

PRESS RELEASE

# THE 'G7 of ART' IN SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE

## 28 MARCH – 17 APRIL 2017

Seven established artists, most of whom received the Lorenzo il Magnifico Award during the past editions of the Florence Biennale, are going to exhibit their works in the basement of the Basilica of Santa Croce, Florence. Within the framework of this contemporary art exhibition they virtually represent the seven nations whose Ministers of Culture are gathering in Florence at the end of March 2017 to attend the G7 of Culture. As if any remainder were needed, the countries involved are the United States, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy. Initiated by Marco Ferri and curated by Dr. Melanie Zefferino with the managing direction of Jacopo Celona, this contemporary art exhibition is unveiling on 28 March 2017. Thereafter, it will be open to the public until 17 April 2017 with free admission.

The 'G7 of Art', however, also anticipates the XI<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Florence, themed 'eARTh: Creativity & Sustainability' to be held on 6-15 October 2015 at the Fortezza da Basso.

Partner of the UN Programme 'Dialogue amongst Civilisations' (2001), recipient of the Anne Archer Artists for Human Rights Award (2007) and of the 'Silver Pegasus' (2015) from the Regional Authorities of Tuscany, since its foundation in 1997 the International Contemporary Art Biennial of Florence has gathered artists from around the world. Artists at different career stages working with different media. Looking forward to celebrating their twentieth anniversary this year, the *Florence Biennale* has kept fostering cultural dialogue by promoting this unprecedented 'G7 of Art'.

The United Kingdom's 'flag bearer' in this event is **Louise Giblin**, Member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors and famous for her body cast metal sculptures, examples of which she is showing at Santa Croce. Representing Germany is **Eva Moosbrugger**, who received many prizes for her sculptural installations in glass and metal, including the German Design Award 2017. From the United States **Romolo Del Deo** is exhibiting three stunning bronze sculptures, with which he gives shape to 'fragments of memory' while exploring the idea that the past haunts present. Japanese artist **Yasumichi Nakagawa** is showing his phantasmagorical giant masks evoking the Samurai heritage: they are mythical *Tigers* guarding the venue. **Gary Barnhart**, who is exhibiting his precious stone sculptures of ethereal beauty, gives new breath of life to the allure of the distant cultures he has studied thoroughly, from the Etruscan civilization to the Inuit tradition. Testifying to the cultural identity of France by displaying beautiful photographs taken on the 'French way' to Santiago de Compostela is **Jean-Pierre Rousset**, awardee at the French and Japanese Festival of Contemporary Arts. Through his images of castles, hospitals, and chapels, some of which listed as World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, this author (also a member of the editorial board of the *Festin, revue des arts et du patrimoine en Aquitaine*) captures human beings' struggle to acquire

**Florence Biennale**

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Ministero  
dei beni e delle  
attività culturali  
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ORDINE DEGLI ARCHITETTI,  
PIANIFICATORI, PAESAGGISTI E CONSERVATORI  
DELLA PROVINCIA DI FIRENZE

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conscience of the mystery of life, also through the sacred. Finally, **Pasquale Celona**, founder and President of the Florence Biennale, is showing his *Annunciation*. While paying homage to fifteenth-century Italian painting tradition, by exhibiting that altarpiece he aims to support the Mayor of Florence in his wishing that 'the G7 of Culture may be the beginning of a new Renaissance'.

According to the exhibition curator, a British-and-Italian scholar who is an *alumna* of the University of Warwick, all the artists involved in the 'G7 of Art' show a sense of identity and belonging to their cultures. Cultures rooted in civilisation, and flowering also thanks to cross-fertilisation between different traditions. Cultures that have left their marks on sites listed as tangible or intangible World Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO as bringing 'the invisible into the visible', quoting Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Such a heritage testifies to the existence of many orders of things, which art – through its many languages – allows us to perceive and understand.

The seven contemporary artists showcasing their artworks in the Santa Croce basilica virtually 'sing' in counterpoint to the Group of Seven's Ministers of Culture, who will 'debut' on the Florentine scene in late March 2017. Indeed, with this exhibition the Florence Biennale renovate their twenty-year commitment to fostering cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary dialogue through art. All the talents who have participated in this biennial over the years, and more especially the outstanding masters of sculpture, painting, and photography who have made the 'G7 of Art' possible, honour Florence as a muse inspiring universal harmony since the arts conjoin in this city, where the past and present intertwine.

## OPENING TIMES

After the inauguration, on 28th March, the exhibition will be open to the public until 17 April 2017, but closed on Easter Sunday. Full-time opening, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., every day excepting on 2-3, 6-9 and 11 April, with afternoon opening from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Free admission.

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## ‘G7 OF ART’ THE ARTISTS IN THE EXHIBITION PATH

### Yasumichi Nakagawa – JAPAN

Born in 1953 in Osaka, Japan, Yasumichi Nakagawa graduated at the Tama Art University in Hachioji (Tokyo), Faculty of Art and Design.

Artist and art teacher, he uses different materials and techniques for his artworks, including a dyeing technique that is most employed to colour fabrics for *kimono*.

