

**The Museum Imagined.  
Stories from 30 years of Centro Pecci**

22 September 2018 – 25 June 2019  
Press preview: 21 September, 12.00  
Opening: 21 September, 19.00

**The Luigi Pecci Center for Contemporary Art turns 30: for the occasion, *The Museum Imagined. Stories from 30 years of Centro Pecci* reinterprets this legacy through an original itinerary of facts, statistics, anecdotes, memories and works selected from the Center's collection and exhibition history, created by the new director Cristiana Perrella. More than a celebration, this is a narrative in autofictional form, in which the reality of what has taken place alternates with an imaginative vision of the museum that reinterprets and configures the past in the light of present sensibilities, projecting it into a possible future.**

Since its opening as the first contemporary art institution created in Italy, Centro Pecci has stood out as a **center of cultural production committed to artistic research in the wider sense of the term**. From 1988 to the present, it has produced over 250 events, including exhibitions of art, design and fashion, as well as an insightful program of activities connected with literature, music, performance and theater.

The exhibition, composed of three parts, traces the stages of the Center's history – starting with the initiative of Enrico Pecci, a textiles industrialist in Prato who imagined the museum as a gift to the city in memory of his son Luigi, which was met with immediate support and collaboration from the municipal government of Prato and the city's entrepreneurs and residents.

The first part features a **timeline designed by the graphic arts studio of Sara De Bondt**, and narrates the sequence of exhibitions, concerts, programs, festivals and talks hosted by the museum across the past three decades, providing a chance to map a sort of DNA of the museum through various materials: videos, photographs, documents, audio tracks, posters and works.

The second begins with **analysis – both statistical and semantic – of information from the archives, organized together with the MoSIS (Models and Systems of Statistical Information) of PIN, Polo Universitario Città di Prato**, tracing a parallel, and at times unexpected, history of the museum. A story made of quantities: the number of works in the collection, the exhibitions, visitors, artists (a total broken down by geographical origin, age, gender). A glimpse between the lines of the narrative the museum has made for itself through the words and linguistic constructs chosen to communicate its activities in hundreds of press releases over the years, analyzed to bring out and underscore, as knowledge and awareness, the "hidden" information contained there. Conceptual areas, key words and semantic relations have been identified, through new methods of text and content analysis.

The timeline and the results of the analysis of archival data form a conceptual framework for the third part of the 30-year narrative: a **new installation of a selection of works, in most part from the museum's collection, selected by tracing the history of the most outstanding exhibitions held at Centro Pecci since 1988**. Works such as those by **Zorio, Schnabel, Cucchi, Merz, Acconci, Morris**, which reflect the focus on the great protagonists of Italian and American art in the 1980s and 1990s, artists whose works were

featured in important solo shows at the museum. Or those of **John Coplans** or **Craigie Horsfield**, pointing to an interest in photography that began with the exhibition *Another Objectivity* curated by Chevrier and Lingwood in 1989, the 150th anniversary of the birth of this artistic medium, then pursued with solo shows by great artists like **Robert Mapplethorpe** and **Nobuyoshi Araki**. Other lines of research gleaned from the exhibitions reveal a specific sensitivity to the epochal changes taking place in Europe towards the end of the second millennium. It was no coincidence that Centro Pecci opened, on 25 June 1988 precisely, with an exhibition titled *Europe Now*, featuring works like those of **Michelangelo Pistoletto** or **Anish Kapoor**, to indicate the faith and enthusiasm for the concept of a cultural – more than political – community of the European countries, which would lead a few years later to the signing of the Maastricht Treaty.

