



Pavilion of the Syrian Arab Republic



Press Release, April 17, 2009

## Artist's chamber

Coordination by Marzia Spatafora and Enzo D'Allara

Commissioner: Christian Maretti

<b>Location</b>	Ca' Zenobio - Dorsoduro 2596, Venice
<b>Inauguration</b>	Friday June 5, 6 p.m.
<b>Date</b>	June 7 – November 11, 2009

The **Syrian Arab Republic** is taking part in the 53rd International Art Exhibition – Venice Biennial with the show **Artist's Chamber** underlying the close cultural ties among Mediterranean countries, with the presence of **Syrian and Italian artists**. Two great Syrian artists, the realist **Issam Darwich** and the informal **Yasser Hammoud**, are showing their works together with seven leading figures of contemporary Italian and international art: **Gastone Biggi, Salvatore Emblema, Sergio Lombardo, Hannu Palosuo, Franca Pisani, Concetto Pozzati, Turi Simeti**.

To represent the Near Eastern republic, the coordinators Marzia Spatafora and Enzo D'Allara, together with the commissioner Christian Maretti, chose to exhibit **paintings, sculptures and installations** on the principle of the historic background and the contemporary and international nature of each artist.

The Syrian Arab Republic, invited for the second time to this important international artistic event, is hosted at the prestigious location of **Ca' Zenobio** where the exhibition, of great importance, is spread out through the inside halls and the garden.

As the title of the event shows, each artist has a specific space reserved to himself, with works which belong to his personal expressive experience, so as to make the work of each both unique and unified at the same time. The creations reveals a cultural exchange which respects and highlights each artistic personality, bringing out its features of form and content. A visit to the show thus opens up moments of discussion, of sharing and debate, from which interesting convergences and divergences of themes and poetics can arise.

**Issam Darwich**, a refined realist, gives voice to the poetics of "presence of absence", which gives the title - *Presence of Absence* – to his room, where the absence of the person has been replaced by clothes which hang or are laid down, often fitted into the memory of experience. This painter, whose creativity focuses on clear aesthetic figures, uses oil on canvas to represent clothing devoid of any real human presence, yet able to reveal the corporeal substance of suggested anatomic traits.

"Light generates Form, when it is connected to my knowledge and my individuality, until sight is turned off and intuition lights up to see in the dark" is how **Yasser Hammoud** describes his work *Ishraqat (Illuminations)*. The artist thus paints the soul of abstract material, the dynamics of introspection, the marriage of light and colour in trembling shadow. The working gesture thus becomes the bearing strain of an informal abstraction which, as it develops in curved or straight lines, parallel or overlapping, intends to follow the inner impulse – conscious or unconscious –

towards a vibrating formal construction, able to express the hidden contents of artistic processing.

**Gastone Biggi**, present at the Syrian Arab Pavilion with his work, *Give me a place to stand and I will paint the world*, is an artist who is always consistent with a work which is full of originality, often centred on the active poetics of the “point”, the source of every creative and exploratory experience. Marzia Spatafora in the text in the catalogue says: “his choice is entirely personal, rigour seems to be his axiom, his mark is determined, I would say almost solemn, the colours are the non colours of the mind: grey, black, white. His “continuous” points obsessively fill up the canvas, creating an effect which is of a mathematical, yet at the same time musical, order. This is how Gastone Biggi expresses himself in this Biennial, setting a comparison between his famous *Continui* and his more recent *Puntocromie*, which are simply an evolution of the same work, read in a way which is more consistent with the reality of today”.

The artist comments the essence of his sign: “I do not find, I seek: seeking one’s sign is seeking oneself. A quest which at times is strenuous, almost disorderly, at other times is more lucid and rational, but is essentially a quest”.

The work of **Salvatore Emblema** *Detessere la tela* reveals the discovery of an “other” dimension. The warp of the fabric, made evident, and the constructive blinding of light, shade and colour, call the spirit to settle and reflect on the changing optic results. The outcome is a work with such a high profile that Giulio Carlo Argan, talking about it, said: “We have managed! You have succeeded in making the space behind the painting throb with life!” The dewoven canvases, represented here in creations dating back to the 60s and later, are evidence of the inner conquest achieved by the artist.