He exhibited above all in Japan, where he also realised a wall painting in the Takahama Nuclear Power Plant. In 2013 he showed his works in two National museums of Poland. He won several prizes, and received the Lorenzo il Magnifico Award for textile art in 2015.

In the ‘G7 of Art’ he is showcasing two giant tiger masks made of dyed textiles, paint, and wire on wood panels. The tiger is not autochthonous of the ‘land of the rising sun’, where the species and its myth was ‘imported’ from China, possibly in the VIII<sup>th</sup> century. Dating to that period is the *Manyoshu*, the earliest Japanese poem in which mention is made of the tiger – still a symbol of dignity and courage. Tiger-shaped *papier maché* masks are donated as wishing well gifts during the Shinno Festival in Osaka since, according to legend, a tiger lived in the castle of that town.



*Tora (Tiger), I*  
 Yasumichi Nakagawa – Japan  
 Textile art installation, mixed media  
 120 x 120 x 28 cm.  
 2015

### Louise Giblin – United Kingdom

Born in the Isle of Wight, she obtained her Sculpture BA Hons. at Brighton Polytechnic and History and Theory of Modern Art MA at Chelsea College of Art and Design, London. Member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors, at the Florence Biennale she received the Lorenzo il Magnifico Award for sculpture in 2015.

Louise Giblin is a world leading body cast sculptor. Her subject matter is the human form and her models include Olympians, celebrities and war veterans. She affirms that ‘It’s not my aim to capture a personality; all I have to go on is what my models choose to project. That’s their armour, that’s what I’m interested in’. So she produces sculptures in clay with detailed imagery applied to the surface, then cast in bronze, translucent resin or cold cast metals.

In the ‘G7 of Art’ she is exhibiting two bronze cast sculptures, namely *Perfect Fit* and *Kissing Christ*; and also *TEK Head*, a Nickel plated bronze on granite base.

[www.louisegiblin.co.uk](http://www.louisegiblin.co.uk)



*Perfect Fit*  
 Louise Giblin – United Kingdom  
 Bronze sculpture  
 66 x 40 x 26 cm.  
 Edition no. 10/12.  
 2010

### **Eva Moosbrugger – Germany**

Throughout her thirty-year career, Eva Moosbrugger has exhibited at foremost international art shows in Europe, USA and Japan. Her unique sculptures are in renowned private collections. Awarded with several prizes for her sculptural installations in glass and metal, she received the Lorenzo il Magnifico Award in 2009 and has just won the German Design Award 2017.

Murano glass has been her passion for over twenty years. She has thus created most of her sculptures with that medium, which she perceives as mystic. Still, using medieval glass making traditions, she 'makes light dance' through sculptures of timeless beauty.

In the 'G7 of Art' she is exhibiting *Six Forms* (2013) As Sven Hauschke, Director of the Veste Museum of Contemporary Glass in Coburg, has remarked, 'Eva Moosbrugger explores the different properties and perceptions of the material she transforms as in a kind of alchemic process. For instance, in *Six Forms* coloured glass looks like marble or pottery, while the steel is worked in such a way as to provide transparency, light and shade – properties which are otherwise associated with glass. This interplay calls into question established habits, things we take for granted and the casual, careless way we treat nature, life and health'.

[www.evamoosbrugger.com](http://www.evamoosbrugger.com)



#### *Six Forms*

Eva Moosbrugger – Germany  
Conceptual art installation with three Murano blown glass forms, and three welded steel forms, 76 x 160 cm.  
2013

### **Gary Barnhart – CANADA**

Born in Ottawa, Gary Barnhart studied Visual Arts at the York University in Toronto and University of Ottawa. While carrying out a successful teaching career, he received International recognition for his exquisite sculpture in marble, limestone and alabaster. He received the Lorenzo il Magnifico Award in 2011 and 2013.

Early influences on his artistic research can be found in the Primitive arts of the South-West Pacific, sculpture from Central and South America and the engraved symbols of Inuit art in Canada's north, which still inspire his work. During his sojourn in Italy he could examine early Etruscan artefacts, which provided new inspiration for his own sculptures. More recently, travelling to Japan has strengthened his commitment to seek the inner self when he approaches the stone. He knows it has a life of its own, and that releasing the ethereal, Essene beauty of stone into the world of shape and form is his gift.

Through the creative process, Barnhart discovers the beauty of the unknown while developing a sense of power and personal fulfilment. He believes that 'Art transcends the pages of daily life in order to fulfill, inspire, and compliment the growth and well being of the individual and also that of the collective.'

[www.garybarnhartsculptor.com](http://www.garybarnhartsculptor.com)



#### *Under a New Moon*

Gary Barnhart – Canada  
Italian alabaster sculpture  
29 x 23 x 19 cm.  
2014

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**Jean-Pierre Rousset – FRANCE**

French-born painter, photographer and writer, Jean-Pierre Rousset works alternately in Portland, Maine (USA) and Hendaye (Southern France). He is a member of the editorial board of *Festin. Revue des arts et du patrimoine en Aquitaine*.

