



GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

Via del Castello 11, San Gimignano (SI), Italia
tel. +390577943134 | info@galleriacontinua.com | www.galleriacontinua.com

ORNAGHI & PRESTINARI

Keeping Things Whole

Opening Saturday 26th May 2018, via del Castello 11, 6-9pm
Until 22nd September 2018, Monday to Sunday, 10am – 1pm / 2-7pm

A strange melancholy.

An unfulfilled desire.

Two sleeping figures, lares of the hearth, surrounded by things.

Keeping things whole (united and complex). Fragments, at times contradictory, of world: work, invention, new and scrap, ancient and technological, nature. There is nowhere else, there are no distinct categories. They are all aspects, parts, of one same complexity.

A brief wander, a stroll around the house, between elements and materials, techniques and situations, almost micro-accounts of a paradoxical and concrete reality bridging the quotidian and the void.

Ornaghi & Prestinari

Galleria Continua is pleased to present *Keeping Things Whole*, a solo exhibition by Ornaghi & Prestinari. High on the ones-to-watch list of a young generation of Italian artists, Valentina Ornaghi and Claudio Prestinari have also consolidated their position internationally in recent years, via a series of exhibitions in public spaces and museums abroad.

In the project that they have conceived for San Gimignano, the domestic intimacy of the home meets the museum concept of the staged space in which the objects are on show. The itinerary is composed of a substantial body of works: sculptures, paintings and collages specifically created for the exhibition, alongside a selection of their most recent pieces. Via these works the artists reflect on the meaning of manual work in a post-artisanal era which is characterised by the automation of the work process; on the connections between production and consumption; on the process of transforming materials and objects; and on the anthropological changes occurring in our society caught between work ethic and consumption aesthetic.

Borrowed from a poem by Mark Strand, the title of the exhibition – *Keeping Things Whole* – is a statement of intent. At the heart of the project are the “things” (in the artists’ native Italian “cose”, which is a contraction of the Latin “causa” – that which is important to us and which we are prepared to fight for). To this end, Ornaghi & Prestinari state: “*Through our poetics we seek to give familiar acts a new value. The everyday aspect of taking care of the house or objects, and of repairing or rebuilding them, lifts ordinary things to a more elevated level of reality. We make an effort to think of things as united, so as not to deprive them of their complexity: to make things cohabit rather than separate. We try to bring about coexistence and balance, to marry seemingly distant worlds, to preserve polysemy*”

(...) With practice, via daily acquaintance with the materials, we challenge ourselves to acquire new abilities. The final form is always the result of a process of refining, of working on a specific thing until it starts to speak.” The artists conclude their reflection with an extract from “*La vita della cose*” (“*The Life of Things, The Love of Things*”) by Remo Bodei (Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2009): “*From prehistoric utensils made of stone, bone or wood to early ceramics, from machines to computers, things have accompanied human beings along a long road. Changing with the times, places, and methods of their production, emerging from diverse histories and traditions, and enveloped in multiple layers of meaning, things embody ideas, emotions, and symbols of which we are often unaware (...) Things represent nodes of relationship with the life of others, rings of continuity between the generations, bridges that link individual and collective stories, connections between human civilisation and nature. Their relationship with us is, to a lesser extent, like the love between two people, in which the bond coexists with a reciprocal autonomy and neither is the exclusive property of the other.*”

In their works, Ornaghi & Prestinari elaborate and integrate formal influences and art-history references: the “*Inerti*” (sculptures which include prints of floral and vegetable motifs inspired by the designs of William Morris – initiator of the Arts and Crafts movement and pioneer of design); “*Paolina*” (a reworking of the famous Canova statue); “*Oltremarino (S. Martini)*” (a work which derives from reflecting on the relation of coexistence and distance with reality and image – between the mineral physicality of the lapis lazuli blue in panels by Simone Martini, and reproductions of the same in books) to give but a few examples. The artists focus on various aspects of “material culture”, understood as the relationship between man and objects, and on how this relationship is linked to the history of materials, their potential uses, planning, production techniques and consumption. In the exhibition, sculptures realised with natural materials such as stone (sodalite and alabaster), wood and clay hardened to ceramic dialogue with metal elements and structures which resemble ordinary mass-produced objects of everyday life.

Valentina Ornaghi (Milano, 1986) and **Claudio Prestinari** (Milano, 1984) began their university education at the Polytechnic University of Milan and graduated in Industrial Design and Architecture respectively. Both then continued their studies at the IUAV University of Venice. Ornaghi & Prestinari have participated in various workshops and artist residencies, including those of the Spinola Banna Art Foundation (Turin, 2011) and VIR-ViaFarini in Residence (Milan, 2013). In 2012, they received the Premio Regione Veneto (Venetian Regional Award) from the Bevilacqua la Masa Foundation (Venice). In 2014, they held a solo exhibition, *Familiare*, at the Galleria Continua (San Gimignano). In 2016, they participated in *Artista x Artista*, the first international artist residency in Havana (Cuba). In the same year, their first solo New York show was held at the Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò of New York University, where it was curated by Vittorio Calabrese, art director of Magazzino Italian Art. In 2017 they created sculptures based on the paintings of Giorgio Morandi which were exhibited in the Casa Morandi of the MAMbo (Modern Art Museum of Bologna). They also won the artist residency at the Carlo Zauli Museum of Faenza, the final show of which was held at the MIC International Ceramic Museum. The same year they unveiled their public sculpture, *Filemone e Bauci*, at the new Citylife park in Milan. They have participated in many international group shows, in both experimental spaces and institutions, including MAAT, Lisbon, 2018; the Voorlinden Museum in Wassenaar, 2016; the Aguila de Oro gallery, Havana, 2016; Le Centquatre, Paris, 2015; the Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2015; the Museo Pietro Canonica in Villa Borghese, Rome, 2015; the Biblioteca Ariostea, Ferrara, 2013; the Bevilacqua la Masa Foundation, Venice, 2012; Zsolnay Cultural Quarter, Pécs, 2012; the GMB Centre for Contemporary Art, Bratislava, 2012; Hamburg Kunsthau, Hamburg, 2012; the Klaipėda Culture Communication Centre, Klaipėda, 2012; La Fabrique, Mountrouge, 2011; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje, 2009.