

IGOR MITORAJ
THE ART
OF WEARING ART



**GALLERIA D'ARTE CONTINI – P.ZZA SILVESTRO FRANCESCHI, 1
CORTINA D'AMPEZZO (BL)**

December 29th 2018 – April 22nd 2019

After the great success of the exhibition *I gioielli di Igor Mitoraj: The Art of Wearing Art* in the Venetian location, the Contini Art Gallery is delighted to present this precious collection of jewelry in the gallery in Cortina d'Ampezzo.

For over twenty years, the Contini Art Gallery has dedicated particular attention to Igor Mitoraj, one of the most significant artists in the national and international contemporary scene, a point of reference for art collectors from all over the world.

Mitoraj's artistic creation is very elaborate. Carrara marble, travertine, bronze with patinas of different colors characterize his sculptures, even monumental, but in addition to this well-established and well-known production, his sensitivity has been able to express itself in another less known form: jewels.

The exhibition proposes a wide selection of jewels, over twenty pieces including necklaces, bracelets, rings and brooches. These refined objects are evidence of a deep research between tradition, taste, harmony, beauty and art, through the processing of precious materials such as yellow gold, white, pink and silver.

The show will therefore enhance Mitoraj's attention to *jewel*, considered not only as an accessory, but above all a masterpiece to wear. Faces that turn into bright and golden rings or bracelets, necklaces made up of sinuous tree fragments and figures, mythological elements in elegant and shiny silver tones: this collection shows once again the eclecticism and the ability of Mitoraj to challenge himself through the experimentation of new artistic expressions such as jewelry.

There is the opportunity to discover a more intimate and engrossed Mitoraj, with its themes based on the purity of the forms and the measure of the material, where balance of proportions and constant artistic research take the appearance of jewelry made of precious metals, giving life to miniature works with the same emotional impact and the same energy of a sculpture. It is the vision of jewelry as a true artistic object, with its uniqueness and elegance: far beyond being a simple feminine adornment, it also enriches the spirit of the wearer.

With his skillful and elegant dexterity, Mitoraj has been able to project classical art into modernity, transforming the protagonists of Greek and Roman statuary into fragmented, blindfolded, mutilated and sensual bodies and faces. This is not a nostalgic look at the past, nor a simple philological work: the topics chosen by the artist are the starting point for a broader reflection on timeless themes such as love, sexual desire, femininity, but also loneliness and suffering.

The central theme of his works is, as always, the man and the uncertainty of life, the introspective research about the human condition and the contemporary society. His sculptural sensibility is perceived in blindfolded faces, faces with empty orbits, in sleeping heads, in armless busts, in winged limbs, in strong and masculine torsos, often engraved and carved out by cracks or "windows" containing objects, symbols, images, abstract forms as all messages that involve the viewer, arousing in him continuous questions.

IGOR MITORAJ was born in 1944 of a Polish mother and a French father in Oederan, Germany. He spends his youth in Krakow where he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts. Under the tutelage of Tadeusz Kantor, he was introduced to contemporary artists such as Andy Warhol, Lichtenstein, Merz and Klein. In 1968 he arrived in Paris to continue his studies at the *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts* (National High School of Fine Arts). A lengthy stay in Mexico in the early seventies allowed him to study South American and Aztec cultures. At this point, Mitoraj chooses to express himself artistically in the form of sculpture. In 1976, his first personal exhibition at the La Hune Gallery in Paris is an enormous success. He is awarded important prizes such as the "Montrouge Prix de la Sculpture" and is encouraged by the French minister of Culture who provides him with a studio at Montmartre. Mitoraj travelled extensively, in particular to New York and Greece. After a visit to Pietrasanta in Tuscany, a sculptor paradise, the artist discovers marble as an ideal material for his sculptures, in addition to his previous use of terracotta and bronze. In 1983, he chooses to make Italy his home and opens a studio in Pietrasanta, though he continues to maintain his Paris atelier. In 1986, Mitoraj accepts an invitation to participate in the XLII International Biennial Art Exhibition in Venice. In only a few years' time, Mitoraj's works of art have been exhibited in many countries, often one-man showings as well as displayed in important museums. He began to receive significant international commissions for his huge monumental sculptures both from private collectors as well as from the public sector. His works can be seen in London at the British Museum and Canary Wharf, at Bamberg and Krakow; in Paris at La Défense, at the Uffizi Museum and the Boboli Gardens in Florence, in Piazza del Carmine and the Scala Theatre in Milan as well as in Rome in Piazza Monte Grappa and Piazza Mignanelli. In 2004, Mitoraj exhibits his monumental sculptures at the Tuileries Gardens of Paris, at the Mercati di Traiano in Rome (in collaboration with the Contini Art Gallery) and at the Royal Palace of Warsaw. In September 2005, The Contini Art Gallery of Venice in collaboration with the city of Venice Civic Museums of Art and History, inaugurate an exhibition entitled *Mitoraj a Venezia*, an exhibition of 21 sculptures, 16 of monumental size along with 25 inedited designs. This exhibition followed an artistic route throughout the heart of the city of Venice – the Contini Art Gallery, Cà Pesaro Museum of Modern Art and strategically placed in various campos, along the Grand Canal. Other points of interest even extended to Mestre on the mainland in the San Giuliano Park and at the Civic Center. The exhibition is a huge success. In September 2008, the Contini Gallery inaugurates a personal exhibition, *BiancoNero* in its Venice gallery, with completely new works realized expressly by the artist for this occasion – twenty or more sculptures in chromatic and material dissonance – white Carrara marble black Belgian marble and bronze works in black patina – all placed in a highly atmospheric setting. The artist also presented a series of icons on a gold background, utilizing the antique pictorial technique of encaustic art of which the ancient Greeks and Pompeians were master craftsmen. The exhibition held from September 27, 2008 to April 15, 2009 attracted many visitors and collectors. In 2011 his monumental sculptures are exhibited in the beautiful frame of Temple Valley, in Sicily, while in the spring 2012 the solo exhibition *Memoriae* is unveiled, during the "Ravello Festival 2012", in the amazing location of Amalfitane Coast. In 2014 two important events for the artist take place: an exhibition to inaugurate the monumental complex in Miracoli Square, Pisa, on May 16th, and the unveiling of the first exhibition at the recently opened gallery Contini Art UK in London on May 22nd. The artist has worked between Italy and France until his death in Paris in October 2014.

Inauguration on Saturday December 29th 2018, at 6:30 pm
The exhibition will remain open daily through April 22nd, 2019
Hours: 10:00 am – 1:00 pm / 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Catalogue curated by Giovanni Ricci Novara

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