



Ghent, NY, June 16, 200

Art Omi

presents

**IRENE DIONISIO
GERMINATION**

Curated by Ilaria Bernardi

July 20, 2022

Art Omi is a nonprofit art center aiming to offer residency programs for international artists every summer. **On July 20**, Italian artist **Irene Dionisio** will open her studio at ArtOmi to present **a project conceived as a solo show**, curated by the art historian and curator **Ilaria Bernardi** who has always been committed to promoting Italian artists abroad.

During her ongoing residency at Art Omi, in fact, Irene Dionisio has created new works that further develop a research theme already *in nuce* in some of her previous works: the germ, to be understood according to the definition given by the biological sciences, that is, as an initial stage of a subsequent development or growth of any kind of entity (vegetal, animal, human, pathogenic, psychic or even figurative-metaphorical).

The exhibition project at **Art Omi**, thus, includes **new works combined with older works** on the same theme.

In the first room a tape recorder is welcoming us, from whose headphones we listen to the audio from ***Da togliere il fiato (Breathtaking, 2021)***. Thought as a site-specific sound installation produced by MUST (Milan), it was originally conceived to accompany the walk of passers-by on the San Rocco Bridge in Milan, a place historically linked to the first plague experienced by that area. This sound evokes a collective process of exploring silence through apnea: the vital act of breathing and its opposite are transformed, through the connective power of sound, into a ritual of renewed trust.

The plague, as a result of a pathogenic germ, and the interrupted breath in *Da togliere il fiato* are the premises for one of Irene's new works created at Art Omi: ***Still Life (2022)***. Starting from a tragic moment experienced by the artist (the death of his uncle in the hospital due to another pathogenic germ, Covid-19), the 'still lives' displayed on the table – but at the same time protected by a filter that does not allow their immediate viewing – correspond to the last traces of a digital greeting to the uncle that returns to being material. They are some of the many fragments of one of the most lacerating traumas of pandemic time: the absence and distance of the beloved body at the moment of its detachment from life.

On the neighboring wall, the installation ***Parole di cocente attualità (Words of Searing Newsness, 2021-22)***, instead, offers the last traces of a greeting, this time material, to the medium, by which, before the advent of the digital, thought was conveyed: the book. Indeed, the work bears witness to the 'sacrilegious' action of burning a book. The work consists of some books, the ashes of the burned book, Polaroids made during the action, and an unseen series of monoprints that, thanks to colored inks, simulate sheets of paper burned by the "germ" of the digital age.

As a *pendant*, a white flag on the ceiling and a chair in the center of the room constitute a new version of ***Che l'assenza sia dichiarata (Let Absence Be Declared, 2019-2022)***. Referring to Guy Debord's absence at the First World Congress of Free Artists in Alba in 1956 as an indictment and poetic declaration, the work just as powerfully implies how only cultural ghosts exist today without real meaning, destroyed by the "germ" of capitalism.

Like the works described above, the video ***Germ Theory I (2020)***, produced by the Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art (Rivoli, Turin), also evokes a reflection on the relationship between the digital/technological and the material/natural, as well as on the concept of germ/germination. Starting by showing the development of a seed (the "germ") into a plant, *Germ Theory I* visualizes the theory of Benjamin Bratton: in *The Stack. On Software and Sovereignty*, he proposes framing today's various computational systems no longer as independent forms of each other, but as a coherent whole structured in six interconnected levels – among which the first is the Earth – the raw material that digital technology uses and which, through the other five levels (including the Cloud), is ultimately shaped in turn by technology.

The projection of *Germ Theory I* is placed in dialogue with the documentation of the ***Saluzzo Rural Happening (2018-22)***, an old participatory project, co-created by the artist with Rebecca De Marchi in 2018 and with the support of A.A.V.V - The Talking Seed. This documentation constitutes a prologue for the new sound work installed in the silo in the Art Omi Park: a choral fable, as development of that participatory project, tells, through the voices of African workers, the archetypes of a collectively created fairy tale dedicated to a heroine fighting to save biodiversity.

Accompanying the viewing of all the works mentioned above is a sound spread throughout the room: it is taken from ***Il grande mistero (The Great Mystery, 2022)***, a sound installation produced by Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art (Rivoli, Turin) and Beatrice Bulgari. It is obtained from the process of sonification of the Higgs Boson, also known as the "God particle," theorized in 1964 by Peter Higgs and first detected in 2012 with experiments conducted by CERN. With this work, Irene Dionisio reflects on the possibility of translating the conjunction of scientific-technological and spiritual research into an artistic language. The result is a sound composition that shows the limits of human translation and its gaze.

