

NARI WARD
Holding Patterns
for
ARTE – IMPRESA – TERRITORIO
curated by Ilaria Mariotti

A municipality of Santa Croce sull'Arno project in collaboration with UNIC – Concerie Italiane, Lineapelle S.r.L, GALLERIA CONTINUA, San Gimignano / Beijing / Les Moulins / Habana, Arte Continua Association, Fondazione per le Arti Contemporanee in Toscana, Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze, and Istituto Comprensivo Santa Croce sull'Arno developed in the context of Toscanaincontemporanea2018 with technical contributions from Consorzio Aquarno, Dolmen S.p.A., Cuoificio Bisonte S.p.A and Salvadori S.r.L., Treccificio R.C.G. s.n.c., Labor S.r.L.

Opening Saturday October 20, 2018 - 11.00 a.m. – 7.30 p.m.
Villa Pacchiani Centro Espositivo
Piazza Pier Paolo Pasolini, Santa Croce sull'Arno
Show runs through January 6, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

Holding Patterns”, a show by **Nari Ward** curated by Ilaria Mariotti, will be inaugurated at Villa Pacchiani in Santa Croce sull'Arno on Saturday, October 20, as part of the “**Arte - impresa - territorio**” project. The show is a part of the relationship between the artist, and UNIC - Concerie Italiane, and Lineapelle S.r.L., and, in the context of a project of wider scope begun in 2013 with wholehearted support from the Municipality of Santa Croce sull'Arno, GALLERIA CONTINUA and Arte Continua Association, all of which have always been interested in the **relationship between art and territory** and advocates of the need involve artists in the process of **reconsidering social issues**. This is the fifth time that the project has been awarded by the Toscanaincontemporanea regional call for tenders.

In this edition, **Nari Ward was invited to engage in dialogue with UNIC Concerie italiane and Lineapelle S.r.L.** as a key element and **metaphor** to the reading of the characteristics and **dynamics of the entire territory**. “*UNIC Concerie Italiane is the world’s most important associations of tanning companies and wields strategic importance for the Italian economic and manufacturing system and the areas in which tanning companies operate. UNIC plays a vital role in representing the trade and promoting the tanning sector also by making investments in the recovery and conservation of the historical and cultural heritage and is a convinced supporter - as in case at hand - of the encounter between tanneries and contemporary art*”, affirms **Group Managing Director, Fulvia Bacchi**. UNIC’s members include Lineapelle, the world’s most important trade fair for the leather sector in its every form: hides, accessories, synthetics, fabrics and models for footwear, leatherware, fashion and decor. “*Sharing the project with a partner like this,*” affirms **Santa Croce sull'Arno Mayor Giulia Deidda**, “*means touching and speaking to an entire territory through its materials, workings, craftsmanship and technology and enhancing the District’s nature and identity through art.*” “*We try to make new connections between the worlds of materials, economy, society, and the thinking of craftsmen, entrepreneurs, and artists. The restitution of a complex experience that takes place with the staging of the show never fails to provide occasion for concerted public debate on local and global characteristics together,*” adds **Councilor for Cultural Institutions and Policy, Mariangela Bucci**.

Born in Jamaica, a New Yorker by residence and study, **Nari Ward** is an artist of international renown to which a major retrospective show will be dedicated at the New Museum in New York in February 2019. Nari Ward’s **works originate from materials that testify to the social, economic, and ceremonial life of entire communities**. Shoe laces, strollers, shopping carts, tv sets, random articles

picked up by chance have all been used in his construction of **metaphors for our times**. His works are structured like balls of yarn from which multiple narratives unravel. Every story is different because the approach case by case is different: intrigued by materials here, the chance to find collective or individual stories there. **The work of art becomes another stop in a process of comprehending and restituting conceptual and scientific data as well as objective, autobiographical input.**

This **show presents a series of works inedited created expressly for the project** and others pertinent to the process of encounter and exchange with the entire Santa Croce sull'Arno territory and the many different aspects of its productivity and social complexity.

The works evoke many oxymorons: transparency vs. opacity, joyfulness vs. grievousness, lightness vs. heaviness, eternity vs. temporality, movement vs. permanence. Leather, and the ways in which it is processed and transformed, is the material that defines the industrial and economic dynamics of the tanning District, and Santa Croce is its capital. The processes linked to leatherworking, the economies it drives, and the human resources with the specific artisanal, technological, and scientific knowledge they imply provide the data and information for the basis of the Nari Ward's practice. His **visits to tanneries (Camaleonte and Dolmen, Ausonia and Cuoificio Bisonte), treatment plants (Aquarno: Depuratore Consortium, Ecoespanso, and the Chromium Recovery Center), and the PO.TE.CO. Tanning Technological Park** provided him with more data, and given the variety of the citizens of Santa Croce sull'Arno also in terms of religion, continued at the **Institute of Islamic Culture.**

*"The works on display represent a complex narrative in which each work is a concentrate of personal and collective experiences that are transfigured by the artist's poetic. **Plastic, plexiglass, leather, iron, resin, fillers, objects picked up by chance on visits and inspections here and there are used by the artist in juxtapositions that uproot the object from the real or realistic and project it into an unprecedented experiential dimension,**"* remarked the curator, Ilaria Mariotti.

