



# MAGAZZINO

Elisabetta Benassi

Selected works 2007 - 2022





Elisabetta Benassi

*The Drowned World*

2024

Installation view at Peter Freeman, INC, New York



Elisabetta Benassi

*Fixator I (Dugong)*

2023

bronze, plaster, iron foundry cart

202.6 x 151.8 x 142.9 cm

Unique

Benassi uses a range of media, including installation, sculpture, photography, and video, to question modernity through the materials of its artistic, cultural, and political dimensions. The Drowned World features all new works conceived and created specifically for the occasion to present an archaeology of the future, an excavation from which the fossils of a vanished world emerge as metallic bones of animals exterminated by man.

The exhibition functions as a landscape to be traversed within the gallery. At the entrance is Study for Michelangelo's Head, a life-sized giraffe skull in bronze resting on a workshop stool and the first iteration of a forthcoming work recently selected for commission by the Museo Nazionale Romano to be installed in Michelangelo's Cloister at the Baths of Diocletian.





Elisabetta Benassi

*The Drowned World*

2024

Installation view at Peter Freeman, INC., New York





Elisabetta Benassi

*La Fanciulla del West*

2023

Hand-knotted wool carpet - 310 x 407 cm  
Antinori Art Project collection - Antinori nel Chianti Classico,  
San Casciano in Val di Pesa, Florence

The handwoven carpet reproduces a telegram that composer Giacomo Puccini sent to Marquis Antinori in 1910 to update him on the great success of the premier of *La Fanciulla del West* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and on the outstanding performance of world-renowned conductor Arturo Toscanini.

The original telegram is kept by the family, together with a substantial correspondence, testifying to an historic friendship that saw the history of this ancient Florentine family intertwine with that of the Italian culture.





cliente *Yahppur*

PROVENIENZA  
*18/11/1911*

*Carriaggio* *Commissaria*

*Tracassi*

*Fanciullo del West*

Elisabetta Benassi

La Fanciulla del West

2023

Hand-knotted wool carpet  
Detail



Elisabetta Benassi

*EMPIRE*

2018

Six thousand English black and purple firebricks,  
one bronze brick covered with gold leaf  
25 x 11,5 x 8 cm each

195 x 1015 x 369 cm

Detail

Site-specific permanent installation at Crypta Balbi - National Roman Museum, Rome, Italy  
Collection Crypta Balbi - National Roman Museum, Rome, Italy  
Courtesy the artist and Crypta Balbi - National Roman Museum, Rome, Italy





Elisabetta Benassi

EMPIRE

2018

Six thousand English black and purple firebricks, one bronze  
brick covered with gold leaf

Installation view at Crypta Balbi - National Roman Museum, Rome,  
Italy.







Elisabetta Benassi

*EMPIRE*

2018

Detail





2

Elisabetta Benassi

*Pietre di Testa*

2022

View of exhibition at Litografia Bulla



*Pietre di Testa*

2022

Folder with seven numbered prints,  
titled and signed

81 x 60 cm  
Edition of 10 + 5AP

Each folder of Pietre di Testa contains seven original prints by Elisabetta Benassi. All the prints were hand printed by Beatrice and Flaminia Bulla at the Litografia Bulla in Roma, using a lithographic press Eugène Brisset, a calcographic press O.Bendini and by hand, on Graphia white paper 310g from the Sicars paper mill in Catania.

Elisabetta Benassi realized Pietre di Testa by inking and printing the verso of five lithographic stones, one linoleum plate and one brick, previously used by artists who worked in the Bulla print house in the past: Enzo Cucchi, Giorgio de Chirico, Jim Dine, Louis Fratino, Jannis Kounellis, Mino Maccari, Nunzio.

