

PRESS RELEASE

Marco Bagnoli

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Opening Thursday 16th September 2004 - 7.00 p.m.

From 17th September to 14th November 2004

Open Tuesday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. – from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.

16th September: Marco Bagnoli's personal show will be opened at Nicola Fornello gallery. The Tuscan artist, who has been taking part in the major international shows for years, such as the Biennial International Exhibition of Modern Art in Venice (1982, 1993, 1997) and Documenta in 1982 and 1992, is now back to Prato: let us not forget his past exhibitions at the Pecci Museum, on occasion of *Europa oggi* show in 1988, besides his personal show in 1995. Since the mid '70s, Marco Bagnoli has also participated in many collective shows both in Italy and abroad (X Biennale de Paris, *Arte e Critica*, *Identité Italienne*, *The European Iceberg*, *Promenades*, *Ouverture*, *SoonsbeeK*, *East meets West*, *Periodi di Marmo*, *Minimalia*, *Belvedere dell'Arte*). Major museum institutions, such as the Castle of Rivoli, the Magasin in Grenoble, the De Appel in Amsterdam, the Centre of Contemporary Art in Geneva, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Lyon and the IVAM in Valencia, have arranged personal shows of the artist.

The artist's path has been a peculiar one, all of his own, ahead of time. For his installations, those being special ones, he has chosen places of high artistic and architectural, religious and spiritual worth: the Pazzi Chapel in Florence, the Medicea Villa of the hundred chimneys in Artimino, the Octagonal Room of the Fortezza da Basso in Florence, the Church of San Miniato al Monte and the rooms of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. His works form part of international public and private collections, while permanent installations are present all around, on request of public institutions and private artistic patrons.

Marco Bagnoli has always operated on a dual level, by searching for the spiritual meaning of art and for the transcendental nature of images, while passionately manipulating shapes and materials, probing into various techniques and genres, freely roaming over all kinds of technologies, from the utmost sophisticated to the very basic ones, using traditional materials such as marble, bronze, fired clay. Bagnoli conceives a work as a threshold, as well

as a path to go through and beyond, to be forgotten in order to gain a higher view, whose shadow-shedding-icon is the work itself. Nevertheless, the supreme power of beauty is asserted, either as an effect or effusion, symbol or memory, whose meaning lies in the wonder it arouses and in the mysterious alchemical process scattered during the sensory perception. Beauty lies both in the work and in the image, and it springs from the alteration of the matter and of the language, of signs and materials; its purpose is not confined to a mere sight or sensual pleasure, rather regards the higher and supreme nature of the image itself. Symbolic level, technique, scheming, formal values, shapes: these tools are used to create a mutual relationship, a double transformation, the subject's and the object's, who disclose the profound and sublime sacredness of being. Revealing and displaying mean reaching a threshold, an extreme limit, such as that "of a temple which men are not allowed to enter, as they are not able to truly meditate on the mystery, being it unbearable to human eyes". Earthly beauty is "just a faint reflex of the celestial one". Image and imagination, words and writing are nothing but the cover wrapping the magnificence of truth, the maze dividing and connecting the empirical world and the Absolute. Bagnoli's work manifestly expands through connections, strains and impressions: his shows always present especially enchanting and beautiful works, being part of a huge scheming - artist and audience included - arranged so as to allow the transcendence of the *mise en scène* and of the work itself. This being the sole way enabling us to distinguish the original source of the pattern appearing, which is sensed and perceived. That same *source from which the knight drank, which quenched his thirst forever*, states the artist.

Scientific, alchemical, mystic knowledge, artist's writing, Platonic and neoplatonic philosophy, Hermeticism, multi-religious sacred writings, history of art, a great many knowledges and recollections: these are the sources on which Bagnoli draws when he wants to overstep the knowledge itself and soothe his melancholy through a double tendency, being either formal or spiritual.

Bagnoli's personal show will include a new staging of both new and old works. We are dealing with a sort of path, a fleeing one, featured by visions, thresholds and entrances, where the becoming shapes and the sensory beauty show a further direction; light and shadow, just like space-time ratio, call up a passage, a connection and an overcoming limit. It is the so-called

buon luogo, as stated by Fulvio Salvadori, a place where the symbols and the shapes are cleared up by the appearance of the 'logos'.

Following one's emotions upon seeing such performance of shadows, means being able to perceive and behold something more sublime, exceeding the pathos of beauty: that 'something' arouses our emotions.

La Parola: a grand imposing maze, made up of dozens of benches piled up one over the other, will initiate the audience into the contemplation of the overturned fire-balloon, *L'albero Rovesciato*, and of its projected shadow. Three stripes, being red, silver and gold coloured, are painted in various points of the gallery, whose sizes correspond to the golden section relating to the narrow door, being the thresholds and the passage limits. Another area of the gallery is reserved for the big parabola, which reflects the gardens and throw their shadows on the walls. The focal point features small wall-mounted ceramic balls, *Quincunx*, which have been dipped in gold and silver paint; these balls are arranged according to the quincunx drawing, a Roman unit of measurement used for arranging trees in the gardens and in the plantations, whose origin is to be traced back to mystical and magical roots. The *Dog*, an abstract figure, according to the hermetic tradition, watches over the seven sleeping figures, *I 7 Dormienti*, who wait for resurrection in the cave.