



## **ARTS&CRAFTS&DESIGN, PALAZZO LITTA, MILAN**

**Time**, by Gianluca Pacchioni

**La Grande Bellezza**, by Starhotels

**Doppia Firma**, by Michelangelo Foundation,  
Fondazione Cologni, Living

**Francis Sultana x Bonacina**

**Zodiac**, by Creative Academy

### **Gianluca Pacchioni**

#### **TIME**

#### **A site specific monumental sculpture in Palazzo Litta on the occasion of Doppia Firma 2023**

On the occasion of the 2023 Salone del Mobile, the Michelangelo Foundation for Creativity and Craftsmanship is pleased to present the seventh edition of Doppia Firma. Dialogues Between Design and Artisanal Excellence. The project was conceived by the Fondazione Cologni dei Mestieri d'Arte and developed with Living, the interiors, design and lifestyle magazine published by Corriere della Sera.

Visitors to the new edition will be welcomed at Palazzo Litta by the imposing site-specific artwork executed by Milanese master artisan **Gianluca Pacchioni**, who specialises in sculpting stone and metal, in collaboration with **Girasole Pietre Naturali**. Run by Enrico Barbessi and Pierangelo Zantedeschi. The company is at the cutting-edge of experimentation and craftsmanship when it comes to stone, with expertise which harnesses the traditional heritage of the local area.

Richini's monumental 17th-century Courtyard of Honour is the setting for the work of this exceptional artisan-artist, a veritable demiurge and heir of the Renaissance tradition, who will have the opportunity to express, with the sculptural energy that characterises his works, the strength and intensity of his creative process, arising from the convergence of art and inspiration, talent and originality, in the name of his great artistic and technical expertise.

In these premises, the artist and artisan - a demiurge in the fashion of a true renaissance man - has managed to convey the force and intensity of creative action with the sculptural power which defines all his works. A force that is unleashed when

art and inspiration, talent and originality all come together under the banner of exceptional artistic and technical knowhow.

The astonishing block of green, pink and light-blue onyx weighing no less than five tonnes reached Milan from the Middle East following a long and intense journey. Only the most skilled professionals can source and work with difficult materials of such priceless beauty.

“I’ve encountered a rare form of creative and professional energy with Girasole, from sourcing materials in the most far-flung corners of the globe to finding solutions for the trickiest parts of the production process. Our relationship is based on overcoming limits and on seeking out the truly unique.” (Gianluca Pacchioni)

## **Sculpting Mystery**

by Federica Sala

“Ye were not made to live like unto brutes, but forpursuit of virtue and of knowledge” reads a well-known quote from Dante’s *Inferno* (canto 26, v.119) with which Ulysses, the hero of human reason triumphing over all else, incites his companions to set off on a new adventure: destination unknown. In the poem, that destination is the vast, unexplored sea that stretches out before those men, reaching far beyond the renowned Pillars of Hercules in the modern-day Straits of Gibraltar.

And that is just what Gianluca Pacchioni does with his sculpture: he puts distance between himself and the limits of the known world, abandoning himself to the ebb and flow of mystery, of the lands – submerged but then revealed – an artist can unveil through the intensity of his work.

According to Dante, and Aristotle before him, the desire for knowledge was one of man’s most defining traits: being rational, reaching out to the darkest corners of the world around him to bring light, the light of reason. This vision has often underpinned scientific research and its attempt to explain phenomena, to translate them into physical laws, to understand them and consequently possess them. The personal research of artists, on the other hand, is driven by a magma of sensations – whether manifest or implied – which, like a river in flood, courses through the veins beneath their skin, momentarily finding a distilled form of completeness in their work of art.

These opposing forces, the desire to descend into the belly itself of mystery, is what first spawned *Time*, the sculpture crafted by artist Gianluca Pacchioni out of his desire to translate the thrill of the unknown. Unlike many of his previous works which sought to master the matter, to stretch it to its very limits, almost as if forcing it to bend to human will, with this work

Gianluca Pacchioni has entered a new phase of his artistic experimentation of truly majestic dimensions. It is a more mature phase in which the ignorance before the ancestral forces of nature and the cosmos reveals humbleness, and with it all the grandeur, of humankind. For tackling our greatest dilemmas, such as *Time* itself, is what humanism is all about. So it is no longer a question of an artist who must forge things, dominate and demonstrate, but instead the bare wonder man experiences before the mystery of the skies, the utterly unfathomable nature of astronomical time. Those nigh-on five tonnes of Middle-Eastern onyx not only encompass the seven

thousand kilometres the block covered to reach the courtyard of Palazzo Litta; it also encapsulates the millions of years of crystallization of minerals and silica from times unknown to us.

