

MARIO ARLATI

THE MATTER BECOMES ART

July 23rd - October 16th, 2022



Viareggio's Municipal Administration, in collaboration with **Contini Art Gallery**, is pleased to present the exhibition "**Matter becomes Art**" by the talented and well-known contemporary artist **Mario Arlati**, who will be exhibiting for the first time in Viareggio from **July 23rd** to **October 2nd 2022** at the **Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea Viani (GAMC)**, inside the historic Palazzo delle Muse.

The exhibition "**La Materia diventa Arte**" ("Matter becomes Art") highlights the evolution of Arlati's experimentation with material: from colour to texture and the three-dimensionality of matter, as well as the expression of colour on different surfaces and light's natural chiaroscuro effects that create infinite perceptions.

Viareggio deeply identifies with this symbiosis between art and matter, as material experimentation is rooted in the city's craft and artistic heritage that is recognised in Versilia more than anywhere else in the world.

Mario Arlati has always been passionately dedicated to the production of his artworks, which are influenced by the surrounding environment, particularly by its colours, its materials and light, as they approach the imagery of Arte Povera. Arlati considers matter as an inner reflection made up of feelings and evocations of the landscape. His works show the quest for a pure matter deprived of its functions. So, painting is matter concealing other matter within itself.

Arlati works with shreds of canvas and rags which are soaked in colour, then twisted and knotted. His flags evoke feelings and images of the past, and reconnect thoughts before the viewer's eyes.

Mario Arlati's *Incomplete Flags* represent a concept derived from the "virtuous recycling" of salvaged materials. They are worn and disconnected remnants that evoke ideas, memories and passions of individuals and communities in constant confrontation and change.

Meeting the artist and his flags made up of rags and ceramics means grasping and sharing fragments of a profound collective identity that is able to resist globalisation and the voracity of time.

His art does not want to be descriptive in any way, but instead it seeks to dig into the conscience of the individual in order to reveal a common human and emotional heritage.

The purest colour offers itself in its frank loquacity and is transformed into real pictorial gestures.

The light reflected in Arlati's canvases reveals sensations, journeys and tales of lived times that also originate from the typical light of Eivissa (the Catalan word for Ibiza) in the Balearic Islands, which is reproduced by the artist's constant pictorial research.

The colours mark the material in the same way that memories are imprinted in the memory. This results in a painting indicative of a reciprocity that cross world cultures with a vocation for integration.

Mario Arlati stages a veritable "Poetry of Matter"; for him, poetics serves as the incalculable foundation of the act of painting, as well as the visual genesis that the body is able to solicit.

In this exhibition, thoughts take shape as they go through works made of rags, ceramics, silk, and large quantities of pigment that dig into the memory to bring back distant emotions and memories.

In this way Arlati manages to give expression to the most hidden emotions by making them palpable presences.

BIOGRAPHY

Mario Arlati was born in Milan in 1947 and his artistic formation matured at the School of Art in Castello Sforzesco, Milan. Following his artistic inclination, his first works were in a purely figurative style, but then he moved onto a more informal matteric style, following in the footsteps of the Spanish school of art. In the 1970s he discovered his true dimension in Ibiza, the smallest of the Balearic Islands. Since then, Mario Arlati has been living and working in Ibiza for many months of the year. Arlati's matter is a representation of his intimate soul, made of feelings, emotions, and landscape's evocations. His "Walls" are a representation of the bright, sunny atmosphere of the island of Ibiza, as well as of the symbiosis created between man and nature and its incessant effects on the works of man. According to Arlati, painting is matter that exists through colour, to which Arlati attributes symbolic connotations: the colour black recalls fear and the unknown, the colour white the purity of an idea, the blue the finality of a vision and the red blood and violence. Arlati's most recent artistic production is focused on the subject of flags. The series *Incomplete flags* was developed from a project supported by the European Union and is an open tribute to the artist Jasper Johns. Arlati strongly emphasises the word incomplete, highlighting the active role of the viewers, who are called by the artist to complete the artwork through their intuition and imagination. The use of rags recycled from the dry cleaners and casually painted by the artist's brush recalls Arlati's poetics, which draws much from arte povera while developing a new and fresh artistic gesture. Already well established both in Italy and abroad, in 2014 Arlati is further noticed with his project *Living Art*, when he paints the facades of the five skyscrapers Pavshino Living Art Towers, designed by Dante O. Benini in Moscow. For this same works, he won the Special Price L'Arca International in 2017. In 2018 in Venice he inaugurates the exhibition *Muri e Stracci: la materia diventa Arte* at Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa. During the same winter, his video-installation *Art Light Flags* lights up the tower bell in San Marco and in occasion of the Carnival of Venice, he inaugurates his video- installation *Blame the moon*, which was made to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the moon landing. In February 2021, Arlati re-proposes his vide-installation *Art Light Flags* projecting it on the façade of the Cristallo Hotel – a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa in Cortina d'Ampezzo – on the occasion of the hotel's 120th anniversary. Mario Arlati lives and works between Milan and Ibiza and has been represented exclusively by the Contini Art Gallery in Venice and Cortina since 2001.

MARIO ARLATI – *La Materia diventa Arte*
Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea Lorenzo Viani
Palazzo delle Muse, Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini, 55049 Viareggio LU

The exhibition will run until October 16th



COMUNE di VIAREGGIO

CONTINI
GALLERIA D'ARTE

Opening hours:

Wednesday-Saturday: 3.30 p.m. -7.30 p.m.

Sunday: 9.30 a.m. -1.30 p.m. / 3.30 p.m. -7.30 p.m.

Monday-Tuesday: closed

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