"Holding Patterns", the work that gives the show its name, is a video and photographic enterprise. **"My project - Nari Ward explains – has to do with possession, belonging, and visibility. My research into tanneries brought me to understand the process adopted to maintain the permanence and aesthetic beauty of the animal hide used in the making of consumer goods. Possession, and suspending time and decay is daunting task. While visiting the Tower of Pisa, I watched so many tourists taking photos in the fictitious pose of trying to push the leaning tower straight (...). The tourists' antics augmented my awareness of another group of individuals also in the tower's immediate vicinity: recent immigrants trying to sell their wares to tourists in order to survive (...) and I started to think: how can I make the immigrant transmigrate into the tourist? One is an expression of leisure time, the other of work, but both are temporary states that an individual can control with various degrees of action."** In the **"Holding Patterns"** video, two refugees are filmed with Piazza del Duomo and its monuments in the background in the "holding up the Tower" pose many tourists use in their selfies. Piles of precious, finely worked hides in glaring colors and the most unusual patterns are draped over their shoulders like royal cloaks or ritualistic tribal apparel. The weight of the load and the fatigue in bearing them are visible and characterize these images of intense beauty.

"Back to Nature Treatment" evokes a nature scene: tree trunks made from the pipes regularly used at the Depuratore treatment plant. Both the water treatment cycle and the spectacular site of the Depuratore with its networks of pipes and tanks in which the recovery process is conducted provide the background against which the work moves. Different materials come together in the **composition balanced between the natural and the artificial. "Insistence on Opacity"** takes form from **Nari Ward's visit to the mosque.** The Santa Croce sull'Arno community is extremely heterogeneous: 23% of a population of around 14,600 are immigrants from over 50 different ethnic backgrounds. One of the

characteristics of the building that hosts the place of worship is the variety of the **Western decorative motifs that are also a part of Islamic culture**. This work's complexity of image is based on **this double register**: a place that is intimate and private that reveals and conceals itself. Also "**Limpidus Goats**" works on suggestions linked to transparency, an ambiguity appears again: the stands on which the hides being worked at tanneries in Santa Croce sull'Arno are draped are called "goats". Transparency and opacity are also characteristic of *Ballast of Miracles*: a series of transparent balloons like the luminous ones recently being used at town and village patron saint festivals that contain objects that were collected during visits to abandoned local companies no longer working.

The entire show is an attempt to construct another "place" that lives a parallel, alternative dimension tangent to the reality we inhabit but governed by different needs than every day material needs. **The works of Nari Ward** are objects that thrive on a lively curiosity for materials and their most characteristic physical features with the **power to become objects of mystery** able to make us explore different levels of existence inside the new "places" they succeed in determining.

Collaboration with Firenze Fine Arts Academy and Fondazione per le Arti Contemporanee in Toscana has enabled the setup of procedures dedicated to the education of the public and the training of young artists through a diversified series of appointments for schools and adults.

Nari Ward, 1963, St. Andrew, Jamaica, lives and works in New York. Personal shows of his works have been held at the Institute of Contemporary Art di Boston (2017); Socrates Sculpture Park, New York (2017); The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia (2016); Pérez Art Museum Miami (2015); Savannah College of Art and Design Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2015); Louisiana State University Museum of Art, Baton Rouge, LA (2014); The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia (2011); Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA (2011); Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2002); and at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN (2001, 2000). His most significant participations in collective shows include *Objects Like Us*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT (upcoming 2018-2019); *UPTOWN: nastywomen / badhombres*, El Museo del Barrio, New York (2017); *Black: Color, Material, Concept*, The Studio Museum di Harlem, New York (2015); *La Grande Madre*, Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Palazzo Reale, Milano (2015); *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to now*, Museum of Contemporary Art di Chicago (2015); *NYC 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star*, New Museum, New York (2013); *Contemplating the Void: Interventions in the Guggenheim Rotunda*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2010); Whitney Biennial, New York (2006); *Landings*, Documenta XI, Kassel, Germania (2003). Ward's work is also on display in numerous public and private collections, at the Baltimore Museum of Art, MD; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Istanbul Modern; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, NC; Pérez Art Museum Miami; Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Ward has been awarded numerous prizes and recognition, among which the Joyce Award from The Joyce Foundation, Chicago (2015), and the Rome Prize, American Academy of Rome (2012), as well as prizes from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Ward has also received commissions from the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

INFORMATION/TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

Title of show: "*Holding Patterns, per Arte - impresa - territorio*"

Artist: Nari Ward

Curator: Ilaria Mariotti

Project: A Municipality of Santa Croce sull'Arno project in collaboration with UNIC - Concerie Italiane and Lineapelle S.r.L., GALLERIA CONTINUA, San Gimignano / Beijing / Les Moulins / Habana and the Arte Continua Association, Fondazione per le Arti Contemporanee in Toscana, and the Firenze Fine Arts Academy, Istituto Comprensivo Santa Croce sull'Arno, developed in the context of *Toscanaincontemporanea2018*,

Technical sponsors: Consorzio Aquarno, Dolmen S.p.A., Cuoificio Bisonte S.p.A and Salvadori S.r.L., Treccificio R.C.G. s.n.c, Labor S.r.L.

Date: from October 20, 2018 to January 6, 2019

Exhibition venue: Villa Pacchiani Centro Espositivo, P.zza Pier Paolo Pasolini, Santa Croce sull'Arno, www.villapacchiani.wordpress.com, Thursday-Sunday, 16.00 -19.00, free admission; info: Comune di Santa Croce sull'Arno tel. 0571 30642; 0571 389853

Press Office: Silvia Pichini, silviapichini@ngi.it, mob. +39 347 45 36 136