**PIETRE DI TESTA**

**Elisabetta Benassi**



Elisabetta Benassi

*Pietre di Testa (Jannis Kounellis)*

2022

Print from lithographic stone  
with Eugène Brasset press,  
on Sicars Graphia 310g paper

81 x 60 cm  
Edition of 10 + 5AP





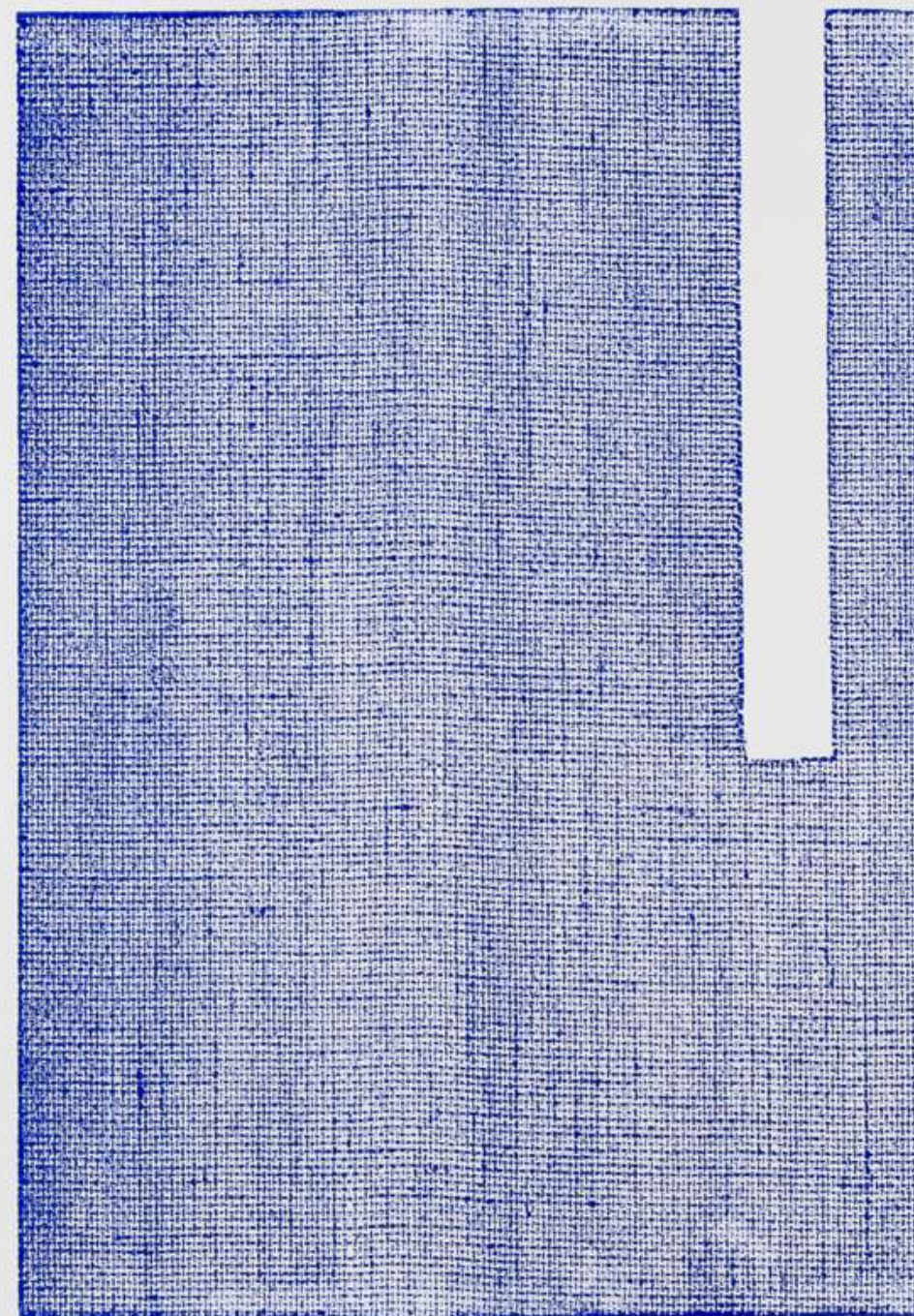
Elisabetta Benassi

*Pietre di Testa (Nunzio)*

2022

Print from lithographic stone  
with Eugène Brasset press,  
on Sicars Graphia 310g paper

