

# 2021

EverAfter

**CLAUDIA ROGGE**

Dante in a private dream of

**RAFFAELE CURI**

The word of Dante with

**THE ACCADEMIA DELLA CRUSCA**

**RHINOCEROS™**

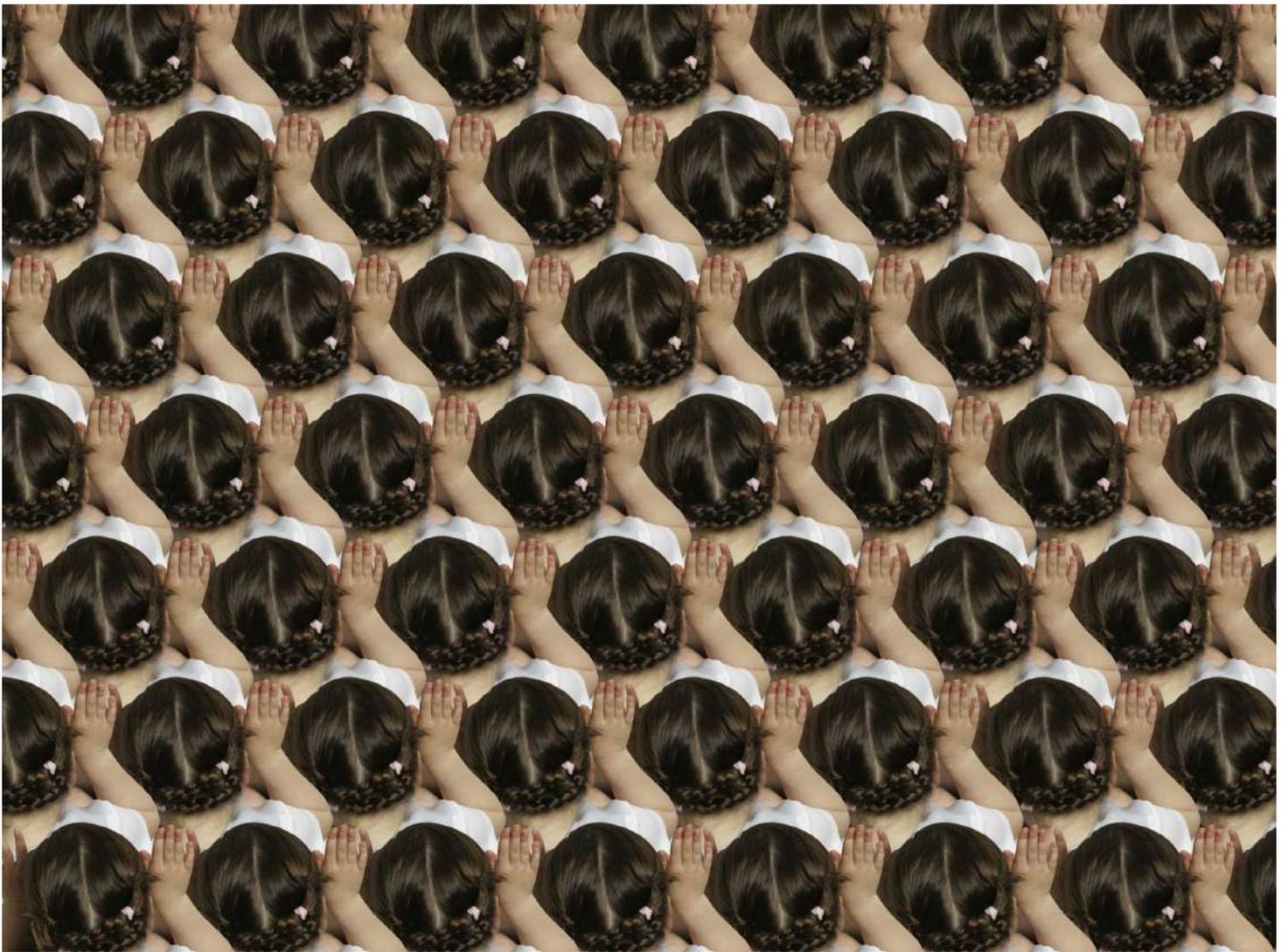
Established in Roma by Alda Fendi

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A radioactive Inferno and a dazzling Paradise, monumental visions bundling together dozens of figures, electronic music and the fifteenth-century miniatures of Giovanni di Paolo, ecological themes and a trail through words, unknown or which we think we know, to discover the beauty of the language we speak - a previously unseen *Dante* that is taking the capital by storm.

As part of the events marking the seven hundredth anniversary of the death of Dante, the *rhinoceros gallery* is hosting an original revisitation of the *Divine Comedy*, arising from the interweaving of a photographic project by Claudia Rogge entitled *EverAfter*, and *DANTE. In a private dream of Raffaele Curi*, together with the presentation of *La parola di Dante [The Word of Dante]*, an initiative from the Accademia della Crusca. This complex expositive score, multifaceted and appealing, brings together multiform stimuli and different paths of inquiry, amalgamated into a unique and complex ensemble set in the building designed by Jean Nouvel.



## THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF CLAUDIA ROGGE

The cornerstone of the project on Dante Alighieri is *EverAfter*, an exhibition of large-format photos by the German artist Claudia Rogge, which *rhinoceros* is presenting to the public for the first time in Rome in the commercial spaces of its gallery.

