

FONDAZIONE PRADA PRESENTS "PINO PASCALI", AN EXHIBITION CURATED BY MARK GODFREY, IN MILAN FROM 28 MARCH TO 23 SEPTEMBER 2024

Milan, 27 February 2024 – An extensive retrospective dedicated to Italian artist Pino Pascali will be presented by Fondazione Prada in Milan from 28 March to 23 September 2024 (Press Preview on 27 March 2024).

The exhibition, curated by Mark Godfrey, is divided into four sections, each presenting a unique perspective on Pascali's work, and unfolds through three buildings of the Milan venue: the Podium, the Nord and the Sud galleries. The set design, conceived by 2x4, includes forty-nine works by Pino Pascali from Italian and international museums and distinguished private collections; nine artworks by prominent post-war artists; selected photographs and a video portraying Pascali with his works.

Born in Bari, Italy, in 1935, Pascali moved to Rome in 1955 to study scene painting and set design at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma. He worked as an assistant scenic designer in many television productions of the Italian broadcaster Rai. He also collaborated as a set and graphic designer with cinema and advertising companies. In 1965, Galleria La Tartaruga in Rome hosted his first solo show. In 1968, Pascali died tragically in a motorcycle accident at the age of thirty-two, in the same year as his solo presentation at the Venice Art Biennale.

Despite his brief career, he contributed to significant developments in the Italian and international post-war art scene. This exhibition aims to examine the innovative scope of Pascali's work, particularly his sculpture, which, over the last five decades, has had a substantial impact on several generations of artists and critics and continues to attract the growing attention of an international audience.

As Mark Godfrey writes in his exhibition catalog essay, "Pascali explored the relationship of sculpture and stage props, and contrasted sculpture with functional objects. Works that looked from a distance like readymades revealed themselves close-up to be constructed from found materials. Pascali thought about what a 'fake' or 'feigned' sculpture could be. He titled pieces as if they were solid masses, winking to his audiences who knew they were empty volumes. He used the natural elements of earth and water alongside construction materials like Eternit fiber cement panels and divided his seas and fields into units with repeated measurements. Pascali brought new consumer products and synthetic fabrics to the studio to fashion animals, traps, and bridges. There is no doubt whatsoever as to the complexity of his approach to sculpture, and yet the genius and originality of his contribution lies somewhere else. Pascali is important today because he was an 'exhibitionist'. [...] Pascali recognized that the postwar artist had to devote as much of their energies to exhibition-making as to refining their work in the studio."

To be an exhibitionist meant "creating captivating but temporary environments made up of the artist's own works, environments that were more than the sum of their parts." Second,

“the exhibitionist had to create their own exhibiting opportunities, as many as they could, and then take control of them”. Third, “the exhibitionist also recognized that they needed to create images prior to an exhibition and once it was installed.” Fourth, “the exhibitionist had to make new shifts in their work for each exhibition, and more than that, they also had to change their entire approach to exhibition-making itself.” All these elements are clearly present throughout Pascali’s dazzling career.

The ground and first floors of the Podium host the first section of the exhibition, which examines how Pascali made five solo exhibitions by creating imaginative environments rather than simply selecting works from his studio. Rooms simulating the spatial dimensions of the original galleries in which Pascali exhibited allow visitors to experience the unconventional display methods the artist used. They replicate those created for his first solo show at La Tartaruga (Rome, 1965) with two series that feature, on one side, *Primo piano labbra* and *La gravida o Maternità*, and on the other side, *Colosseo*, *Ruderi sul prato*, and *Muro di pietra*. His 1966 exhibition at Sperone gallery, Turin, is represented with the “Armi” series, and his 1966 and ‘68 shows at L’Attico gallery, Rome, with the “Animali” series, *Botole ovvero Lavori in corso* and steel wool sculptures such as *Trappola*. Works from the 1968 Venice Art Biennale monographic presentation include *Cesto*, *Contropelo*, *Pelo*, *Ponte levatoio*, and *Solitario*.

The second section of the exhibition is dedicated to the natural and industrial materials employed by Pascali. It explores where he sourced them, what they were used for in commerce, which other artists were also using them, and what has happened to them over time. Visitors can walk through different areas, each focusing on a specific material such as canvas, dye, earth, Eternit fiber cement, fake fur, steel wool, foam rubber, car components, hay, and scrubbers. Key works such as *Barca che affonda* (1966), *Campi arati e canali di irrigazione* (1967), *Pelle conciata* (1968), and *L’Arco di Ulisse* (1968) are presented alongside magazines and catalogues from the 1960s, and newly filmed videos with conservators, so that the audience can better understand the qualities, contexts, and conservation issues of the materials Pascali experimented with in his career.

The third part develops in the Nord gallery. It demonstrates how Pascali made strategic contributions to three significant group shows: “Fuoco Immagine Acqua Terra” curated by Alberto Boatto and Maurizio Calvesi at L’Attico (Rome, 1967); Cinquième Biennale de Paris: Manifestation Biennale et Internationale des Jeunes Artistes curated by Jacques Lassaigne at Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (Paris, 1967); and “Arte Povera” curated by Germano Celant at Galleria de Foscherari (Bologna, 1968). This section includes four of Pascali’s renowned works: *Ricostruzione del dinosauro* (1966), *1 metro cubo di terra* (1967), *9 mq di pozzanghere* (1967), and *Fiume con foce tripla* (1967), placing them in dialogue with landmark works by other artists including Alighiero Boetti, Agostino Bonalumi, Mario Ceroli, Luciano Fabro, Piero Gilardi, Jannis Kounellis, Eliseo Mattiacci, Gianni Piacentino and Michelangelo Pistoletto, who exhibited alongside him.

On view in the Sud gallery, the fourth chapter of the exhibition examines the way Pascali performed with his sculptures in legendary photographs taken by Claudio Abate, Ugo Mulas, and Andrea Taverna, and the 16mm video, *SKMP2* (1968), by Luca Maria Patella. Four works—*32 mq di mare circa* (1967), *Vedova blu* (1968), *Cinque banchi da setola e un bozzolo* (1968), and *Cavalletto* (1968)—are displayed next to four photographs enlarged to billboard scale. As Godfrey writes: “The images were neither documents of performances nor instructions about how to interact with the works. They served two primary purposes. First, as promotional material, since picture editors deciding how to illustrate their publications would find these more eye-catching than formal and sober installation shots by other artists. Second, as prompts to Pascali’s audience, who, on seeing these photographs, would have a good idea of how to engage with an exhibition in unusually imaginative and playful way.”

An illustrated book, designed by Joseph Logan and published by Fondazione Prada, will accompany the exhibition “Pino Pascali.” It will include an introduction by Miuccia Prada, President and Director of Fondazione Prada, an essay by the exhibition curator Mark Godfrey, texts by international writers, art historians and curators Valérie Da Costa, Michele D’Aurizio, Eva Fabbris, Pia Gottschaller, Teresa Kittler and artist Peter Fischli, as well as reprinted interviews and essays by art critics Achille Bonito Oliva, Germano Celant, Maurizio Fagiolo, Carla Lonzi, Filiberto Menna, Sandra Pinto, Vittorio Brandi Rubiu, Lorenza Trucchi, Cesare Vivaldi, and Marisa Volpi Orlandini.

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