81 x 60 cm  
Edition of 10 + 5AP







Elisabetta Benassi

*Pietre di Testa*

2022

View of exhibition at Litografia Bulla



*Io vivere vorrei addormentato entro il dolce rumore della vita*

2022

Two Morse lamps, two tripods, electromagnets,  
electronic control unit, wires

Site-specific installation

The two Morse lamps compose an imaginary dialogue based on a montage of several poems by Sandro Penna, one of the greatest Italian poets of the 20th century, and an essay by Pier Paolo Pasolini. The conversation begins and ends with the image of the night, the dimension in which time appears to be suspended and poetry can be born. The disembodied voices of the two poets, transformed into sequences of intermittent flashes of light, create a conversation around the themes of youth, wonder, and desire, central themes of both Penna's and Pasolini's work.





*Io vivere vorrei addormentato entro il dolce rumore della vita*

2022

Two Morse lamps, two tripods, electromagnets,  
electronic control unit, wires

Site-specific installation





Elisabetta Benassi

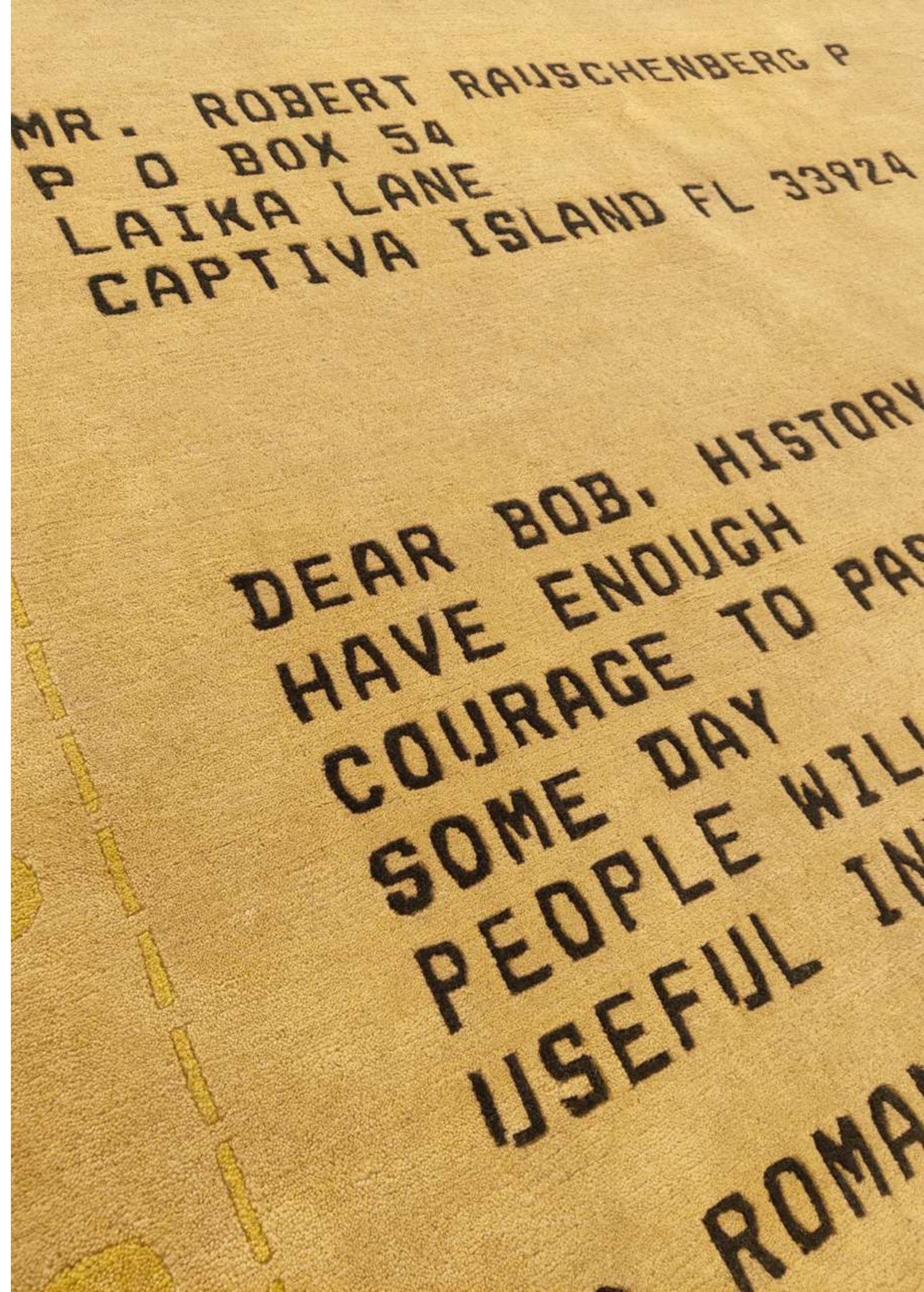
*All the Terrors of the Planet*

2021

Hand-knotted wool carpet  
226 x 308 cm

Edition of 5 + 2AP

