



FONDAZIONE TERZO PILASTRO  
ITALIA E MEDITERRANEO

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF POMPEII  
15<sup>th</sup> May 2016 - 8<sup>th</sup> January 2017

# MITORAJ IN POMPEII

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## PRESS CONFERENCE

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF POMPEII**

Auditorium, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2016, 12:30 am

Inauguration: Quadriporticus of the Theatres, 6:00 pm

Entrance: Piazza Esedra

A grand event conceived and promoted by the  
**Fondazione Terzo Pilastro - Italia e Mediterraneo**  
with the sponsorship of the **Minister of the Cultural Patrimony and Activities and of Tourism**  
and organised by the **Superintendency of Pompeii**,  
the **Contini Art Gallery** (Venice - Cortina d'Ampezzo) and by the **Atelier Mitoraj** (Pietrasanta)

## MITORAJ IN POMPEII

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After the success of the exhibitions at the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento and at the Trajan's Market in Rome, a new exhibition comes to life in the archaeological site of Pompeii with monumental sculptures by the Polish-French artist, Igor Mitoraj who passed away in 2014. The archaeological classicism and the contemporaneity of Mitoraj's art – one never overwhelming the other – establish a harmonious, dialectic bond that emphasise and enhance the historical solemnity of the excavations as much as the delicate figures of the master sculptor.

Professor Emmanuele F.M. Emanuele, the Chairman of the Fondazione Terzo Pilastro states, "This exhibition conceived and promoted by the Fondazione Terzo Pilastro – Italia e Mediterraneo, represents a desired continuation of the previous exhibition in 2011 at the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento and was born from an idea cultivated by myself and the Maestro, precisely in Agrigento. The excavations of Pompeii today welcome the monumental sculptures of Mitoraj in the same way that a theatre would welcome the performance of its actors. As previously experimented, beauty is blended with ancient history as it dialogues with a contemporary artistic expression in a perfect symbiosis between ancient and modern. In this respect, Mitoraj was a true master: his style in fact, although entrenched in classic tradition with a post-modern twist, draws from Mediterranean historical patrimony and is conceived – in my opinion – as a sea of encounters between people, civilisations and culture".

"Gods and mythological heroes will populate the streets and the squares of the city buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, and emerge from the ruins like a vision", states Massimo Osanna, General Director of the Superintendency of Pompeii. "The mute and iconic symbols in Mitoraj's works, in their immanence, recall the profound classic values of classicism in a contemporary culture. In 1852 Théophile Gautier wrote, 'In Pompeii, two steps separate ancient life from the modern'".

With the organisation of Stefano and Riccarda Contini (Contini Art Gallery) and under the artistic direction of Luca Pizzi (Atelier Mitoraj), nearly thirty monumental bronze sculptures will be placed in diverse sections of the archaeological site – from the Sanctuary of Venus to the Forum, from the *via dell'Abbondanza* to the Stabian Baths and up to the Quadriporticus of the Theatres. The massive and elegantly sculpted figures, inspired from the classic iconology of myths and legends, will co-habit alongside the architecture of ancient Pompeii – *Daedalus* and the Sanctuary of Venus, the *Centaur* and the Forum, the *Centurion* at the Stabian baths and *Ikaro alato* at the triangular Forum. This grandiose project is expected to inject new lifeblood into one of the most important archaeological areas in the world.

On 14<sup>th</sup> May in the Quadriporticus of the Theatres, inside the archaeological site, the vernissage of the exhibition will take place along with the presentation of the catalogue with exclusive photographic images by Giovanni Ricci-Novara and critical essays by Richard Cork and Eike Schmidt.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY:

*IGOR MITORAJ was born in 1944 in Oederan (Saxony) of a Polish mother and a French father. He spent his youth in Poland near the city of Krakow, where he would follow the courses of Tadeusz Kantor (1914-1990), a renowned painter, theatre director and set designer.*

*In 1968, under the advice of Kantor, he left Poland for Paris, where he would enroll in the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts. He widespread success of his first important exhibition in 1976 held at the Galerie La Hune in Paris, urged him to dedicate his talents exclusively to sculpture. In that same period he was awarded the "Montrouge Prix de la Sculpture" and the French Minister of Culture provided him with a studio at Montmartre. The following year, Mitoraj was invited to participate in the 42<sup>nd</sup> edition of the International Biennale in Venice.*

*In 1987 he acquired an atelier in Pietrasanta and in 1989 Mitoraj for the first time, presented his works at the New York Academy of Art. In the years after he would hold numerous solo exhibitions, receive invitations to exhibit in the most important international museums and receive prestigious commissions for creating monumental sculptures in major cities amongst which included the British Museum, Canary Wharf in London, Bamberg (Germany), La Défense in Paris, the Uffizi Galleries and the Boboli Gardens in Florence, Piazza del Carmine in Milan, the Scala Theatre, continuing with Piazza Monte Grappa and Piazza Mignanelli (Rome) to the Olympic Museum in Lausanne (Switzerland).*

*In 1995 Mitoraj began a collaboration with the Contini Gallery of Art, located in Venice and Cortina d'Ampezzo.*

*In 2001, the President of Italian Republic bestowed on him the "Vittorio De Sica Award".*

*In the years between 2002 and 2006 he dedicated his time to set and costume designing for two Puccini operas, "Manon Lescaut" and "Tosca" staged during the Puccini Festival in the city of Torre del Lago.*

*In 2003 Mitoraj installed the monumental Dea Roma and the monumental doors of the Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri (Rome).*

*Igor Mitoraj is an honorary citizen of Pietrasanta, Greve in Chianti and Massa Marittima.*

*In 2007, the Academy of Krakow bestowed on Mitoraj an honorary degree.*

*In 2009 he completed the set design and costumes for Giuseppe Verdi's "Aida" staged in Florence at the Boboli Gardens as well as the monumental bronze door for the Jesuit Church of Warsaw.*

*In 2010 the Salento Faculty of Cultural Heritage also bestowed on him an honorary degree in Archaeology.*

*In 2011, The Valley of the Temples in Agrigento (Sicily) welcomed his monumental sculptures, a prestigious première for an archaeological site to accommodate contemporary art. In the same year his works were exhibited at the Civic Museum of Archaeology in the town of Sarteano.*

*In 2012 Mitoraj's works were exhibited in the city of Ravello - in the Chapel of villa Rufolo and in the Niemeyer Auditorium. That same year he was decorated with the Cross of Merit from the Order of the Rebirth of Poland.*

*In 2013 during the Centennial celebration of the Arena of Verona Foundation, the artist designed the set for the staging of Giuseppe Verdi's Requiem Mass.*

*In 2014 on the occasion of the 950<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone for the Cathedral of Pisa, Mitoraj's works were exhibited in the Piazza Duomo, inside the Palazzo of the Opera and the Museum of the Sinopie. Once again, Mitoraj brought contemporary art to where it had never been before.*

*Igor Mitoraj died in Paris on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.*

*In 2015 the city of Pietrasanta honored his memory with an important exhibition; the Contini Gallery in Venice followed this with its own tribute to the artist.*

*In 2016 a monumental exhibition where the works of the great sculptor were exhibited inside the archaeological excavations of Pompeii.*