What was once submerged now affords a glimpse of the geological eras of our planet, almost like an ancestral time machine taking us back to our most ancient history. In which each era, each century, each decade and each day, left the mark of its passing. The power of the matter itself is such that it annihilates the visitor's vision. But if it were only material, we would be looking at the work of a geologist instead of an artist. What we have is an artist leaving his own mark on a submerged terrestrial mirror which reveals the celestial heavens.

With a hole. A vortex. A gateway to another world. An invitation to launch ourselves into infinity, or rather to trace its limits within the bounds of present-day knowledge. A hole which is a funnel through time, giving us a way in, but also a way out. In the midst of it all is the mystery along the thin horizon on which the artist tiptoes.

All the force of the sculpture gathers around the edges of this hole, this dimension in the making. In the midst. Which is precisely where Gianluca Pacchioni wants to be. On the edge of this blackhole which, just sixty years ago, we were not even able to see, and which we can now take pictures of, hear and study thanks to the equation between time, gravity and space we have grasped thanks to Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity (1905). The theory which has since allowed us tiny human beings to catapult ourselves onto the edge of this space vacuum. Which is where we remain, a split second before Time is distorted.

But the sculpture casts its line a little further out, beyond the three irregular bronze elliptical shapes which convey an idea of movement, of something that remains unresolved; they bring movement to the central body of the sculpture, posing us the same question Ulysses asked his companions: "And after? What is there after?"

So, what is there after the edge of the blackhole?

Perhaps that quantum leap in the film Interstellar which Christopher Nolan allowed us to glimpse. Or perhaps white holes, where time is turned on its head, as recently theorised by physicist Carlo Rovelli? It is this combination of fear and desire, of joy and bewilderment which Time conveys, taking us to the very edge of the horizon of a new interstellar space in which matter is no longer imploded and absorbed as it is in blackholes, but is perhaps restored to a new, perhaps upended dimension of Time itself: the dimension of white holes.

And that is where the artist, in a state of wonder and astonishment, leaves us, at that very point on the unknown horizon, in the midst of mystery.

### **Gianluca Pacchioni**

Born in Milan 1966, after graduating in economics and business studies from the Bocconi university in Milan, he moved to Paris.

There, during the Nineties, he was plunged into the Paris art world and was overcome with a passion for sculpting metals which he experimented, self-taught, in the studio shared with other artists at the Quai de la Gare. The experiments then found their place, with the first collection of sculpture furniture in iron shown by an important gallery.

The return to Milan was dictated by the need to work in tandem with the flexibility, experience and creativity of Italian artisans. This relationship with the material and with artisans led to his leap from designer to homo faber.

He opened his Milan atelier in an eye drops factory from the 1930s, with the final

location for the forge and workshops set up in 1998. Since then the atelier has constantly forged sculptures and limited editions of furniture, produced for an international clientele.

Exploration is ongoing and there has been a move from iron to stainless steel, bronze, brass and aluminium, to patinas and experimental techniques with liquid metals. The workshop only produces works with experimental and innovative working and techniques.

In 2014, following an exhibition, one of his works was permanently exhibited as a symbol of Italian savoir-faire, at the entrance hall of the Italian Embassy in Paris.

## **Gianluca Pacchioni**

### **TIME**

#### **Italia 2023**

#### **In collaboration with Girasole Pietre Naturali**

Site-specific monumental sculpture

“Odyssey” onyx, bronze, steel

cm h 215 x 92 x 92 / pedestal h 50

Three bronze ellipses of different sizes, cm h 280-320

*Viabizzuno supports Doppia Firma by artfully illuminating the site-specific work by Gianluca Pacchioni in the courtyard of honor of Palazzo Litta.*

*An exceptional partner, who designs and installs light alongside great artists, designers and companies: at the forefront of research, always in the name of beauty and excellence.*

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