The telex reproduced here was sent from Joseph Beuys to Robert Rauschenberg in 1984, and features a strong and poetic statement (or warning?) about the role and the responsibility of arts and artists towards mankind.





LT

6A 01/25 11:41 I043 165-1 C013 149 01/25/84 15:47  
/ RGC165 VIA ITT GXA572 DP1111TK420  
UINX CO DPBE 141  
BERLIN FA1/TF 141/136 25 1710 PAGE 1/50

MR. ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG P  
P O BOX 54  
LAIKA LANE  
CAPTIVA ISLAND FL 33924

DEAR BOB, HISTORY WILL GRANT US NO PARDON EVEN IF WE  
HAVE ENOUGH  
COURAGE TO PASS THROUGH ALL THE TERRORS OF THE PLANET.-  
SOME DAY  
PEOPLE WILL ASK WHETHER WE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO BE DEGRADED TO  
USEFUL INDIVIDUALS BECAUSE OUR WORK WAS MERELY

A ROMANTIC JOURNEY TO BEAUTY AND HORROR.- SO WITH ART  
WE  
WILL HAVE TO USE THE SLOW AND WEARISOME PASS PREPARING FOR  
CENTURIES IN WHICH THAT TERRIBLE ABUSED CONCEPT OF FREEDOM IS  
NO LONGER A MYTH. I SEE THE ENTIRE PRESENT SPREAD OUT IN YOUR  
WORKS. ALL WE NEED TO

DO IS REALLY GRAB HOLD OF IT TO GIVE OUR IDEAS THEIR TRUE  
MEANING.- YOUR WORK AND MINE OUGHT TO EMBODY A CONCEPTION  
OF

ART THAT ENCOMPASSES THE WHOLE HUMAN BEINGS.

