

MARINELLA SENATORE **FESTA!**



Mazzoleni, Milan

16 April – 27 June 2026

Private View: Wednesday 15 April, 10am – 8pm

Mazzoleni celebrates its **fortieth anniversary** with **FESTA!**, the first solo exhibition by **Marinella Senatore** in the new Milan space, following previous presentations in Turin (2021) and London (2022) galleries.

From the title itself, the exhibition invites to recognise artistic practice as a political act and as a celebration of the power of **communitas**, a concept that has been central to Senatore's research for over two decades.

Mazzoleni Galleria d'Arte Srl

Via Senato 20
20121 Milano, IT

04839580018

+39 011 534473
milano@mazzoleniart.com

Sede legale: Piazza Solferino 2, 10121 Torino, IT

mazzoleniart.com

From the outset of her career, the artist has conceived her role as activator of processes and experiences in which individual subjectivities can meet and emerge with their distinct identities within shared spaces of **action** and **thought**. This vision lies at the core of **The School of Narrative Dance**, through which Senatore has given voice and visibility to **millions of people worldwide** across major **national and international public commissions**.

With this exhibition, the artist invites viewers to discover a new phase of her research: **all the artworks on view are newly produced**, including **embroidered tapestries created in collaboration with the Chanakya School of Craft in Mumbai**, alongside sketches and drawings that intertwine her reflections on **participatory practice** and landscape. Each of these works addresses tradition as a device, of the present, engaging with social activation, and the transmission of craft-based knowledge.

"In an increasingly fragmented present, FESTA! reclaims the power of the collective body, of light as a public gesture, and of celebration as a practice capable of building community anew." – Marinella Senatore

Throughout history, festivities have assumed multiple meanings: **celebrations of power, religious rituals**, moments of symbolic subversion, and **affirmations of identity**. Today, collective manifestations – from **folk festivals and parades**, to civic gatherings and commemorative ceremonies – continue to function, in dialogue with the surrounding landscape, as spaces where values, forms of belonging, and shared visions of communal life are negotiated.

*"Landscape is not merely a natural backdrop or an iconographic genre, but a device in which social relations, memory, conflict and belonging are condensed. It is a **living cultural archive** that does not simply preserve traces, but inscribes the micro-narratives of the community within its forms," writes Senatore.*

FESTA! draws on the long tradition of **public celebrations** and festive apparatuses that, between the **seventeenth and eighteenth centuries**, transformed European cities – especially **Rome** and **Venice** – into extraordinary open-air scenographic machines. Squares were animated by ephemeral structures, monumental catafalques, temporary architectures, firework devices and luminous installations that temporarily redefined urban space. Conceived by architects, artists and

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engineers under political or religious patronage, these apparatuses nonetheless engaged citizens in a collective, sensorial and meaning-generating experience.

Honouring this **historical and cultural legacy**, *FESTA!* emphasises the profound sense of gathering and of sharing a common space and time.

Central to the imagery of **Baroque scenographic structures** were candlesticks, botanical elements and the complex ornamental motifs that adorned catafalques and theatrical machines. These elements have come down to us mainly through engravings – visual testimonies of an ephemeral art destined to disappear.

Through these images, Marinella Senatore activates a form of rewriting: her drawings and views offer **a new gaze on the landscape**, becoming the lens through which to observe the world and to reactivate tradition as a dynamic device – not nostalgic but generative and constituting a crucial aspect of the artist's trajectory:

"Processional forms often function as laboratories of community: one crosses a space together, shares a rhythm and makes a memory public. In my participatory works – and indeed across my entire practice – I invite viewers to think of landscape not as a backdrop but as the result of practices in resonance. Processions and parades, in this sense, are a public intensification of gestures, sounds, pauses and passages."

A **textile experimentation** emerges in the hand-embroidered tapestries created by master artisans and graduate women artisans from **Chanakya School of Craft in Mumbai** – a multidimensional learning platform dedicated to arts and crafts, with a particular focus on women. Through a holistic programme that teaches **more than 300 hand-embroidery techniques**, the school has trained over 1,000 women of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds. The participants collaborate with artists, fashion houses and non-profit organisations on interdisciplinary projects that promote inclusivity and artisanal excellence. This collaboration – embedded in Senatore's participatory practice and representing a tangible expression of **female empowerment** – reinforces the threads connecting diverse communities, which the artist has interwoven for more than twenty years.

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MAZZOLENI

Mazzoleni is one of Italy's leading Modern and Contemporary Art galleries with locations in London, Turin and Milan, active for over 35 years. Mazzoleni presents museum-quality exhibitions and participates in major international art fairs in the Art Basel, Frieze, TEFAF circuits; Artissima, Artefiera and Miart in Italy and recently opening to new collecting realities in the East, participating in fairs such as Frieze Seoul and Art Abu Dhabi. The gallery's collection is exhibited in museums and institutions worldwide, including the Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo in Paris, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Tate Gallery and the Estorick Collection in London, the Museo del Novecento in Florence, GNAM in Rome, Museo MADRE in Naples, the Triennale and Palazzo Reale in Milan and the Venice Biennale in Italy. The gallery represents the Agostino Bonalumi Estate.

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Via Senato, 20 – 20121 Milan

Tel. (+39)02.99914325 | E: milano@mazzoleniart.com

Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 10am–1pm; 2pm–7pm

Press Office: Lucile Brun

M: (+39) 340.0664675 | E: lucile@mazzoleniart.com

www.mazzoleniart.com

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