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***Conversation Piece | Part VI***

Reality *is that which, when* you stop believing *in it,* doesn't go awayCorinna Gosmaro, Philippe Rahm, Rolf Sachs
an exhibition curated by Marcello Smarrelli

**Inauguration**: Tuesday 14th January 2020, 6.00 pm
**Open to the public**: 15th January 2020 - 22nd March 2020

**PRESS RELEASE**

The *Fondazione Memmo* presents ***Conversation Piece* | *Part VI***, curated by **Marcello Smarrelli**, the latest in a series of exhibitions dedicated to Italian and foreign artists temporarily present in Rome.

The exhibition, which will be open to the public **from the 15th of January 2020 to the 22nd of March 2020**, features **Corinna Gosmaro** (an artist with a CRT Italian Fellowship in Visual Arts at the American Academy in Rome), **Philippe Rahm** (an architect who is currently residing in Rome and a fellow of the French Academy in Rome at Villa Medici in 1999-2000) and **Rolf Sachs** (a Swiss artist and designer who has recently established his studio in Rome).

The subtitle of the exhibition, Reality *is that which, when* you stop believing *in it,* doesn't go away, is a quotation from Philip K. Dick's essay *How to* Build *a* Universe *That* Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days *Later* (1978-1985), which affirms a positivistic vision of reality, based on the concreteness of objects. The nature of reality is also a central part of the reflections of the philosopher Maurizio Ferraris whose Manifesto *of* New Realism (2012) states – in contradiction to certain “dogmas” of postmodernism – that reality is not infinitely manipulable, advocating a return to “truth” and “objectivity” as a valid means for understanding the present.

The exhibition, which originates from a series of conversations with **Philippe Rahm** (b. Pully - Switzerland, 1967) and from his research in the fields of architecture, art and design (which he considers as pertinent to the philosophical theories of “new realism”), testifies – also through the works of the other artists – to a faith in objects as possible agents of change. The works, most of which have been specially created for the exhibition, are closely connected with the concepts of “new realism”, and they seem to enter into a dialogue between each other, with the rooms of the *Fondazione Memmo* and with the city.

**Rahm**, well known for his innovative theories of architecture that incorporate the principles of thermodynamics, presents *Climatic Apparel,* two unisex suits, prototypes of what the artist defines as “New Realism Fashion” which reflect the basic principles expounded by Ferraris: aesthetic formalization, the study of materials and a belief in the possibility of being able to affect reality through a combination of technologies. These items of clothing – created in collaboration with his associate Irene D’Agostino and the French brand *About a Worker –* are able to react to atmospheric conditions and they refer to the theme of climate change, which has been the artist's main field of research for several years now. In order to demonstrate the technical properties of the fabrics they will be exhibited in a setting that reproduces the seasonal variations of light – from winter to summer – and they will also be worn by two models in a fashion show/performance during the inauguration of the exhibition. At 6 pm the next day, Wednesday the 15th of January, Maurizio Ferraris and Philippe Rahm will discuss the themes of the exhibition in a conference hosted by the Swiss Institute in Rome.

**Corinna Gosmaro** (b. Savigliano - Italy, 1987) shows us how real data can constitute the most profound meaning of a work of art, thanks to her installation entitled *Aria calda* (“Hot Air”). In an area delimited by a red carpet two types of works are exhibited: pictures painted on air filters and sculptures made from brass handrails. These works realized with everyday objects have an extremely concrete quality and they exist in a liminal zone at the boundaries between painting, sculpture and design. The artist exploits the physical characteristics of the filters (porosity, transparency and lightness, as well as their large dimensions) to produce lyrical images, reminiscent of landscapes photographed from a moving vehicle, while her bronze sculptures constitute vertically rising architectural forms with which the public can interact. These paintings and sculptures based on the direct recording of data in real time reveal the possibility of registering and retaining traces of phenomena existing in a physical space, above all the passage of air and of people.

The intervention by **Rolf Sachs** (b. Lausanne - Switzerland, 1955), is unsettling but not without irony. He presents us with works made from everyday objects or natural elements, transformed and reassembled, which reveal the artist's strong interest in manual interventions and experimentation upon materials. He declares his adherence to the current of “new realism”, also by means of a temporary photographic studio due to be set up during the inauguration, in which the artist will create portraits of visitors to the exhibition, immediately printed out and attached to the wall. In this way the members of the public will become actively involved, being transformed from passive spectators to the subjects and even the creators of the artworks. At the entrance to the exhibition Sachs will also place coloured containers, like those used for the collection of differentiated household waste. Each one will be marked with a label referring to a negative state of mind, thereby inviting people, when they throw their rubbish away, to metaphorically get rid of unpleasant thoughts.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue, which is due to be printed in February 2020.