In a second room, a screening of the film ***Il mio unico crimine è vedere chiaro nella notte (My Only Crime Is Seeing Clearly in the Night, 2020)*** is concluding the exhibition project and is a tribute to the artist's parallel activity as a film director. *Il mio unico crimine è vedere chiaro nella notte* addresses the issues of censorship in Italian cinema and psychological removal in art. The film, with its re-imagining of film fragments, cut out and eliminated with bureaucratic scrupulousness, doggedly retraces the cuts inflicted on the productions of past masters and thinks them through once again as the signs of a cinema yearning to be completed.

The exhibition project is part of a longer-term project in the United States by Irene Dionisio, curated by Ilaria Bernardi and continues now at Art Omi.

ARTOMI

1405 County Route 22,
Ghent, N.Y. 12075

Open daily from 9 am - 5 pm

Tel: (518) 392-4747

info@artomi.org

ART OMI

Art Omi believes that exposure to internationally diverse creative voices fosters acceptance and respect, raises awareness, inspires innovation, and ignites change. By forming community with creative expression as its common denominator, Art Omi creates a sanctuary for the artistic community and the public to affirm the transformative quality of art. Art Omi is a not-for-profit arts center with a 120-acre sculpture and architecture park and gallery, residency programs for international artists, writers, translators, musicians, architects and dancers. Since its founding, Art Omi has been guided by the principle that artistic expression transcends economic, political, and cultural boundaries. To date, Art Omi has hosted more than 2,000 artists from over 100 countries. By inviting a unique and varied mix of artists, writers, musicians and dancers from all over the world to create a diverse, positive working community, Art Omi transforms this guiding vision into an exciting reality. Website: www.artomi.org

The artist Irene Dionisio

Irene Dionisio is a filmmaker and artist. Her productions span video installations, documentaries, and films including *Le ultime cose* (2016), *Sponde* (2015), and *La fabbrica è piena* (2011) which have been featured at many international festivals (Festival di Venezia, Torino Film Festival, Visions du Réel, Taiwan Film Festival, among others). She was awarded Premio Filmmaker, Premio Solinas, Premio Scam and Jury Prize at Cinema-Verité in Iran. Dionisio's work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions at Magazzino Italian Art, New York; CACG, Genève; Polo del Novecento, Turin; PAC, Milan; OCAT, Shanghai; Palazzo Grassi, Venice; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Villa Arson, Nice, amongst others. Website: iredionisio.com

The curator Ilaria Bernardi

Ilaria Bernardi has a PhD in art history and is a curator.

Her previous collaborations include working with Germano Celant and, at the Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, with Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev.

She has curated exhibitions for public institutions such as the MAECI-Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and for important exhibition spaces in Italy and abroad, including: the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome; Palazzo delle Esposizioni and Auditorium Parco della Musica, Rome; Villa and Collezione Panza, Varese; Museo del Novecento e del Contemporaneo di Palazzo Fabroni, Pistoia; Magazzino Italian Art, Cold Spring, NY; IIC New York; IIC Madrid; Keyes Art Mile, Johannesburg; 6 Spin Street, Cape Town.

She is currently the curator of *Progetto Genesi. Art and Human Rights*, a travelling exhibition and educational project, promoted by Associazione Genesi and sponsored by MiC- Ministry of Culture, Italian National Commission for UNESCO, Rai Per il Sociale, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore e FAI-Fondo per l'Ambiente Italiano.

In addition to following the most recent art, both Italian and international, Ilaria Bernardi specialises in the artistic research that developed in Italy in the 1960s and 1970s, to which she has devoted several publications, including the monographs *Opere e Archivi. Mara Coccia e Daniela Ferrara* (Silvana Editoriale, Milan 2020), *La Tartaruga. Storia di una galleria* (Postmediabooks, Milan 2018); *Giulio Paolini. Opere su carta* (Prinp – Editoria d'Arte 2.0, Turin 2017); *Arte e Impresa. Omaggio a Marco Rivetti* (Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Turin 2017); *Vincenzo Agnetti. Testimonianza* (Gli Ori, Pistoia 2015); *Teatro delle mostre. Roma, maggio 1968* (Scalpendi editore, Milan 2014).