

PRESS RELEASE

**Oliviero Rainaldi
AQUAE**

Venice International University, San Servolo

May 29th to November 24th 2013

Inauguration with the presence of the artist May 29th, 30th, 31st from 10.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Presentation of the catalogue May 31st, 11.00 a.m.

The Ambassador Umberto Vattani, President of the *Venice International University* is due to inaugurate the exhibition *AQUAE* by Oliviero Rainaldi on the occasion of the 55. *Venice Biennale* International Art Exhibition: “*AQUAE*, the exhibition of Oliviero Rainaldi’s works on the island of San Servolo, held in conjunction with the Venice Art Biennale, is in a way a consecration. The sculptor has lived in Venice, where he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts under Emilio Vedova and later worked for many years with Fabio Mauri. So the exhibition on San Servolo marks his return to a city that has played a central role in the development of his artistic sensibility. The backdrop against which his sculptures are set is the campus of *Venice International University* on the island of San Servolo, a unique institution that brings together Universities from all over the world”.

After Michelangelo Pistoletto, Vettor Pisani and various other important international artists, the moment has now arrived to pay tribute to Oliviero Rainaldi (Caramanico Terme, Pescara 1956), who has returned to the area where he lived during his childhood. The artist presents a series of twelve sculptures inspired by the theme of water in the unique setting of the park of the island of San Servolo that set up a dialogue with the lagoon, the open spaces, the buildings and the courtyards of the University. His work, which for over thirty years has been in bronze, plaster, gold, marble and glass, is now enhanced by the vital and evocative presence of water, which is utilized as a raw material and a surface to be modelled. This will be the third exhibition dedicated to this topical theme, which has already been developed by the artist in his previous two exhibitions, at Villa Aldobrandini, Rome (2009) and at Villa Pisani (VE) (2010).

The works on display refer to the world of ancient myths: the *Aphrodite* seems to disappear, absorbed by the flowing waters of the lagoon, the *Four Ages* emerge from a transparent cube, and the gilded *Venus* comes alive with the passing of a thin veil of water. The *Argonaut*, an 8 meter high stele covered in gold leaf and cloaked in running water, turns towards the lagoon and the Giardini di Venezia, in a way that seems to be a tribute to the eternal bond that unites Rainaldi and his master old and friend Fabio Mauri.

The choice of the VIU campus, with its gardens and courtyards, is a constantly evolving challenge for Oliviero Rainaldi, but it is also an exciting opportunity for the professors and students from all over the world who will visit the island.

Oliviero Rainaldi currently lives and works in Rome. He was born in Caramanico Terme in 1956. He studied at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts alongside painter Emilio Vedova and at the Aquila Academy of Fine Arts with Fabio Mauri. Between 1998-1999 he extended his personal interest for the connection between Art and Liturgy, attending the biennium of studies at the Theological Institut of Sant' Anselmo and also a three year course of Theology for Laici in Rome.

Since 1976, the work of Rainaldi has focused on the human figure, through an exploration of drawings, paintings and sculptures. In the nineties he began to create compositions of a hidden narrative character. He switched to portraying isolated figures, depicted through linear signage in perfect simplicity. He allowed bodies or fragments of bodies to exist simply through their fine and subtle connections with the archaic and medieval cultures. Such works include the series *Gisant* (1990), *Battesimi Umani* (1992), *Caduti* (1993), or the more recent *Santo* (2000), *Conversazioni* (2001) and *Vergini* (2006).

In 2007 he presented at the Sale del Mappamondo and at the Appartamento Barbo of Palazzo Venezia in Rome a major exhibition of works from 1988 to 2006. Always in Rome, in 2010 he presented *The Nature of Things* (*La Natura delle Cose*), an exhibition of sculptures with water in the gardens of Villa Aldobrandini. In 2011, the same show was moved to the National Museum of Villa Pisani (VE). Important personal exhibitions have also been held at the Foundation Staurós in San Gabriele (TE) (1999) and at the Gallery of Modern Art of Bologna (2003).

Since 2000, Rainaldi has worked on various ecclesiastical commissions, creating the liturgical furnishings for churches in Rome, Terni, Prato and Warsaw. During the Jubilee of 2000, the Pope John Paul II awarded him the title of 'Academic' of the Pontifical Academy of Fine Arts and Letters of the Virtuosi of Pantheon.