Many activities have been planned to coincide with the exhibition. As previously mentioned, at 6 pm on Wednesday the 15th of January 2020, at the Swiss Institute in Rome, the artist Philippe Rahm and the philosopher Maurizio Ferraris will discuss the themes of Rahm's installation and that of the exhibition as a whole. In addition, in conjunction with the exhibition, creative workshops will be held for children aged 4 to 11, the proceeds of which will be entirely donated to the *Fondazione Theodora* children's charity.

PROGRAMME OF THE INAUGURATION

6 pm: start of the photo sessions run by Rolf Sachs.

7 pm: fashion show/performance featuring the clothes created by Philippe Rahm with the french fashion brand *About a worker*

**Conversation Piece – the project**

*Conversation Piece* is a series of exhibitions that are motivated by the desire of the *Fondazione Memmo* to constantly monitor the Roman contemporary art scene, particularly the activities of the foreign academies and cultural institutes in the city, where new generations of artists from all over the world traditionally complete the process of their education and training. Thanks to these exhibitions and several other initiatives the *Fondazione Memmo* intends to act as an amplifier for the work of these institutions.

The exhibition cycle takes its name from the English title of one of Luchino Visconti's most famous films, *Conversation Piece* (in Italian *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*, 1974), and is intended as a metaphor to express the encounter between different generations and the love-hate relationship between the ancient and the modern. The expression “conversation piece” also refers to a genre of painting widespread in the 17th and 18th centuries, depicting groups of family members in conversation with each other in the typical situations of daily life.

These exhibitions, in addition to offering an opportunity for engaging in a dialogue with several Roman institutions, are also a valuable space for encounters between different artistic personalities, so that they can bring together their energies, know-how and different artistic approaches and methods within the context of a single exhibition event.

Over the years, some thirty international artists have participated in *Conversation Piece*, including Yto Barrada, Eric Baudelaire, Rossella Biscotti, Piero Golia, Francesca Grilli, Jonathan Monk, Julian Rosefeldt.

**Fondazione Memmo**

The **Fondazione Memmo** was founded in 1990 due to the desire of Roberto Memmo to establish a cultural activity that could bring the general public closer to the art world by giving them a direct knowledge of some of the greatest masterpieces created by the most varied civilizations over the ages.

Since 2012, thanks to the initiative of Fabiana Marenghi Vaselli Bond and Anna d'Amelio Carbone, a new exhibition programme has been active, which is entirely dedicated to the contemporary art scenario. The objectives of the Fondazione Memmo include contributing towards developing cultural initiatives related to Rome and its surroundings, establishing international relationships and dialogues with other institutions, and promoting collaborations and interactions between artists and the city of Rome.

Performances, residencies, talks, educational workshops and publications represent an opportunity for celebrating and promoting the present, like an observatory dedicated to contemporaneity that can contribute towards the development of our future.

In 2018 the Fondazione Memmo won the prestigious *Montblanc de la Culture* *Arts Patronage Award*, thanks to which it intends to initiate a programme of residencies in London dedicated to Italian artists, in collaboration with the British non-profit contemporary visual art organisation “Gasworks”, thereby continuing its activities of discussion, sharing, exchange and connection between artists and institutions in many different contexts.

Rome, November 2019

**Press materials and photos at the following links:**<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4ce4irfba03hzxf/AACTtkPwp-k9Ly1cHvwRJ7Xra?dl=0>

**INFO**

Title: ***Conversation Piece | Part VI –* Reality *is that which, when* you stop believing *in it,* doesn't go away**

Curator: Marcello Smarrelli

Assistant curator: Saverio Verini

Venue: Fondazione Memmo, via Fontanella Borghese 56/b, 00186 Roma

Inauguration: Tuesday, January 14th, 6 pm

Open to the public: January 15th – March 22nd 2020

Hours: Monday - Sunday 11 am – 6 pm (closed on Tuesday)

Free admission

Info: Benedetta Rivelli: +39 06 68136598 | info@fondazionememmo.it | www.fondazionememmo.it

**EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS** (4-11 years old):

TBC

Only by reservation: daphne.ilari@gmail.com

The proceeds will be entirely donated to Fondazione Theodora Onlus

**PRESS OFFICE**

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**Thanks to:**

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**Workshops:**

 