LOVE BEIJYS,

JANUARY 25 1984

Elisabetta Benassi

*All the Terrors of the Planet*

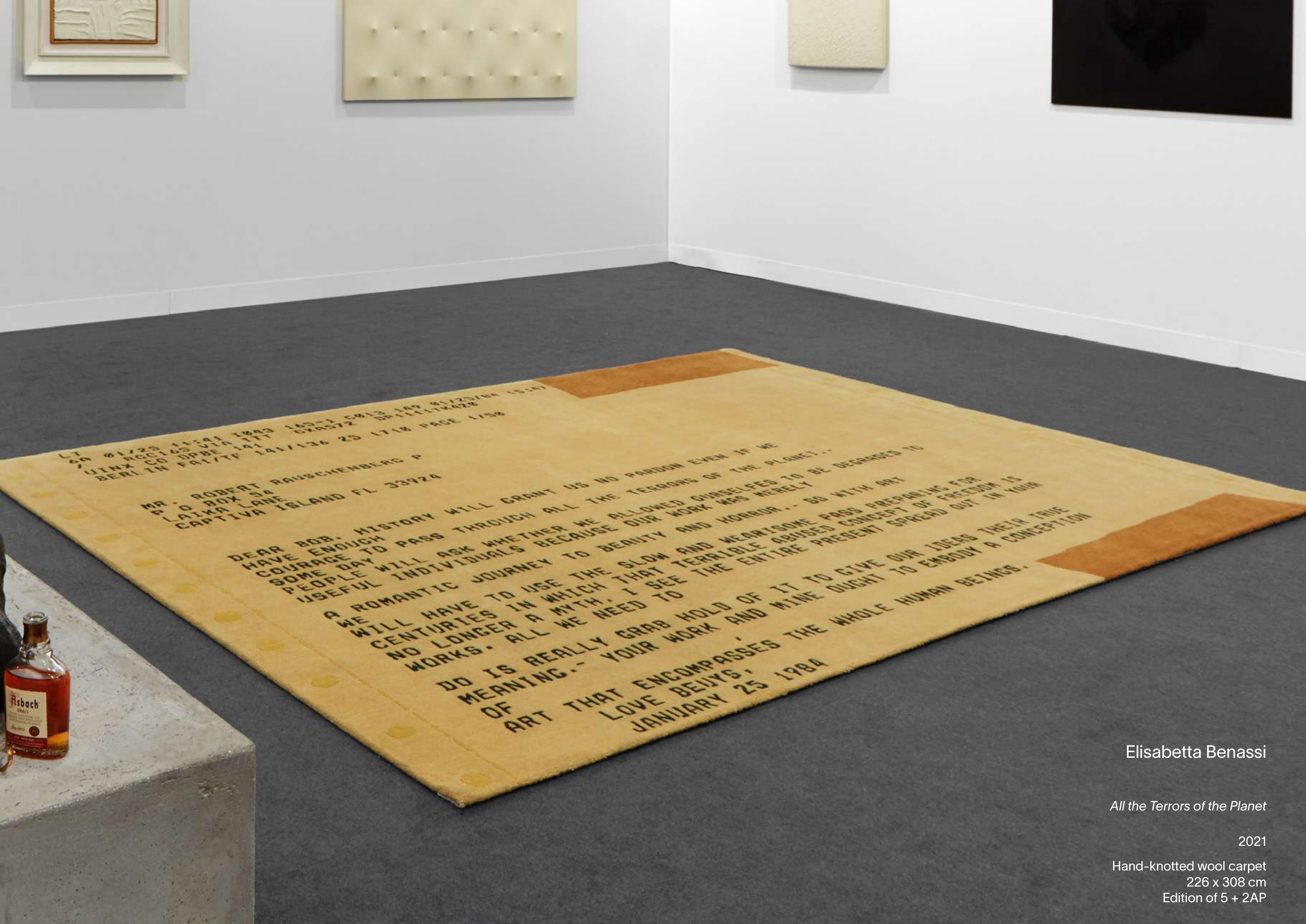
2021

Hand-knotted wool carpet

226 x 308 cm

Edition of 5 + 2AP





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SA RCC165 VIA 111 GXAS72 DP1111TK87W  
JINX CO DPBE 141  
BERLIN FAI/TF 141/136 25 1718 PAGE 1/58

MR. ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG P  
P O BOX 54  
LAIKA LANE  
CAPTIVA ISLAND FL 33924

DEAR BOB. HISTORY WILL GRANT US NO PARDON EVEN IF WE  
HAVE ENOUGH COURAGE TO PASS THROUGH ALL THE TERRORS OF THE PLANET...  
SOME DAY WILL ASK WHETHER WE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO BE DEGRADED TO  
PEOPLE WILL INDIVIDUALS BECAUSE OUR WORK WAS MERELY  
USEFUL JOURNEY TO BEAUTY AND HORROR... SO WITH ART  
A ROMANTIC JOURNEY TO BEAUTY AND HORROR... SO WITH ART  
WE WILL HAVE TO USE THE SLOW AND WEARISOME PASS PREPARING FOR  
CENTURIES IN WHICH THAT TERRIBLE ADVISED CONCEPT OF FREEDOM IS  
NO LONGER A MYTH. I SEE THE ENTIRE PRESENT SPREAD OUT IN YOUR  
WORKS. ALL WE NEED TO  
DO IS REALLY GRAB HOLD OF IT TO GIVE OUR IDEAS THEIR TRUE  
MEANING... YOUR WORK AND MINE OUGHT TO EMBODY A CONCEPTION  
OF ART THAT ENCOMPASSES THE WHOLE HUMAN BEINGS.  
LOVE BEIJYS,  
JANUARY 25 1984