In 2008 he was selected to represent France at the First French-Japanese Contemporary Art Festival in Japan, where he received two Honorary Awards. Within the framework of his project entitled *Camino*, he has immortalised castles, hospitals, and temples destined to host pilgrims and Knights of the Order of Saint Jacques de l'Épée Rouge on the Way to Saint James of Compostela. That path, according to the artist, is the earliest 'European journeys through culture'.

From the aforementioned project he is displaying a photo of the *Castle of Clavijo (Spain)* taken from a spot on the *camino francés*, and also a photo of the *Templar Chapel of Notre-Dame de l'Assomption in Aragnouet (France)*, a site that has been listed as UNESCO World Heritage. Also on display are his shots of the *Templar Commandery in Bessaut* and *Funerary Stone of Knight Pierre de Cunh in the Church of Notre-Dame du Bourg at Rabastens, France*, which testify to faith, faithfulness and fight in Medieval France. Indeed, showing through Rousset's work is a feeling of disenchantment as well as a sense of hidden driving human beings' struggle to acquire conscience of the mystery of life.

[www.roussetfineart.com](http://www.roussetfineart.com)



*Templar Chapel of Notre-Dame de l'Assomption (XII<sup>th</sup> c.) in Aragnouet, France*  
Jean-Pierre Rousset – France  
Photograph, 70 x 100 cm.  
Taken with Nikon D800E on  
14 September 2014

**Pasquale Celona – ITALY**

Born in Bruzzano Zeffirio, he made Florence his home town after graduating in Natural Sciences at the University of Reggio Calabria. By then, he had already developed his flair for painting. In 1978 he was awarded the Trofeo Leone d'Oro by the Circolo della Stampa in Florence. He has exhibited his paintings in public and private venues in Europe, including the Yacht Club de Monaco during the 'Month of Italian Culture (2014)'; the Chiostrò di Sant'Agostino in Pietrasanta (2015), and the basement of the Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence (2013). His works, blending figurative and abstract art, are in prestigious institutional collections, for instance that of the Museu de arte do Parlamento de São Paulo. In the 'G7 of Art' he is paying homage the Florentine Old Masters of painting with this *Annunciation*. Pasquale Celona's contribution to art not only lies in his creative practice, but also in his commitment to serving as President of the *Florence Biennale*, which he founded with his brother Piero in 1997.



*Annunciation*  
Pasquale Celona  
Oil on canvas – Italy  
150 x 250 cm.  
1992

### Romolo Del Deo – U.S.A.

After training in his father's painting studio and perfecting sculpture with other masters, he completed his early education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, followed by an Honors BA at Harvard University, receiving the President's Award in 2000 for his contribution to the Arts at Harvard.

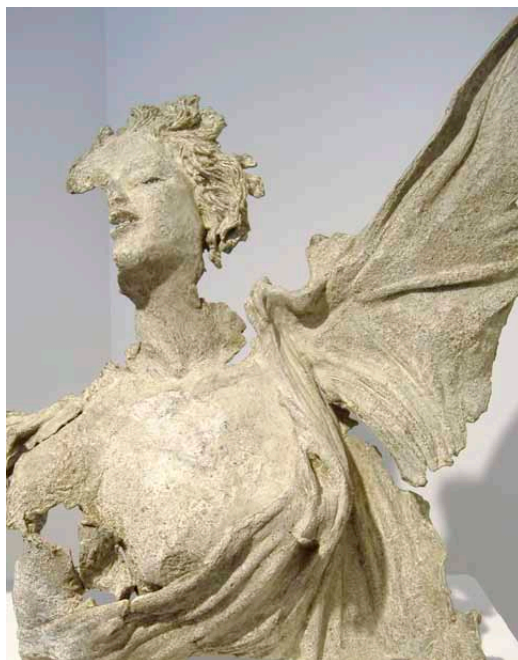
Recently awarded the Lorenzo il Magnifico Award for sculpture, other honours include the Henry Moore Foundation, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Harvard David McCord Prize, the Harvard Danforth Award and the PAAM International Award.

As Alexander K. Noelle, Director of the New Britain Museum of American Art, has remarked that 'Romolo's artwork exists on two levels: one of pure aesthetic balance and beauty, and another of mysterious and evocative narrative. His bronzes seem to be shards from an ancient culture, yet are hauntingly contemporary.

Playing with the acculturated baggage of classical icons, Romolo's work mirrors the present art world's fractured individuality and inspiration. [...] Considering life as bittersweet, he transforms perfect form into fragments that express the contrasting forces of perpetual beauty and passing time'.

In the 'G7 of Art' Del Deo is showing *Ephemer*, *Sovra* and *Allora*, beautiful sculptures in vitreous bronze with calciferous patina.

[www.studioromolo.com](http://www.studioromolo.com)



*Sovra*

Romolo Del Deo – United States of America  
Sculpture in vitreous bronze with calciferous patina on marble base, unique,  
66 x 91 x 30 cm (26 x 36 x 12 inches).  
2011

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