Also in connection with the European sociopolitical climate from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, the Center widened its range to include the art of Eastern Europe, and in particular of post-Soviet Russia, with a series of shows over the years, including the very timely *Contemporary Russian Artists* in 1990, leading to the acquisition of works in the collection such as those of **Ilya Kabakov**. Over the years, close attention was also devoted to the latest trends in Italian art, with overviews like *An Emerging Scene* in 1991, from which arrived the large work by **Stefano Arienti** *Cartoline*, or *Futurama* in 2000, which led to the acquisition of *Aiuole* by **Massimo Bartolini**, and to environmental installations, starting with the exhibition *Spazi '88*. The Center's collection contains many works of great depth, like the piece by **Mario Merz**, *La spirale appare*, or the work made by **Barbara Kruger** on the facade of a factory in Prato as part of the exhibition *Inside/out* curated by Ida Panicelli in 1993, as well as the work by **Michael Lin** done in 2010, or that of **Thomas Hirschhorn**, acquired at the time of the exhibition *The End of the World* in 2016, which will be reinstalled for this 30th anniversary. The focus on performance art and live events has addressed the extensive use of time and space, as seen in the remake of the performance *Che cos'è il fascismo* by **Fabio Mauri**, presented in 1993, also part of *Inside/out*, or the work by **Kinkaleri**, *Otto*, a performance that will be reactivated for the exhibition, as well as that of **Jérôme Bel** presented in 2017.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the museum, a recent work by Martin Creed (Wakefield, UK, 1968) will be installed in the entrance hall: his neon, *Work No 2833: Do not Worry*, 2017. This is the one and only work on display that does not belong to the past history of the museum, rather, it is an invitation, made with the irony typical of its author, to look to the future with confidence.

### Multidisciplinary programming for the 30th anniversary

The history of Centro Pecci is one of multidisciplinary activity and dialogue, on both local and international levels, which will be enhanced by the events that accompany the 30th birthday celebration:

***Codice Colore*, works from the collection of Alessandro Grassi**, an exhibition curated by Stefano Pezzato (from 7 September to 2 December 2018) that highlights the remarkable long-term loan of works granted by Alessandro Grassi, one of the most important Italian collectors. Having close ties with the Prato area, he was one of the first supporters of the Transavanguardia, and a steadfast patron of European and American postmodern painting and photography.

***Otto*, the performance by Kinkaleri**, sixteen years after its debut (Premio UBU 2002 as best dance theater production), will be adapted for the new spaces of Centro Pecci in collaboration with Teatro Metastasio, and will be previewed during the opening, with ongoing performances every week on Friday and Sunday, until 21 October.

**RAID**, a new performance by **Marcello Maloberti** commissioned by **Centro Pecci** for the Giornata del Contemporaneo. On 13 October, AMACI presents a widespread exhibition by Marcello Maloberti, which will take place in all the museums of the association. Maloberti has been invited to create a performance for the 30th anniversary that connects to the new installation of the collection. *Raid* will happen in all the rooms of the museum, relating to the works shown inside.

**The Second Summer of Love**, a series of artists' films that narrates another anniversary with reference to 1988: the year of the explosion in the United Kingdom of electronic music and youth culture, which then expanded into Europe and the United States. The roots of the acid house and rave scenes, and the way they revolutionized youth lifestyles with a lasting impact on contemporary culture, comparable to that of the counter-culture of the 1960s, **provide inspiration for work by Jeremy Deller. While the scenes that preceded and influenced rave inspire the works by Wu Tsang and Josh Blaaberg.** Commissioned and produced in collaboration by Frieze and Gucci, the three films are presented for the first time in Italy at Centro Pecci, starting with *Into a Space of Love* by Wu Tsang, which will be screened from 6 to 11 November, followed by ***Distant Planet*** by Josh Blaaberg (from 13 to 18 November) and ***Everybody In The Place*** by Jeremy Deller (from 20 to 25 November).

#### **New spaces and new functions for a museum that grows and changes**

Under the direction of Cristiana Perrella, starting in March 2018, **Centro Pecci now has a new “look” that makes it increasingly appealing and open to the city.** The 30th birthday has been taken as a chance to reinterpret and reactivate the spaces and functions of Centro Pecci after the expansion completed in 2016. For the first time, the internal architectural structure is fully visible, thanks to the removal of the internal partitions and the reopening of the space to natural light from the skylights that had previously been covered. The rationalist approach of Italo Gamberini, designer of the original nucleus of the museum, meets with the unexpected, unusual form of the addition designed by Maurice Nio and opened two years ago, in an open dialogue that thrives on the contrast of two different but interacting ways of thinking about space: on that is rhythmical and modular, marked by orthogonal intersections, and one that is fluid, always different, full of curves.

The opening of the **new bistro bar** to celebrate the 30th anniversary is a decisive step in the regeneration of important social functions of the museum initiated by Perrella, functions that have been part of the identity of Centro Pecci since its founding: besides the bar – a long-awaited gathering place – there is also the **outdoor theater** with seating for 950 people, restored and put back into operation during the summer for the program of concerts, *Pecci Summer Live*; starting in the new year, the **classrooms** will reopen to host the **educational program**, whose basic approach is inspired by Bruno Munari, along with the **CID, the documentation center and library**, reactivated with longer hours and new departments, such as the one that includes publications on art, architecture and design conceived for children. All this joins the already existing facilities: the **cinema**, with programming of daily screenings per day plus festivals and film series; a **haute cuisine restaurant**, Myo, run by the chef Angiolo Barni; the **bookshop**, with a selection of publications related to the exhibitions in progress, and much more.

