



VOGIA DE CARNOVAL

ON SHOW IN ROME

IN THE RHINOCEROS GALLERY

THE PALACE CONCEIVED BY ALDA FENDI AND DESIGNED BY JEAN NOUVEL

in via del Velabro 9A

Roma, 15 December 2022 - 21 May 2023

A new proposal by Fondazione Alda Fendi - Esperimenti: Venice.

In the *rhinoceros* gallery in Rome, with Raffaele Curi's artistic line, a visionary experience arrives from the outside of the building where, thanks to a large projection, visitors enter immersed in the sea.

The enchantment of Venice, an ancient and futuristic city, sacred and licentious, **bewitches Rome with *Vogia de carnoval***, the exhibition experiment realized thanks to the contents provided by the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice, which can be visited from the 15th of December to the 30th of April with free admission at Via del Velabro 9A, in the spaces of *rhinoceros*, the cultural center overlooking the Arco di Giano, conceived by Alda Fendi and designed by Jean Nouvel.

After the Pollaiuolo of the Uffizi, the Michelangelo, El Greco and Picasso of the Hermitage, and the Picasso of the Intesa San Paolo Collections, the Fondazione Alda Fendi - Esperimenti is plunging into a daydream about Venice, full of varied suggestions, orchestrated in a crescendo aimed at evoking the role of the Serenissima as a crossroads of cultures in history and in the collective imagination.

FROM MOSE TO GIOVANNI BELLINI, VIA GOLDONI

In the reverie of a permanent carnival imagined by Raffaele Curi, which does not follow the logic of calendars and the changing of the seasons but inhabits an exceptional time (even though historically Carnival began in Venice on the 27th of December!), anything is possible: even diving into the sea while remaining perfectly dry. This is what happens at the entrance to Rhinoceros, thanks to a projection that envelops the building in waves, without wetting the audience. It is the same magic that the **Mose** does, **the Experimental Electromechanical Module that, by operating a system of mobile dams, saves Venice from high water**, an engineering work applauded worldwide for its effectiveness. The Mose is also the artistic protagonist inside the palace: at the beginning of the exhibition a video installation sees it dance to the notes of Gioacchino Rossini's Cinderella, in a perfect correspondence between Rossini's highs and lows and the flow of the tides. The sea cradles the desire for an out-of-season carnival, and from the technological advances of the present, we move on to the splendours of Venice in the past, and then on to the art of the future.

A tribute to Carlo Goldoni, scattered throughout the palace's exhibition levels, resounds with Fellini echoes. On the one hand, the titles of the playwright's comedies become the subject of a sound installation that bounces the rainbow of colours of Harlequin's dress on the walls, while the voices of the play *Una delle ultime sere di Carnovale* resonate; on the other, the sequence of the mechanical doll from *Federico Fellini's Casanova* is projected, with Nino Rota's music filling the room. The vision of Donald Sutherland's face, the protagonist of the 1976 film, is multiplied in perspective in the installation inside the black cavern.

Fiction or reality? Original or copy? These questions resound along the exhibition itinerary imagined by Raffaele Curi. **The heart of the experiment is the citation of the great Venetian painting tradition with works from the Fondazione Querini Stampalia. After the Uffizi, the National Gallery, the Pinacoteca di Brera and the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, rhinoceros gallery for the first time in Rome brings a DAW®, i.e. a Digital Artwork realized by Cinello on his patent.** This is an **innovative technology that reproduces an ancient painting while creating a new original digital work.** The visitor admires the *Presentation at the Temple* painted in 1460 by Giovanni Bellini and kept in the Venetian foundation. "I am she who is believed to be me", recites around the DAW® the voice of Rossella Falk: a line from *Così è se vi pare*. **The rhinoceros Gallery embraces the challenge of digital and new technologies that amplify the possibilities of the work of art.** In this game that takes the visitor in and out of the dimensions of dream and illusion, in a continuous interchange between reality and its double, between the copy and the original, Bellini's *Presentation at the Temple* is compared with the work of the same subject painted in 1455 by his brother-in-law Andrea Mantegna, preserved in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin. The lagoon enchantment continues on the upper floors with views by Gabriel Bella and Venetian scenes by Pietro Longhi, until we reach the panoramic terrace that reminds visitors that they are in the center of Rome.