Between 2007 and 2010, he created sculptures-awards on commission dedicated to the issues of peace, human rights and culture, including: Alberto Sordi award (2009 to 2012); award for the peace San Francesco d'Assisi, Comunità S. Egidio, Rome / Assisi (2006 to 2008); award for San Valentino per l'impegno per la pace, Robert F. Kennedy Foundation of Europe (2008); 80 World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, Campidoglio, Rome (2007); La Scienza per l'Uomo award, University Campus Biomedico, Rome (2007); Anima award, Unione degli Industriali e delle imprese, Rome (2010).

In 2010 Rainaldi was awarded the European Personality Prize in Campidoglio, Rome.

His works have been shown in various museums in Italy and abroad, including:

GAM, Rome (1990); Otis Parson, Los Angeles (1991); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (1993); Polk Museum, Florida (1996); Museum Beelden Aan Zee, Scheveningen (2000); Museum of Modern Art Rupertinum, Salzburg (2000); Museum National Jakarta, Indonesia (2001); Mücsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest (2002); Tokyo Design Center, Gotanda (2004); Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (2006); Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park di Grand Rapids, Michigan (2006); MASP - São Paulo Museum of Art, São Paulo (2008);

National Museum of Fine Arts, Buenos Aires (2008); Museum José Luis Cuevas, Mexico City (2009); Expò, Shanghai (2010); Blickachsen 8, Bad Homburg e Frankfurt (2011);

His works can also be seen in the collections of important national and international public institutions, including:

Battesimi Umani, seat of the Nobel prize, Municipality Palace, Stockholm (1995); *Battesimi Umani*, Palace of ONU, Geneva (1998); *Engagement*, MACRO, Rome (2000); *La déjeuner sur le blanc*, MAMbo, Bologna (2003); The Collection of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome; *Conversazioni*, Piazza del Cinquecento, Rome (2011-2012); *Santo*, The Pontifical Council for Culture, Vatican City (2012); *Antigone*, Ex Sala Capitolare, Avvocatura dello Stato (2013);

Venice International University (VIU) is an international network of Universities and Public Institutions with its own campus on the island of San Servolo, in the Venice lagoon. This international learning and research center was founded in 1995 and is comprised of the following Universities:

Boston College (USA), Duke University (USA), the European University at St Petersburg – EUSP (Russia), Ludwig Maximilians Universität - LMU (Germany), Tel Aviv University - TAU (Israele), Tongji University (China), Tsinghua University (China), Università luav di Venezia (Italy), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona - UAB (Spain), Università Ca' Foscari Venezia (Italy), Università di Padova (Italy), Waseda University (Japan); and the following Public Institutions: National Research Council - CNR (Italy), Ministry of the Environment (Italy) and the Province of Venice (Italy).

The mission of VIU is to offer advanced training and research in an international context, by promoting the exchange of ideas and knowledge with a multicultural and interdisciplinary approach and in agreement with the different academic traditions of the Universities which are part of VIU.

Each year VIU welcomes professors, researchers and students of different nationalities who live together, study and carry out research on its campus on key topics such as globalization, sustainable development, innovation and the promotion of Cultural Heritage.

Venice International University has a great interest in contemporary art. On its campus visitors can admire works of art by internationally renowned contemporary artists. Moreover, VIU looks at contemporary art as an experimental tool to promote innovative forms of research and training.

Artistic processes combine ideas, suggestions and creative thinking which can turn into a first step towards new training methods, where theory is combined with creativity and the semantics of art.

VIU encourages the practice of contemporary art in order to pursue research based not only on data and statistics but also on human and artistic implications.

In the past years VIU has actively participated in the Venice Biennale by promoting exhibitions on different innovative topics, such as:

Radar Connecting Europe, 50th Venice Art Biennale, 2003

L'Isola Interiore: Il Terzo Paradiso, 51st Venice Art Biennale, 2005

Curated by Achille Bonito Oliva with Michelangelo Pistoletto and Cittadellarte

Mobile Journey, 52nd Venice Art Biennale, 2007

Curated by Lorella Scacco, a dialogue between artistic experimentation and technological research.

L'Isola Interiore: Isolamenti e Follia, di Vettor Pisani, 52.ma Biennale d'Arte, 2007

A cura di Achille Bonito Oliva

A Gift to Marco Polo, Contemporary Art from China, 53rd Venice Art Biennale, 2009

Curated by Lu Peng and Achille Bonito Oliva.

Mapping Contemporary Venice – from the City of Today to the Venice of the Future, 54th Venice Art Biennale, 2010

Information

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