Centro Pecci thus revitalizes and reinforces its identity, oriented towards the needs of the future, for which the museum is increasingly seen as a place of cultural production, of encounters between different forms of knowledge and languages, a place that responds to multiple needs and multiple audiences. A piazza in the city where it is possible to spend time, not necessarily just to view exhibitions.

### **The new Pecci Vintage channel for the Web TV of Centro Pecci**

For the 30th anniversary and in the context of the reprise of activity of the Web TV of Centro Pecci, which offers multiple video contents on exhibitions, talks, performances and concerts that have taken place at the Center, the new Pecci Vintage channel is being launched, featuring archival video materials that have been restored and made available for the first time, including some that will be inserted in the context of the exhibition *The Museum Imagined*.

### **Firenze Card**

Starting on 6 September, Centro Pecci becomes part of the circuit of the Firenze Card, the official museum pass of the city of Florence, confirming its role as the contemporary art museum of a vast metropolitan area that includes Florence, Prato and Pistoia.

The program for the year 2019 will be announced during the course of Autumn 2018.

-----

*I believe that to play a major role on the art scene, not only in Italy but also on an international level, it is important to start from the identity of the Centro Pecci, from what it has been and what it can be today in relation to the place in which it exists and the times in which we live, with the ability to preserve a cultural identity, to grasp the historical moment, to express a critical discourse, to produce new ideas. It is not easy, but I believe this is the great challenge facing museums today: to avoid being subject to a cultural hegemony, but to express an independent and recognizable voice that questions the present, raising issues.*

### **Cristiana Perrella, Director, Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato**

#### **Fondazione per le Arti Contemporanee in Toscana**

The Luigi Pecci Center for Contemporary Art is run by the Fondazione per le Arti Contemporanee in Toscana. Active since 2016 for the production, conservation, protection, enhancement and promotion of the contemporary arts, architecture and culture, the Foundation was created by the City of Prato and the Associazione Culturale Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci Prato, which are its founders, and is supported by the Tuscany Region.

### **Cristiana Perrella**

An art curator and critic, Cristiana Perrella directed the Contemporary Arts Programme of the British School at Rome from 1998 to 2008. Later, as an independent curator, she has collaborated with Italian and international institutions, including MAXXI, Rome, from 2010 to 2016, Museo Riso, Palermo, from 2008 to 2012, Fondazione Marino Golinelli, Bologna, from 2008 to 2017, and Fondazione Prada, Milan. She is a professor of Phenomenology of Contemporary Art, from 2003 to 2009 at the University of Chieti, and since 2010 at the IED in Rome. Starting in March 2018, she is the director of the Luigi Pecci Center for Contemporary Art in Prato.

**The Museum Imagined**  
**Stories from 30 years of Centro Pecci**  
**Curated by Cristiana Perrella**

In collaboration with Irene Innocente, Elena Magini, Marta Papini, Maria Teresa Soldani.

22 September 2018 – 25 June 2019  
Press preview: 21 September, 12.00  
Opening: 21 September, 19.00

**Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci**  
**Fondazione per le Arti Contemporanee in Toscana**  
Viale della Repubblica 277 – Prato

New hours: 10.00-20.00 daily, Friday and Saturday 10.00-23.00  
Closed on Mondays

**INFO**

**Centro Pecci Press Office**

Ivan Aiuzzi – T. 0574-531828 [I.aiuzzi@centropecci.it](mailto:I.aiuzzi@centropecci.it)

**Pickles PR**

Maria Cristina Giusti  
[cristina@picklespr.com](mailto:cristina@picklespr.com)  
+39 339 8090604

Enrichetta Cardinale  
[enrichetta@picklespr.com](mailto:enrichetta@picklespr.com)  
+34 656956672

.....  
**[www.centropecci.it](http://www.centropecci.it)**

#peccitrenta #museoimmaginato

The activities of Centro Pecci are supported by:  
the City of Prato and the Tuscany Region

Energy Partner: Estra S.p.A.  
Technical sponsor: Unicoop Firenze  
Official carrier: Trenitalia S.p.A.