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## Artium Institute celebrates Michelangelo Pistoletto's 90th birthday

*The exhibition follows the worldwide calendar of tributes to the key artist of the Italian Arte Povera movement and runs from November 29 to March 3 in Higienópolis (SP). Admission is free.*

**São Paulo, November XX, 2023** - On November 29, the Artium Institute of Culture in collaboration with Galleria Continua / San Paolo opens the exhibition Terzo Paradiso - a special selection of works by the great Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto. The show is the last stage of the gallery's global Pistoletto exhibition, taking place throughout the artist's 90th birthday year, in all 8 of its locations. The exhibition is free and runs until March 3 at the historic Artium mansion in Higienópolis, São Paulo.

A leading exponent of the Arte Povera art movement for almost 20 years, Michelangelo Pistoletto's work is dedicated to what he called the Third Paradise - a reconfiguration of the infinity symbol that gives the show its name. At the edges, nature and the artificial, in the center, the insertion of a circle that symbolizes openness, creation, a proposal of practices for a responsible transformation of society. Emblematic of this approach, the Terzo Paradiso symbol will be in the exhibition specially designed to be integrated into Brazilian culture with colorful Senhor do Bonfim ribbons.

Started in 2014, the Color and Light series delves into themes spanning the artist's entire body of work, encompassing his education, early pictorial works, and a conceptual approach he has honed throughout his prolific artistic career. Material choices play a crucial role in conveying the artist's message. The use of jute, a humble and modest fabric, echoes the principles of Arte Povera. The raw canvas, the same used in old paintings, and the gilded frames that surround each composition, refer to the artist's training and to the beginning of his career in which he worked together with his restorer father and learnt about the history of art and the techniques used in Old Master paintings and their restoration.

In "Color and Light" Pistoletto brings the purity and spontaneity reminiscent of a child's first outlines: the initial drawing of the work has an indomitable and childlike quality, unencumbered by social conventions. It represents an immediate gesture that captures the essence of the artist's instinctive response to the world around him. The artwork becomes a portal to childhood memories, evoking the simplicity and wonder of those formative years. Another useful element to understand Pistoletto's artistic vision lies in understanding the work 'Metro Cubo' which exemplifies the artist's fascination for mirrors as containers of infinity. In 'Color and Light' this concept of infinity returns when applied to a single fragment of mirror. The work appears before us as a visual map, a line divides the mirror and the canvas



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by drawing a sort of border. Through the inclusion of the viewer and the surrounding environment, the mirror thus becomes a gateway to go further and see beyond the canvas.

Like in the mirror paintings, we witness the conjunction of opposite polarities activated by the interaction between the immobile materiality of the canvas and the continuous mutation of the image in the virtual space generated by the mirror surface. The fragment of mirror offers us a double perspective, extending both in front of and behind us, capable of projecting space-time into the virtual dimension of the work: a door that connects art and life. In 'Color and Light', the fragmentation of the mirror creates a contemporary vision of the virtual nature of the reflected images and the corporeality of matter.

Pistoletto said of this series: "It is a work of broken mirrors but executed in an orderly manner. The outlines produced by breaking the mirror itself are included in the mirror, and these outlines form a puzzle. The large mirror is broken and each piece takes on its own individuality. The universal figure of the mirror divides and multiplies with the breaking and cutting, becoming an innumerable quantity of single figures. Each fragment of the mirror can be considered as a person who is part of a larger mirror, that is, society. Society is like a big mirror".

This installation also brings together works from other times, such as **Metamorfosi** - a work Pistoletto created for the first time in 1976, made up of mirrors and rags. The work presents a demarcation between two distinct groups of rags, a monochrome white one on the left and a polychrome one on the right. The rags and mirrors, which stand out among the artist's visual tools, are here the protagonists of a series of conceptual confrontations.

