

Press Release

Canaletto and Melissa McGill: Performance and Panorama

16 July – 13 November 2022

The Lightbox, Woking, GU21 4AA

Mazzoleni is pleased to announce an unprecedented new exhibition at **The Lightbox gallery and museum** that will bring together the work of Italian master **Canaletto** (1697-1768) and contemporary interdisciplinary artist **Melissa McGill** (b.1969). These two renowned international artists share a profound connection and dedication to **Venice**, born 250 years apart. The display will feature Canaletto's highly detailed depictions of both Italy and England alongside Melissa McGill's major independent public art project **Red Regatta** presented in Venice in collaboration with Associazione Vela al Terzo Venezia in 2019, co-organised by Magazzino Italian Art, curated by Chiara Spangaro with project manager Marcella Ferrari and with support from Mazzoleni, London - Torino.

The Lightbox is featuring these two artists' **reflective relationship with Venice** and its unique qualities, sights, sounds, traditions and individuality. The exhibition will combine 20 paintings, prints and drawings by Canaletto and 16 works from Melissa McGill's highly acclaimed Venice-based public art project **Red Regatta**. It will feature a **documentary film**, **hand-painted photographic artist renderings**, **sound work**, a **glass installation** and **watercolours**. A highlight is the installation of McGill's **Campo Box (Santa Maria Nova)** from 2017, a sculptural sound work based on the iconic square Campo Santa Maria Nova. Taking the shape of the architectural footprint of this public space, the work activates the interplay between sound and visual memory, public and private space, visceral and physical experience, releasing a world of ambient sounds recorded there: snippets of conversation between neighbors, calls from passing working boats and gondoliers, children playing, footsteps. Set in a room surrounded by Canaletto works, it evokes the sound of Venice through time.

Whereas Canaletto is famed for his scenes that combine real and imagined spaces, and was collected by eighteenth century aristocrats, McGill is recognised through her ambitiously staged **collaborative art projects** that address environmental issues and are designed to spur real change. **Red Regatta** celebrates the city's maritime history and calls attention to the forces of climate change and mass tourism that threaten its future. The body of work on view were created during different phases of **Red Regatta**'s timeline, as McGill considered the delicate and liminal relationship between Venice's built and natural environments, between land and sea and between humanity and nature. Both artists engage intimately with the landscape of Venice, seemingly unchanged over hundreds of years, yet their distinctly different perspectives inspire new conversations about the city's past, present and future.

Melissa McGill says: *"Canaletto is known for blending the real and imagined seamlessly. Red Regatta also blended the real and imagined, in the spirit of healing and collectively envisioning a more sustainable future for Venice... Canaletto's 'vedute ideate' (idealized views) are imbued with sunlight, shadows and atmospheric effects, creating a distinctive sense of site-specificity. To create my project renderings, I use a combination of painting and photography to center the connection between the artwork and the specificity of its environment – its colours, reflections and details- all in their own dialogue."*

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CANALETTO

The 18th century painter and printmaker Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto, was born in Venice, the son of a theatrical scene painter. He was very influential, famed for his precisely depicted and evocative views (vedute) of Venice, London and the English countryside. Canaletto's early pictures for local patrons are his most accomplished: these carefully designed, individual, and atmospheric studies include *The Stonemason's Yard*. Canaletto was favoured by English collectors, he visited England repeatedly between 1746-56. He may have used a 'camera obscura' for topographical accuracy in creating some of his designs, but he always remained concerned with satisfying compositional design, not simply lavishly recording views.

MELISSA MCGILL

Melissa McGill is a New York based interdisciplinary artist known for ambitious, collaborative, site specific public art projects. They take the form of site-specific, immersive experiences that explore nuanced conversations between land, water, sustainable traditions, and the interconnectedness of all living things. At the heart of her work is a focus on community, meaningful shared experiences, and lasting impact. Spanning a variety of media including performance, photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, sound, light, video and immersive installation, McGill has presented both independent public art projects and solo exhibitions nationally and internationally since 1991. McGill lived in Venice from 1991-93 and returns regularly for inspiration and work. Her project *Red Regatta* (2019) was inspired by her observations over more than two decades of the challenges Venice is facing given the impact of climate change and intense tourism. Melissa's intimate knowledge of Venice and her deep personal and professional relationships in the city have made it possible for her to develop this ambitious project. She is particularly passionate about the collaborative aspect and the fact that *Red Regatta* involved many members of the local community. The project was intentionally designed to welcome the participation and enjoyment of local citizens and to honour their abiding love for their city. Her previous sculptural sound work, *The Campi* (2017) - sponsored by Magazzino Italian Art - invoked daily life in the Venetian Campo and was presented at Carlo Scarpa's Casa/Studio Scatturin, Università Iuav di Venezia and Giorgio Mastinu Fine Art in Venice, Italy. *Constellation* (2015-2017) installed on an island in the Hudson River, New York, lit each night creating a new constellation transforming Bannerman castle ruin. McGill has exhibited her artwork nationally and internationally since 1991, including solo and groups exhibitions at Mazzoleni, London - Torino; Magazzino Italian Art, Cold Spring (NY); The Permanent Mission of Italy at the United Nations, New York; TOTAH, New York; White Cube, London; Power House, Memphis; Palazzo Capello, Venice; CRG Gallery, New York; Zabłudowicz Collection, London; Norrtalje Konsthall, Norrtalje (Sweden); Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent (Belgium). Mazzoleni, London - Torino officially represents Melissa McGill in Europe and Asia.

MAZZOLENI

Mazzoleni was founded in Turin in 1986 by Giovanni and Anna Pia Mazzoleni as a natural evolution of the private collection they 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).

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Lightbox, Chobham Road Woking, Surrey, GU21 4AA
Opening hours: Tue – Sun 10.30am – 5pm
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