Elisabetta Benassi

*All the Terrors of the Planet*

2021

Hand-knotted wool carpet  
226 x 308 cm  
Edition of 5 + 2AP





Elisabetta Benassi

*Lady and Gentlemen*

2021

Installation view Fondazione Adolfo Pini Milan, 2021



Elisabetta Benassi

*Anonimo, Bayerische Vereinsbank, n.d*

2021

Refrigerators, watercolor on paper

47 x 38 x 44,5 cm

Installation view at Fondazione Adolfo Pini Milan, 2021  
Courtesy the artist and Fondazione Pini







Elisabetta Benassi

Giorgio de Chirico, Banca Commerciale Italiana, 1975

2021

Detail





Elisabetta Benassi

*Lady and Gentlemen*

2021

Installation view at Fondazione Adolfo Pini Milan, 2021





Elisabetta Benassi

Allan Kaprow, Wells Fargo Bank, 1975

2021

Detail





Elisabetta Benassi

*Autoritratto a lavoro*

2016

Motor Hoe Benassi  
105 x 70 x 140 cm

Installation view at La Galleria Nazionale, Rome, 2020



Elisabetta Benassi

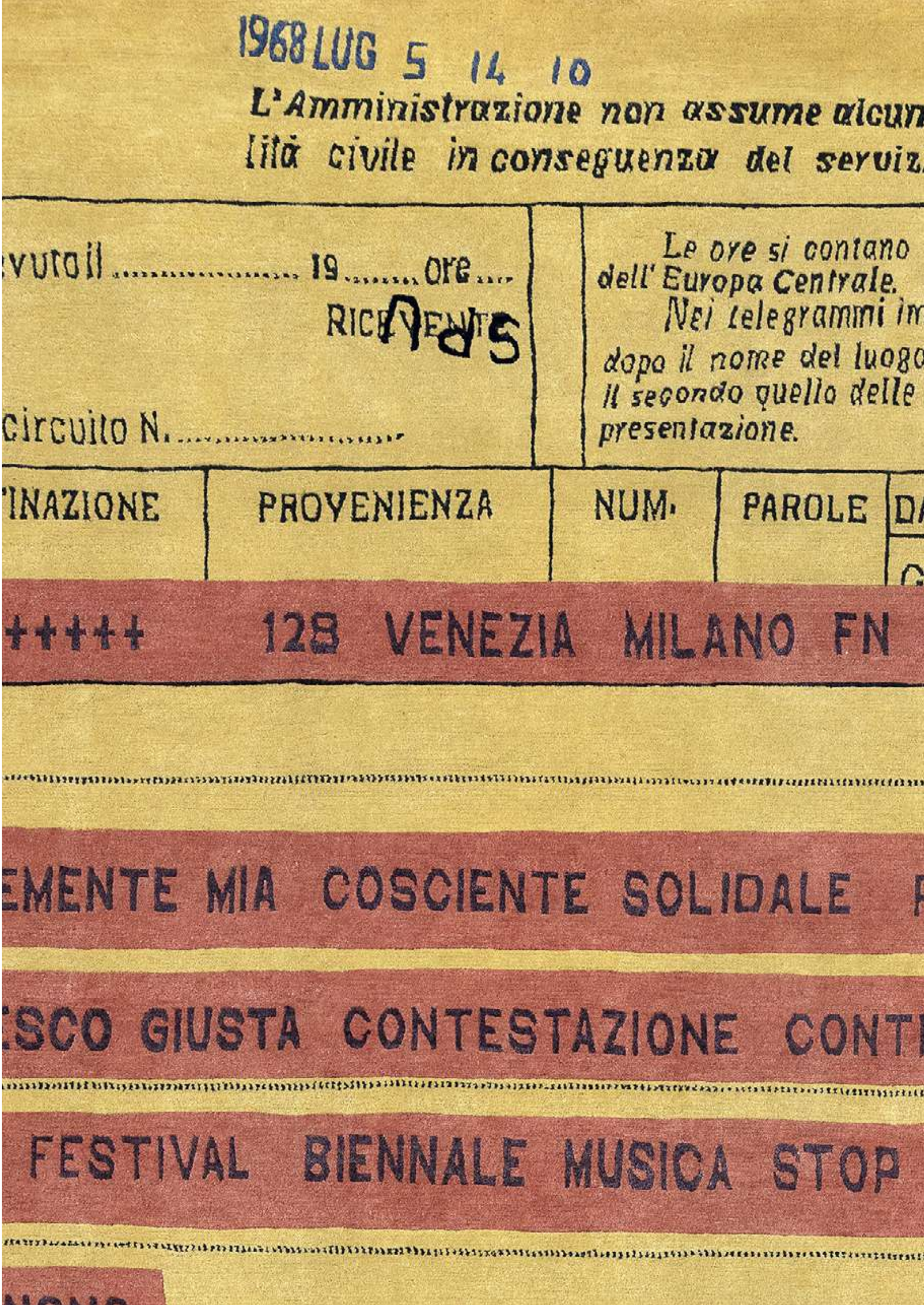
Cosciente solidale

2020

Hand-knotted wool carpet  
284 x 371 cm

Edition of 5 + 1AP

Written by the Italian composer Luigi Nono, at the Venice Biennale, like Pascali and other artists at the 1968 Venice Biennale, turned the paintings on the wall. For the Elisabetta Benassi it is an "anti-gravity device", which contrasts and defies gravity, a flying carpet that instantly takes us to distant places. It is also a time machine, a bridge between the past and the present.





MODULARIO  
Telegr.-61

1968 LUG 5 14 10