BLACK VENICE AND THE DRAMA OF THE LANDINGS

On the occasion of the exhibition opening, rhinoceros gallery hosts **BLACK VENICE, an action piece by Raffaele Curi.** Using the tools of wonder and dream, the public is led into a topical reflection on negritude and the presence of the other in contemporary society. At the center of the exhibition space stands the large rhinoceros designed by Curi (already a finalist for the Compasso d'oro in 2020); on its back is seated a lady dressed in an 18th-century dress, motionless like a statue, evoking the famous painting *The Rhinoceros* by Pietro Longhi from 1751 at Ca' Rezzonico.

The lady's shoulders are covered by a heat sheet. The performer is a contemporary castaway and at the same time the Madonna of a bizarre flight to Egypt. With this evocative image, the gold of the sacred painting becomes very human and speaks of current events and their urgencies. However, the roles are reversed: it is a female personification of the West that is rescued and helped by those who today find themselves asking for help. Surrounding the lady is in fact a black-skinned male figure with a turban on his head (King? Seer? Magician? Or just support?), without ever touching her and without speaking. In silence, throughout the evening the performer is intent on tracing marks on the floor: these are symbols of sharing and solidarity. While the spell is being performed, *the overture from Gioacchino Rossini's Otello* plays in the space, interspersed with a quotation from William Shakespeare's *Otello* that begins with the words: 'The Moor of Venice is frank and loyal'. After the opening, only the inanimate elements of the action remain, and the audience is confronted with an installation featuring a rhinoceros, the thermal blanket on its back and symbols drawn on the ground.

It is Venice with its history and the joyful insurrection of its carnival that offers an important key to the themes of welcome and multiculturalism that are becoming pressing in contemporary Western societies. Ever since the early Renaissance, the iconography of Venetian painting has featured Moors, Blacks and black-skinned Africans, as evidenced by the studies of Giovanna Nepi Scirè, former Special Superintendent for the Venetian Museum Complex. We are dealing with people integrated into Venetian culture and society, such as the wet nurse that Lorenzo Lotto in 1523 places in the *Santa Lucia altarpiece in front of the tyrant Pascasio*, or the young page with a refined striped robe that Titian portrays at the side of Laura Dianti. Not only slaves or servants, they could also be ambassadors to the Venetian Republic, such as the protagonist of the *Portrait of Moor* from Domenico Tintoretto's workshop, dressed in the European style, with a packet of letters on his right alluding to his diplomatic role. Not forgetting Shakespeare's Othello. In the 18th century, then, 'black is beautiful', as the title of an exhibition held in Amsterdam in 2008 and as evidenced by Rosalba Carriera's splendid allegory of Africa and numerous works by Giambattista Tiepolo. In the 18th century, the black page became a *status symbol* that, with the pomp of his uniform, sanctioned the wealth and prestige of his owners. Thus we find him in the painting *The Moor's Letter* by Pietro Longhi, dressed in an elegant red tailcoat edged with fur, while delivering a missive to a lady. These figures from another time are mirrored in the gazes of the people we meet every day on the street and are the starting point for a reflection on the present, mixing the signs of art with the most pressing current affairs.

The Fondazione Alda Fendi - Esperimenti brings Venice to Rome. Multicultural Venice, with its history teaches us about openness to the other and coexistence between peoples. Mysterious Venice, with its masks invites us to inhabit a timeless carnival.

Alda Fendi

During the months of the exhibition, Rhinoceros Gallery hosts a kaleidoscope of literary, pictorial and cinematographic memories; performance images and the revolutionary proposal of an ancient art that, through technology, becomes contemporary.

Alessia Caruso Fendi

Nigra sum sed formosa. The Canticle of Canticles resounds in Black Venice in a golden harmony between stillness and its double - labyrinthine or suave?

Raffale Curi

INFORMATION:

rhinoceros gallery

Address: Rome, Via del Velabro 9A

The exhibition is open daily from 12 to 8 p.m.

Free entrance.

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