

For Immediate Release

SALVATORE ASTORE
Gli occhi della Scultura

Mazzoleni, Turin

12 April – 30 June 2022

Private View: Tuesday 12 April, 5pm - 10.30pm

Mazzoleni is pleased to present ***Gli occhi della Scultura*** (The Eyes of Sculpture), a personal exhibition by **Salvatore Astore** (San Pancrazio Salentino, 1957) taking place at the Turin gallery for the first time. This new exhibition project marks the natural evolution of the pluriennial collaboration between Mazzoleni and the artist, which culminated last autumn with the installation of the public artwork *Anatomia Umana* (Human Anatomy) in Corso Galileo Ferraris in front of the “Mastio della Cittadella di Torino.” The five-metre-high, stainless steel sculptural group was donated by Mazzoleni to the city of Turin.

The title of the exhibition follows the path initiated by *Anatomia Umana*, re-establishing its semantic relevance and thematic punctuality, as outlined in the critical text by Elena Pontiggia, which was included in the homonymous volume published last November, along with texts by Astore and the art historian Francesco Poli.

Since the 1980s, Astore's practice has been defined as “*organic minimalism*.” Topics such as matter, weight, shape, emptiness, and fullness are at the heart of his research. This entails a sensitive analysis of forms “that are not original, but which are of primary origins, essential and primary insofar as they have been inscribed in the logic of organic structures” (F. Poli). The atmosphere of his oeuvre is ancestral, with references spanning from fossils, prehistoric megaliths, human and animal organic forms to metals – especially steel and, most recently, bronze – relating to the industrial and post-industrial city of Turin. “The more archetypal and pure the shape, the more the others may subjectivize it and make it their own in different ways,” says the artist. His works speak broadly and deeply of humankind and its relationship with the world - it is no coincidence that *Anatomia Umana* is a tribute to Leonardo Da Vinci. Astore’s presences are latent forms within our genetic memory that naturally “sprout” and evolve in the mind. Astore’s forty-year-long research has led to a language that is structured and formal, yet always evolving.

The show is an occasion for the viewer to experience an aspect widely explored by Astore, which is the scale of the works in relation to the surrounding space. *Grande calotta* (Large Skull Cap) – an iconic 1988 work in glazed, welded stainless steel – opens the show. The wall-mounted sculpture dimensionally challenges the space, dominating the entire wall. In the following room, a site-specific environmental work *Sconfinamenti* (Trespassings), challenges the viewer: here the “eye of sculpture” opens wide, growing in scale along with the proportions of the room. The viewer can consequently cross a physical threshold: “entrance-crossing-exit”, and vice versa.

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The exhibition continues in the so-called “fireplace room”, where a smaller-scale group of new bronze sculptures of the same title is presented on a large white base, as if it was a drawing sheet. The use of a classic and recognisable material such as bronze – a material used by Astore for the first time – is here employed in reference to its plastic and chromatic features. Compared to other recent works, these pieces showcase evolved forms and expanded hollow areas towards a “lightening of the matter.”

In the same room are exhibited *Sconfinamenti* (Trespassings), a series of new graphite and oil on paper drawings, where the recognizable iconology of the “skull cap” is developed with great freedom of sign. Astore experiments with the infinite possibilities of the *form* to rewrite a personal idea of space and time. The lines intersect, coagulate, and expand until they saturate the two-dimensional space and guide the viewer towards the depths of the matter.

The exhibition closes with a room dedicated to *Sutura e forma* (2019) (Suture and Form) and a space where Astore *meets* Massimo Vitali, whose solo exhibition is concurrently held at Mazzoleni.

SALVATORE ASTORE

Salvatore Astore was born in 1957 in San Pancrazio Salentino, in the Province of Brindisi. He currently lives and works in Turin, a city where he moved to with his family at a young age. After studying art in secondary school, he later graduated from the Albertina Academy of Fine Arts.

Astore has been active on the Italian and international scene since the 1980s. His preferred artistic languages are sculpture, painting, and drawing. His diverse body of works corresponds to different historical periods and existential phases and is characterised by a profound desire to experiment with techniques and materials related to the urban industrial context, as well as by a specific interest in the condition and destiny of humankind.

In the late 1980s, Astore started to exhibit in Milan at Valeria Belvedere gallery. Those were years of research for the artists belonging to generation following the one of Arte Povera. In 1991, Astore was invited to the exhibition *Anni '90* (1990s), curated by Renato Barilli, Dede Auregli and Carlo Gentili, and hosted by the Galleria d'Arte Moderna of Bologna, the municipal museums of Rimini, and the former colony “Le Navi” of Cattolica. In 1992, he took part in *Avanguardie in Piemonte 1960-1990*, curated by art historians Mirella Bandini and Marisa Vescovo; in 1996, he participated in the 12th Quadrennial in Rome.

More recently, after a series of pictorial works, the sculpture came back at the 13th Biennial of Sculpture in Carrara in 2008; at the solo exhibition *C'era una volta e una stanza* (Once Upon a Time and a Room) at the 107 Foundation in Turin in 2010; and at the Frost Art Museum in Miami in 2011.

In 2018, the exhibition *Anatomico Organico Industriale* (Anatomic, Organic, Industrial) at the 107 Foundation reconnected the creative environment of the 1980s Turin, with a focus on the artistic research of Salvatore Astore, Sergio Ragalzi, and Luigi Stoisa. In the same year, Astore took part in the collective exhibition *100% Italia, Cent'anni di capolavori* at Museo Ettore Fico in Turin. In the most recent years, the long-lasting relationship with the Mazzoleni family has strengthened with a variety of projects curated by the gallery, including: *Speciazione*, a complex of iron sculptures installed in the garden of the Reggia di Venaria on the occasion of the ART SITE FEST (2019); and *Anatomia Umana* (2021), installed at the corner between Giardini c.so G. Ferraris and Via Cernaia in Turin.

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. The historic Turin space, which occupies two floors of Palazzo Panizza, overlooking the city-centre Piazza Solferino, has since 2014 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. All exhibitions are accompanied by fully illustrated monographs, with authoritative critical texts.

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

NOTES TO EDITORS

SALVATORE ASTORE. Gli occhi della Scultura

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