

PRESS RELEASE



Rossella Biscotti
The Journey, 2021 (detail). Photo Alexandra Pace

Title One, I dreamt, Clara and other stories

Rossella Biscotti

Curated by Marianna Vecellio

21 April – 24 November 2024

Castello, Third floor

Opening: Saturday 20 April 2024, 6.30 pm

Castello di Rivoli is pleased to announce *Title One, I dreamt, Clara and other stories*, the first museum survey of Rossella Biscotti (Molfetta, 1978), an Italian artist based in the Netherlands and Belgium. A key member of a generation of Italian artists dedicated to exploring the modern history of Italy by bringing to light its stratified layers, Biscotti has created an art of investigation and research which places questions of collective interest at the centre of her work. Though early on in her career Biscotti focused on the structural amnesia marking recent history, her latest works look at resources, raw material extraction, process and circulations and how nature politics, economy and gender intersect in complex narratives. Biscotti combines research with the powerful agency of sculptural forms and vibrant matter to create work with suggestive power and forensic precision.

Biscotti often collaborates with other disciplines, including archaeology, anthropology, geopolitics and environmental science. She uses a wide range of creative languages – including installation, sculpture,

performance, sound and film – to make work that is grounded in a concept of history understood as an ecosystem of active relationships. Her works involve long periods of investigation and study aimed at uncovering the complex power structures that condition the unresolved dimensions of our present.

This exhibition fills the entire third floor of Castello di Rivoli, presenting more than 20 works. Among them large installations and body of works, from the early beginning to the present time that illustrate the research processes conducted by the artist over her 20-year career. The artist engages with themes and subjects such as the overlap between the private and public domains; the relationship between the past and the present, between the monument and the document. The works on display show how, from the beginning, Biscotti has based her practice on the power of gesture and word, on the process of unveiling and excavation, through a multi-vocal language in which the use of sound predominates. The layout of the exhibition follows a polyphonic narrative composed of minor stories and investigations of major ecological, political and gender issues, highlighting the connections between different uses of the techniques of extraction and archiving and asking questions about what we choose to explore and how we record it.

The exhibition presents some of the early works made by the artist in the 2000s that explore the relationship between history and individual memories to recent investigations of the notion of energy as a tool for interpreting contemporaneity. The exhibition itinerary includes key works such as *The Trial*, 2010-2016, an installation about the infamous trial in which a number of militants and intellectuals, formerly members of Potere Operaio (Workers Power) and Autonomia Operaia (Workers Autonomy), were trialled across Italy on terrorism charges. Biscotti's multi-media installation relates to the procedures that took place between 1982-84 in the Fascist-era Foro Italico Bunker Room, and it includes casts from architectural details of the courtroom, sound, and silk-screen prints that bring to the light this multi-layered history.

In addition, through the investigation of the female body and its objectification, further works explore different forms of exploitation, imprisonment and confinement. The exhibition also includes *Trees on Land*, 2021, from the collection of Fondazione per l'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea CRT on loan to Castello di Rivoli. This work traces the impact of the *xylella fastidiosa* bacteria that recently devastated entire olive plantations in Apulia, leading farmers to burn thousands of trees to contain its spread. Biscotti mixed the remaining ashes with clay to create symbolically empty jars, sculptures that map and visualise this ecological and economic tragedy.

The exhibition includes a new commission specially conceived by the artist for the museum. The new work is a reflection on the relationships, both historical and current, between extraction, landscape and subsoil through the metaphor of the circulation of raw materials and energy. The installation is made of steel pipes arranged like a full-scale oil pipeline that invades the exhibition space in diffuse, sprawling forms. This new work deals with the theme of the underground world, which is reinterpreted by the artist as a creative and regenerative space. Like a living creature in the making, the work will come to life, changing form over the course of the exhibition.

The project is accompanied by a bilingual catalogue, in Italian and English. The publication is the first comprehensive monograph on the artist and offers an extensive analysis of her 20-year expressive practice, including essays by the curator, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Australian anthropologist Michael Taussig.

Francesco Manacorda, Director of Castello di Rivoli, states: "Rossella Biscotti is a key representative of the generation of Italian artists that has emerged the past 10-15 years. Her work presents a peculiar and effective way of placing Italian issues on the international stage and vice versa, touching on unresolved aspects of recent history, as well as urgent issues such as climate change, migration and gender issues. The attention and care that she dedicates to the transformation of historical narratives and materials into social, cultural



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and poetic questioning continues an art historical specificity in Italian art which was inaugurated by Arte Povera, and plays a particularly poignant role in today's practice."

"Rossella Biscotti is among the most interesting voices on the contemporary scene. The exhibition at Castello di Rivoli," says **Marianna Vecellio**, curator of the exhibition, "dwells on the political, ecological and speculative potential of the circulation of energy understood, in its various forms, as a means of interpreting and reading contemporaneity. The practices of immersion and "extraction," of sinking and unearthing, of immateriality and solidification present in the artist's work become strategies of resistance and liberation. From the perspective of the subsoil, between archaeology, industry and science fiction, the artist gives voice and body to what is not visible, generating new and possible languages of interpretation of the present, and showing the potential for active resistance of human beings in today's world."

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