Born in Düsseldorf, Germany in 1968, Claudia Rogge produced the series of works after which the show is named in 2011. Drawing inspiration from the *Divine Comedy*, she offers a personal and contemporary take on the three realms of Dante's afterlife: *Inferno*, *Purgatory* and *Paradise*.

Visitors are faced by visionary images that appear inspired by ancient painting. They are complex scenes with great visual impact, thronged by dozens of figures piled up on top of each other, naked bodies that twist or rise up depending on the part of the poem imagined by the artist.

The technique adopted by Rogge in making these powerfully theatrical works is a peculiar one, and involves taking dozens of posed photographs, as many as there are figures in the image. They are then painstakingly put together by means of digital processing to create a single imposing image, sumptuous in its sophisticated visual architecture. In both form and content, the richness of this narrative-in-images poses, for the artist, profound questions about faith in an increasingly secularized Western society.

The show also features some works from the *Rapport series* (2005), also by Rogge. They are portraits of young female figures which, through digital processing, multiply to infinity. The faces of the subjects are almost always hidden, and even when visible, they are inexpressive and dehumanized, though this in no way diminishes the beauty of the contemplated bodies and the harmony of the composition. Indeed, these components are accentuated in a refined aestheticization.

For Rogge the individual becomes mass, acquiring pure aesthetic value, without any ideological or didactic intent.



## DANTE. IN A PRIVATE DREAM OF RAFFAELE CURI

The photographic path devised by Claudia Rogge is interwoven with a complex installation route inside the exhibition spaces. *DANTE. In a private dream of Raffaele Curi* is the name of the piece conceived by the artistic director of the Fondazione Alda Fendi - Esperimenti, which combines multisensorial stimuli and offers, in the *rhinoceros gallery*, a new and original rereading of the forest of the suicides described by Dante in Canto XIII of the *Inferno*.

What might correspond in today's world to the dark wood of twisted branches and bristling thorns described by Dante? The answer lies in the petrified forests of the nuclear disasters of the twentieth century.

What Raffaele Curi imagines is a rock piece about a radioactive Dante. It focuses on the environmental and ecological themes increasingly dear to the new generations, who are concerned with using natural resources responsibly and sustainably and with limiting the human damage caused to the life of the planet.

So, after having seen Claudia Rogge's exhibition, visitors enter a dark room. Here they follow an obligatory, non-linear route, allowing themselves to be enveloped by a large multimedia installation.

The space of this Dantesque nightmare is punctuated by monitors hanging from the ceiling at different heights. The monitors cast a pale, spectral light on what appears to be an electronic forest in which one loses oneself.

The monitors are tuned to the four radioactive cities of Chernobyl, Hiroshima, Sellafield and Harrisburg. The soundtrack of this contemporary *Inferno* is electronic music played at an extremely high volume.

The different stimuli contribute to the weaving of a single enveloping experience of great emotive impact (not recommended for those who suffer from claustrophobia). Sealing it is a line from Dante, almost a warning, uttered by Pier delle Vigne: "Uomini fummo, e or siam fatti sterpi" ("We once were men, and now are turned to arid stumps").



## **A DAZZLING *PARADISE***

In stark contrast to the gravity of tone of *Inferno*, on the upper level of the exhibition space the atmosphere becomes lighter and more rarefied, in the experience of an intimate vision of *Paradise* that pays tribute to Dante through the work of the Tuscan painter Giovanni di Paolo di Grazia, who was born in 1398 and died in 1482.

The multimedia installation, which can be viewed one person at a time, is a truly celestial space. In it is the reproduction of a famous miniature by the Sieneese artist, from the Yates Thompson 36 manuscript held in the British Library in London. Illustrating the final stages of Dante's journey in the company of Beatrice, it stands out over monitors and lightboxes in a triumph of light. The whole space is illuminated by a strong golden light, which envelops, embraces and almost dazzles viewers, and it is filled with the light, gentle sonorities of Denmark+Winter. Visitors are advised to bring sunglasses, to avoid being overwhelmed by this display of light that sings, with the final verse of Dante's poem, "L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle" (The love that moves the sun and the other stars").

The critical essay for *DANTE. In a private dream of Raffaele Curi* is by Vittorio Sgarbi.

# LA PAROLA DI DANTE WITH THE ACCADEMIA DELLA CRUSCA

In an original short circuit between social networks and screens in the exhibition, the Accademia della Crusca is mounting *La parola di Dante fresca di giornata*, an anthology of common expressions and neologisms, Latinisms, Dantesque onomatopoeia, a lexical heritage that demonstrates the infinite richness and vitality of Italian down the centuries.

One word a day, accompanied by a short commentary and by the citation in Dante from which it comes, leaps out from books and is posted by the Accademia della Crusca on its Instagram profile. A special space is also devoted to it in the exhibition. Visitors can see it in one of the architectural spaces of the building designed by Jean Nouvel, accompanied by readings from Dante.

The Fondazione Alda Fendi - Esperimenti is not new to collaborative ventures with other important national and international institutions. Suffice it to mention the cooperation agreement with the State Hermitage Museum of Saint Petersburg, as a result of which Michelangelo's sculpture of a *Crouching Boy* and El Greco's painting of *Saint Peter and Saint Paul* have already been exhibited at the *rhinoceros gallery*, attracting an enormous number of visitors; and, before that, the loan of Antonio del Pollaiuolo's *Hercules and Antaeus* from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.

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