

Press release

MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO from the COMUNICAZIONE series

22 September 2020 – 16 January 2021

Open to the public 22-23-24 September | 2 - 9 p.m.

From 22 to 24 September 2020 Galleria Giorgio Persano will inaugurate a new space in the courtyard of Via Stampatori 4 - Turin, with a selection of mirrored paintings from the "Comunicazione" series exhibited in the gallery in the former Opificio Pastiglie Leone in October 2018.

In the works chosen for this event, the figures are depicted shown in conversation with their smartphones. Enclosed in their gestures, the women portrayed lead the viewer even more to seek a dialogue with them that is not mediated by technology. Pistoletto's mirrors thus continue to reflect not only the contemporary world, but also the present itself, the living and immediate one of the reflection, and finally becoming a historical document for the future.

"Today the phenomenon of communication has assumed a dimension inconceivable a few decades ago. A small pocket phone instantly puts us in touch with the world. As *ante litteram* computers, the *Quadri Specchianti* are both the present and the memory. Moreover the exhibited works are like selfies, as they portray the person with all that lies behind him. The whole of humanity is now technologically linked up to the point of making inter-individual communication outside the technological system precarious. The works on show have neither an apologetic nor a critical function: they simply document the state of things. Communication, however, as we can well understand, has another side and that is the lack of communication. For this reason it becomes imperative to develop a new dimension that connects the positive side and the negative side of the communication processes, finding new balances in the relationship between nature and artifice, between individual people and society" Michelangelo Pistoletto, August 2018

Michelangelo Pistoletto (Biella, 1933).

He began to exhibit his work in 1955 and in 1960 he had his first solo show at Galleria Galatea in Turin. An inquiry into self-portraiture characterizes his early work. In the two-year period 1961-1962 made the first *Mirror Paintings*, which directly include the viewer and real time in the work, and open up perspective, reversing the Renaissance perspective that had been closed by the twentieth-century avant-gardes. These works quickly brought Pistoletto international acclaim, leading, in the sixties, to one-man shows in important galleries and museums in Europe and the United States. The *Mirror Paintings* are the foundation of his subsequent artistic output and theoretical thought. In 1965 and 1966 he produced a set of works entitled *Minus Objects*, considered fundamental to the birth of Arte Povera, an art movement of which Pistoletto was an animating force and a protagonist. In 1967 he began to work outside traditional exhibition spaces, with the first instances of that "creative collaboration" he developed over the following decades by bringing together artists from different disciplines and diverse sectors of society. In 1975-76 he presented a cycle of twelve consecutive exhibitions, *Le Stanze*, at the Stein Gallery in Turin. This was the first of a series of complex, year-long works called "time continents". Others are *White Year* (1989) and *Happy Turtle* (1992).

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In 1978, in a show in Turin, Pistoletto defined two main directions his future artwork would take: *Division and Multiplication of the Mirror* and *Art Takes On Religion*. In the early eighties he made a series of sculptures in rigid polyurethane, translated into marble for his solo show in 1984 at Forte di Belvedere in Florence. From 1985 to 1989 he created the series of "dark" volumes called *Art of Squalor*. During the nineties, with *Project Art* and with the creation in Biella of *Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto* and the *University of Ideas*, he brought art into active relation with diverse spheres of society with the aim of inspiring and producing responsible social change. In 2003 he won the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion for Lifelong Achievement. In 2004 the University of Turin awarded him a laurea honoris causa in Political Science. On that occasion the artist announced what has become the most recent phase of his work, *Third Paradise*. In 2007, in Jerusalem, he received the *Wolf Foundation Prize in the Arts*, "for his constantly inventive career as an artist, educator and activist whose restless intelligence has created prescient forms of art that contribute to fresh understanding of the world." In 2010 he wrote the essay *The Third Paradise*, published in Italian, English, French and German. In 2012 he started promoting the *Rebirth-day*, first worldwide day of rebirth, celebrated every year on 21st December with initiatives taking place all around the world. In 2013 the Louvre in Paris hosted his personal exhibition Michelangelo Pistoletto, *année un – le paradis sur terre*. In this same year he received the *Praemium Imperiale* for painting, in Tokyo. In May 2015 he received a degree *honoris causa* from the Universidad de las Artes of Havana in Cuba. In the same year he realizes a work of big dimensions, called *Rebirth*, situated in the park of the Palais des Nations in Geneva, headquarters of the UN. In 2017 the text written by Michelangelo Pistoletto *Ominitheism and Demopraxy. Manifesto for a regeneration of society* was published. Between 2018 and 2020 the activity of the *Third Paradise* has further intensified, in particular through the development of an international network of Embassies and Forums. In these same years he has been particularly active in various South American countries, with personal exhibitions and a series of initiatives linked to the *Third Paradise*.