*"Terzo Paradiso is a celebration of Pistoletto's legacy, rooted in innovation and human connection. The exhibition invites the viewer to actively participate in the evolution of art and society. Pistoletto creates a kind of guide towards a future where creativity, collaboration and awareness meet and redefine the very essence of art,"* comments Graziela Martine, one of the Artium Institute's visual arts directors.

*The exhibition has been organized together with Galleria Continua and will feature free educational actions and workshops aimed at audiences of all ages. Schedule and information on the website.*



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### **About the artist**

Michelangelo Pistoletto was born in Biella (Italy) in 1933. In 1962, he created his first Mirror Paintings, with which he quickly achieved international recognition. He is considered one of the forerunners and protagonists of Arte Povera, with his Minus Objects (1965-1966) and Venus of Rags (1967), the latter of which was destroyed by an arson attack in Naples in July of this year.

From 1967 onwards, he carried out actions outside traditional exhibition spaces, which were the first manifestations of the "creative collaboration" he would develop over the following decades, bringing together artists from different disciplines and increasingly broad sectors of society.

In the 1990s, he founded *Cittadellarte* in Biella, placing art in relation with the different spheres of the social fabric in order to inspire and promote a responsible transformation of society.

He has received numerous international awards, including the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale in 2003 and the Wolf Foundation Prize in the Arts for a consistently creative career as an artist, educator and activist in 2007. In 2013, the Louvre Museum in Paris hosted his solo exhibition Michelangelo Pistoletto, Année 1 - Le paradis sur terre. In the same year, he was awarded the Praemium Imperiale for painting in Tokyo. In 2022, his latest book, *La Formula della Creazione* (The Formula of Creation), was published by Cittadellarte Edizioni. His works can be found in all the major contemporary art museums.

### **About the Artium Institute**

The Artium Institute occupies a century-old mansion on Rua Piauí, in the Higienópolis district, listed by Conpresp (Municipal Council for the Preservation of the Historical, Cultural and Environmental Heritage of the City of São Paulo) and recognized as a historical heritage site.

Built to be the residence of the first Swedish consul in São Paulo in 1921, the mansion passed through two of São Paulo's great coffee baron families and was owned by the Empire of Japan for 67 years (from 1940 to 2007). The residence was closed during the Second World War and, in 1970, as a testimony to the history of Brazil at the time, the Japanese Consul General was kidnapped on his arrival.

Degraded since 1980, the space was taken over by the Artium Institute in 2019 and underwent painstaking restoration work, revitalizing gardens and recovering ornamental and decorative elements from the architecture of the time it was built. The non-profit cultural organization currently carries out a plan of activities that brings together projects in the areas of intangible heritage preservation, material heritage preservation, visual arts and performing arts.



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### **About Galleria Continua**

Galleria Continua was founded in 1990 with the intention of giving continuity to contemporary art in a landscape rich in signs of ancient art. Occupying a former cinema, Galleria Continua established itself and thrived in the town of San Gimignano. In 2004, Galleria Continua began a new adventure in Beijing, China, showing contemporary Western artists in an area where they are still rarely seen. Three years later, in 2007, Galleria Continua opened in Les Moulins, in the Parisian countryside. In 2015, it began operations in Havana, Cuba, dedicated to cultural projects that aim to transcend all borders. In 2020, two new spaces were opened: in Rome and in São Paulo, inside the Pacaembu sports complex and currently, due to the stadium works, the gallery's office is located at Travessa Dona Paula, 29, under the direction of Akio Aoki. In early 2021, a new space was inaugurated in Paris, and another inside the world's most iconic hotel, the Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, in Dubai.

### **Service**

#### **Terzo Paradiso - Michelangelo Pistoletto**

Venue: Artium Institute of Culture

Address: Rua Piauí, 874 - Higienópolis, São Paulo - SP - Brazil - 01241-000

Exhibition period: November 29, 2023 to March 3, 2024.

Opening hours:

Wednesday to Friday from 12pm to 6pm.

Saturdays and Sundays: 10am to 6pm.

Mondays and Tuesdays: closed.

Free admission

### **Press information**

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