*Mappe stocastiche* is the title **Sergio Lombardo** has given to his “Chamber”. The artist explains: “these are thoroid maps: complex and meaningless forms, created using exclusive mathematical procedures”. Psychologist, artist and mathematician, Sergio Lombardo carries out a profound and meditated investigation into the architectural structure of the pictorial surface and on composing elements which harmonize the geometrical and chromatic scanning of apparently abstract intarsios. Actually, the chance nature of the artistic event rests on firm mathematical algorithms, permeated by the poetic wisdom of equilibrium of tone and defined by the dynamic and formal sign of “stochastic painting”, the founding parameter of the creative, psychological and formal action of the painter. The significant corpus of works exhibited here are entrusted with the eloquence of an original and noticeably sharp expressive language.

**Hannu Palosuo**, of Finnish origin but of Italian culture and education, has created *None of them is the truth* for the Venice Biennial - a pictorial installation which fills the whole space dedicated to him, with the intention of swallowing the onlooker up into the work itself. He thus becomes the craftsman of a modern figure which reveals how such as recurring theme as a floral composition may turn out to be absolutely up to date. By evoking memory and remembrance, the artist makes the flower into the main actor of his paintings – a flower which is developed on two contrasting yet mutually agreeing shades, in order to highlight the positive and the negative of the image, its presence and its emptiness. In this way, a modular installation is born, where the sequence of the canvases amplifies the meaning of implicit artistic projection.

*Il Giardino delle Forme* by **Franca Pisani** is an intervention consisting of a bronze sculpture, *Anima primitiva*, and a many-matter installation, *La macchina del tempo*. The works find their ideal setting in the fascinating garden of Ca’ Zenobio, where they fit perfectly into the rich nature of the place. A versatile and poetically strict artist, Franca Pisani makes wise use of different materials, blending them to the breath of innerness and nature, as well as to the investigation of the individual and social essence. A kind of sensitivity which tends to analyze the primitive and prehistoric archetypes which arise in monumental sculptures, where culture, instinct and rationality penetrate into each other in a temporal process of action which emerges from deep knowledge and exalts the universal sense of life.

In 2008, she played a leading role in prestigious exhibitions, which were decisive for her artistic recognition: the Museo del Mare in Genoa, the Casa del Pane in Milan, Palazzo Cerretani and the Museo Marino Marini in Florence.

**Concetto Pozzati**, artist with a many-faceted personality who is taking part for the fifth time in the Venice Biennial, establishes a deep physical and mental contact with the Time parameter and with inner listening to *Tempo sospeso*, the title of the cycle of paintings on exhibit in the Syrian Arab Pavilion. Here the artist resets the usual chronological scanning, projecting himself into a timeless dimension of the present. Pausing over the “here”, the creating spirit vibrates on the rhythm of memory, on the soul of time, on the perception of the voice of a still clock. An intrinsic notion of “still life” thus pervades the time of the painting, impressing itself onto the exhibited paintings, blended with a meditated sequence of little collages, declared to be indicative studies.

The title of the room “*Ritmi, accordi e sequenze per una ‘pittura’ dello spazio*” by **Turi Simeti** perfectly grasps the meaning of the work which is exhibited: simple words which are extremely explanatory of a conceptual reality made of notes of light and shade and of space and time relations.

A historic work, dating back to the 60s, where the light of white highlights the concept of purity, appears along side recent paintings, made on red hues, from which the perception of existence springs out. The surface painted by Turi Simeti trembles at the slightest touch of light on homogeneous chromaticisms, often with vivid monotonal results. Meditated shaped “protrusions” give tactile and optic vibrations which interact wisely with the direction of the light source.

The show is accompanied by a detailed catalogue in Arabic and Italian published by **Christian Maretti Editore** with texts by Marzia Spatafora, Enzo D’Allara and Christian Maretti.

The historic **Palazzo Ca’ Zenobio**, located in the Dorsoduro area, in a place steeped in poetic atmospheres, is a monumental patrician family building, put up between the end of the 17th and the early 18th century for the noble Venetian Zenobio family. During the 19th century, the Loggia – built in the garden according to neo-classic rules – was added on to the original Baroque structure. The 18th century interior of the main construction has rooms rich with stucco and fresco decoration, including the Hall of Mirrors, with painting by **Giambattista Tiepolo**.

## Data

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**Catalogue** **Christian Maretti Editore**

**Public Information**      **AGG Communication:** Nicoletta 327.2071964

**Press Office**      **Irma Bianchi Comunicazione**  
tel +39 02 89404694 - +39 02 89400732 fax +39 02 8356467  
www.irmabianchi.it - [info@irmabianchi.it](mailto:info@irmabianchi.it)