

PRESS RELEASE

Anselm Kiefer
Salt of the Earth

Emilio Vedova
...in continuum

Venice
Magazzino del Sale and Studio Vedova
1st June / 30th November, 2011

From 1st June to 30th November, the Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova will be presenting two extraordinary and singular exhibitions to run concurrently, curated by Germano Celant: the first is **Salt of the Earth** by Anselm Kiefer, one of the most important contemporary artists, who has produced an installation especially for the Magazzino del Sale, the space restored by Renzo Pieno for the Fondazione. While the former studio of Emilio Vedova will instead provide the venue for the second exhibition, **...in continuum**, an imposing cycle of 108 canvases, most of which in black and white, produced in 1987-88. With these two new exhibitions, the Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova continues its process of dialogue in parallel, begun last year with "Louise Bourgeois: the Fabric Works" and "Emilio Vedova Sculptor", between the Venetian artist and one of the leading exponents of contemporary art.

What sparked the idea of bringing two apparently distant albeit in some way communicating worlds together? What was the logic underlying the aim of metaphorically weaving their respective works together? First of all, both artists have pushed art towards an area of purification: Vedova by seeking to regenerate a sign or gesture that remained ever a "discharge" of life, and Kiefer aspiring to finding a point zero, however tragic and horrendous, from which to begin to "purge" his palette. Despite being two different and independent settings, Kiefer in the Magazzino del Sale and Vedova in his studio on the Zattere, their research nevertheless reveals the intention of causing a crisis in codified forms: an iconoclasm fired in the hope of finding a primary condition in painting: a double pilgrimage, physical and mental, tending to recover a new force and energy.

The title of the first exhibition – "**Salt of the Earth**" by Anselm Kiefer – refers to the artist's interest in the alchemical process, in which salt is a component. According to Kiefer, in order to reawaken from his past and find a new spiritual dimension, the human being must go through various stages of mutation, and art is the instrument to facilitate this process and rebirth towards a new awareness of the world. For this reason, the artist resorts, in his paintings and sculptures, to symbolic materials and processes, such as lead and electrolysis, gold and salt. At the same time, the display case first seen by the public at the entrance contains a stove or oven, means of the transmutation and sublimation of matter, but also an image of tragic dissolution, that of the cremating ovens from Auschwitz to Dachau. The polarity between sublimation and dissolution finds a single point of equilibrium in another element in Kiefer's work at the Magazzino del Sale: a spatial and architectural group entitled "Das Salz der Erde" (2011), consisting of a structure in which are hung photographs of landscapes on sheets of lead submitted to a process of electrolysis that has covered them in a green patina: a colour

underlying hope and announcing the union of opposites. The space in the Magazzino will be symbolically closed by the image of the initiatory triangle above the large painting of "Salz, Merkur, Sulfur" (2011). The installation not only finds an echo within this historic architectural container, but is also a reflection of places crossed, full of the same memories and saline and mutating experiences, formed of a further metaphor of art as a continuous active force, a step towards the possible constellations of knowing oneself. One hundred and height large canvases go to make up Emilio Vedova's "**...in continuum**" (1987/1988), a choral, imposing and dramatic work conceived to express a fragmented, syncopated and transitory poetic vision within an extreme expressive tension. Through a sometimes casual overlay of the paintings, which constitute the main thinking behind the work, "**...in continuum**" is a sort of accumulation "without beginning and without end": the randomness of the contacts and the infinite possible combinations constrain the gaze to an incessant movement to gain a sense of that inexhaustible energy. A spectacular and extraordinary stratification that the artist produced over a period of one year. White on black and black on white, "**...in continuum**" is a wall of (musical) scores that blend and become confused to form a concert in which, instead of "visual" sounds, the images interweave with each other to create ever new structures. In the studio of the artist, where the pictorial planes of the large recomposed canvases enter each other, hiding and highlighting each other, an infinite and temporary profundity is created, a materialisation of the pictorial force of the artist's personal inner world. In the old boatyard the artist had chosen for his studio, the uninterruptedly changeable black and white of "**...in continuum**" recalls not only the shifting Venetian waters on which Venice lives and is reflected, but also archaic remains, broken images and deep sediments within a dramatic tension.

"Water/plasma - ambiguous mobility - Flow... continuous..." "Mirrors... infinite echoes, visual references, memories, precipitous dizziness", as Vedova himself wrote.

The catalogue of both exhibitions is published by Skira

Anselm Kiefer

Salt of the Earth

Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova
Venice
Magazzino del Sale, Zattere 266

Emilio Vedova

...in continuum

Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova
Venice
Studio Vedova, Zattere 50

1st June – 30th November

10.30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

closed Tuesdays

www.fondazionevedova.org

Venice, 29th April 2011