronze and iron, made between 1993 and 2009 - fills the room like a constellation of presences. Some older, some more recent, but together, chronology loses its importance. What matters is the density: each form carries its own history while belonging to a larger one.

In the Studio, icons dedicated to great figures of literature - from Joyce to Céline, Borges to Calvino, Kafka and Svevo - stand alongside books by those same authors, into which Paladino has worked figures, drawings, and secret signs. Literature becomes a field where the image moves across sideways, without following the story - something the text inspired without anticipating, a visual thought that needs the written word to be born but not to survive.

Paladino takes something ancient - a symbol, a form, a material - and returns it to the present as though it had just come into being. The sculptures on the table, the solemn faces, the light moving toward gold: everything here lives in that suspended territory between what has already been and what does not yet exist. A territory Paladino has always inhabited, moving through painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography and cinema without ever settling in one, where the sacred and the everyday, memory and invention, sit side by side without resolution. In his hands, time does not pass. It transforms.

This exhibition at Casa Corbellini-Wassermann anticipates the exhibition at Palazzo Citterio, which, from May 16, will host a show dedicated to Paladino's work.

## Mimmo Paladino

Mimmo Paladino (born in Paduli in 1948) first emerged in the early 1970s with an approach marked by openness to multiple media - initially centred on photography, drawing, and environmental installation. Alongside painting, sculpture, printmaking and set design, he has worked as a feature film director and collaborated with leading designers and architects.

Paladino has played a crucial role in connecting the deep allegorical traditions of southern Italy with a broad range of artistic languages. In the 1970s he challenged the avant-garde art system, pushing the boundaries of expression across multiple disciplines. He was a defining figure of the Transavanguardia movement theorised by the critic Achille Bonito Oliva, alongside Sandro Chia, Francesco Clemente, Enzo Cucchi, and Nicola De Maria. In the 1980s he gained international recognition, exhibiting at the Venice Biennale, Documenta, and in major museums worldwide.

In the decades that followed he continued to experiment at urban scale, with exhibitions in Beijing, at the Forte Belvedere in Florence, and across European and American cities, as well as permanent public installations including *Montagna del sale* in Naples and *Lo sciamano dell'acqua* in Solopaca, near Benevento.

Paladino's work is held in major public collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Tate London, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, the Albertina Museum in Vienna, the Kunstmuseum Basel, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and the Setagaya Art Museum in Tokyo.