

Press release

Melissa McGill: In Venice

23 June – 18 September 2021

Private View: Tuesday 22 June 2021 6-8pm



Melissa McGill, *Red Regatta (Coppa del Presidente della Repubblica, San Giorgio Maggiore)*, 2019

Mazzoleni London presents *In Venice* by Melissa McGill. This will be the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery. Following her highly acclaimed Venice-based public art project *Red Regatta*, 2019, the exhibition presents related artworks in a wide range of media. It will feature hand-painted photographic artist renderings, works with sailcloth and paper, photographs, an installation in glass, sculptural sound works, and a new series of watercolour studies of the Venetian Lagoon. *In Venice* will open to the public on Wednesday 23 June and continue until 18 September 2021.

Melissa McGill has developed a profound personal relationship with the city of Venice. Having lived there in the early 90s, she has continued to engage with the city. *Red Regatta* was an unprecedented series of four large-scale site-specific performances in Venice's waterways between May and September 2019, presented in parallel with the 58th Venice Biennale: 52 traditional *vela al terzo* boats sailed in choreographed

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regattas, each with sails hand-painted in distinct shades of red. An innovative reflection on environmental issues and historical traditions, the reds reference forces of life and passion, alarm and urgency, and Venice itself – from its bricks and terracotta rooftops, to its flag and history of trade in red pigment, to paintings of Titian, Tintoretto and other Venetian masters. *Red Regatta* is the first artwork to be registered as a “Clean Regatta”, a programme of Sailors for the Sea powered by Oceana, that mobilises sailors to protect the ocean through education and activism. The project of *Red Regatta* by Melissa McGill was organised by Magazzino Italian Art, Associazione Vela al Terzo Venezia and Comune di Venezia, supported by Mazzoleni gallery and curated by Chiara Spangaro, with project management by Marcella Ferrari.



Melissa McGill, *Riflessi (Red Regatta - 1 September 2019) - 3*, 2019

In Venice presents a significant body of work created during different phases of *Red Regatta*'s timeline, as McGill considers the delicate and liminal relationship between Venice's built and natural environments, between land and sea and between humanity and nature. The first body of work includes the artist's large-scale hand-painted photographic renderings, anticipating the realisation of the future performances. The second group of works are vibrant red colour studies on sailcloth and paper, made as she created the 52 shades for *Red Regatta*, as well as works produced during the sail painting workshop, where the artist hand-painted 104 red sails with art students and collaborating sailors in the historic maritime Arsenale in Venice. The third series, *Riflessi*, are photographs taken by the artist during the actual *Red Regatta*

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performances in which the red sails were reflected in the Venetian lagoon waters. Here they are presented in two evocative installations, one printed on paper, another on glass, in varying sizes. Titled *Acqua Alta*, the latter reflects on the project from the perspective of the catastrophic flooding in Venice that immediately followed caused by rising sea levels.

Alongside these, a new series of watercolour studies of the Venetian Lagoon will be exhibited, as well as *Campo Box (Santa Maria Nova)* and *Campo Box (San Polo)*, black lacquered sculptural sound boxes that evoke the architectural footprints and aural experience of these Venetian *campi*. The irregularly shaped public squares serve as the historic heart of every Venetian neighbourhood and are in danger of disappearing. By isolating the aural experience of this place, the artwork captures the subtle nuances of daily Venetian life – the snippets of conversation between neighbours, calls from passing boats and gondoliers, children playing and footsteps in a pedestrian city where sound bounces off from stone to stone free of the din of traffic.

"*Red Regatta* and its related artworks speak simultaneously of, on one hand, the individual, intimate, local and handmade, while also, on the other hand, emphasising the collective, large-scale public and global community. Bringing individuals together on both intimate and collective scales, uniting for a common goal – this is the core of my work." Melissa McGill

In parallel with the exhibition, Marsilio Editore will publish a book celebrating the project, available from 17 June. *Red Regatta* will feature original texts by the artist, Silvio Testa, Chiara Spangaro and all 52 of the *armatori* (boat owners) who collaborated in the project's realisation.

On the occasion of the Private view of *In Venice* on Tuesday 22 June 2021, 6 - 8 pm, and the publication of *Red Regatta*, Mazzoleni presents Melissa McGill in conversation with Flavia Frigeri and Tamsin Dillon, followed by the opening reception.

The event is by appointment. Please email london@mazzoleniart.com to book your time reservation.

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MELISSA MCGILL

Melissa McGill is a New York based interdisciplinary artist known for ambitious, collaborative, site-specific public art projects that explore the intersection of human culture and the natural world. She uses a wide range of media, including photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, sound, light and immersive installation. Her works connect viewers with forgotten stories and traditions, investigate the dialogue between the visible and the invisible and aim to increase awareness of the environment surrounding us. The artist lived in Venice from 1991 to 1993, where she returns regularly for inspiration and artistic collaboration. Her most recent project, *Red Regatta* was a vibrant site-specific public art project emerging from the artist's history of social practice projects and previous work in Venice. McGill's intimate knowledge of Venice and her deep personal and professional relationships in the city have allowed her to develop this ambitious project. Her previous sound sculptural work, *The Campi* (May 2017), curated by Chiara Spangaro, invoked daily life in the Venetian Campo and was presented at the Casa / Studio Scatturin designed by master Venetian architect and designer Carlo Scarpa, at Ca' Tron and at Giorgio Mastinu Fine Art, in Venice. *Constellation*, 2015-2017, installed on an island in the Hudson River, New York, lit up every night creating a new constellation that transformed the ruins of Bannerman Castle.

McGill has exhibited her artwork internationally since 1991; including recent solo exhibitions, at The Permanent Mission to the United Nations, New York; TOTAH, New York; White Cube, London; Power House, Memphis; Manitoga: The Russell Wright Design Center, New York; Palazzo Capello, Venice; CRG Gallery, New York.

MAZZOLENI

Mazzoleni was founded in Turin in 1986 by Giovanni and Anna Pia Mazzoleni, as a natural evolution of their private collection started in the 1950s. Since 2014 the historic Turin space has been flanked by the London gallery in Mayfair. Over the past three decades Mazzoleni has organised solo and group exhibitions of more than 200 prominent Italian and international artists from across the 20th century with an exhibition programme focused on museum-calibre Italian art from the post-war period and recently the contemporary panorama, working in close collaboration with artists' estates and foundations.

Under the leadership of Davide and Luigi Mazzoleni, the gallery has intensified its international activities, participating in numerous art fairs, including Art Basel (Basel, Miami and Hong Kong), Frieze Masters (London), TEFAF (Maastricht and New York) and FIAC (Paris).

Mazzoleni officially represents Melissa McGill in Europe and Asia.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Exhibition: *Melissa McGill: In Venice*

Dates: 23 June – 18 September 2021 | Private View: Tuesday 22 September, 6–8pm

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