Mod. 30 - Ediz. 1966

L'Amministrazione non assume alcuna responsabi-  
lità civile in conseguenza del servizio telegrafico.

INDICAZIONI D'URGENZA	Ricevuto il ..... 19 ..... Ore ..... RICHIESTA		Le ore si contano sul meridiano corrispondente al tempo medio dell'Europa Centrale. Nei telegrammi impressi a caratteri romani, il primo numero dopo il nome del luogo di origine rappresenta quello del telegramma, il secondo quello delle parole, gli altri la data e l'ora e i minuti della presentazione.			
	Per circuito N. ....					
Qualifica	DESTINAZIONE	PROVENIENZA	NUM.	PAROLE	DATA DELLA PRESENTAZIONE	Via e indicazioni eventuali d'ufficio
	++++++	128 VENEZIA	MILANO FN	3174	30/29 5 1200	



Roma - Ist. Poligr. Stato V.G.

+ COERENTEMENTE MIA COSCIENTE SOLIDALE PARTECIPAZIONE MOVIMENTO

STUDENTESCO GIUSTA CONTESTAZIONE CONTRO BIENNALE IN NESSUN CASO

PARTECIPERO FESTIVAL BIENNALE MUSICA STOP SEGUE LETTERA CARI SALUTI

+ LUIGI NONO

Elisabetta Benassi

Cosciente solidale

2020

Hand-knotted wool carpet  
284 x 371 cm  
Edition of 5 + 1AP



*La città sale*

2019-2020

Rock salt, mechanical lifters  
Site-specific installation

The work takes inspiration from *La città che sale* by Umberto Boccioni (1910-1911), Futurist masterpiece devoted to the dynamic energy of modern cities. Benassi reflects upon the precariousness of cities, notwithstanding their apparent solidity, and on the relationship between past, present and future.







Elisabetta Benassi

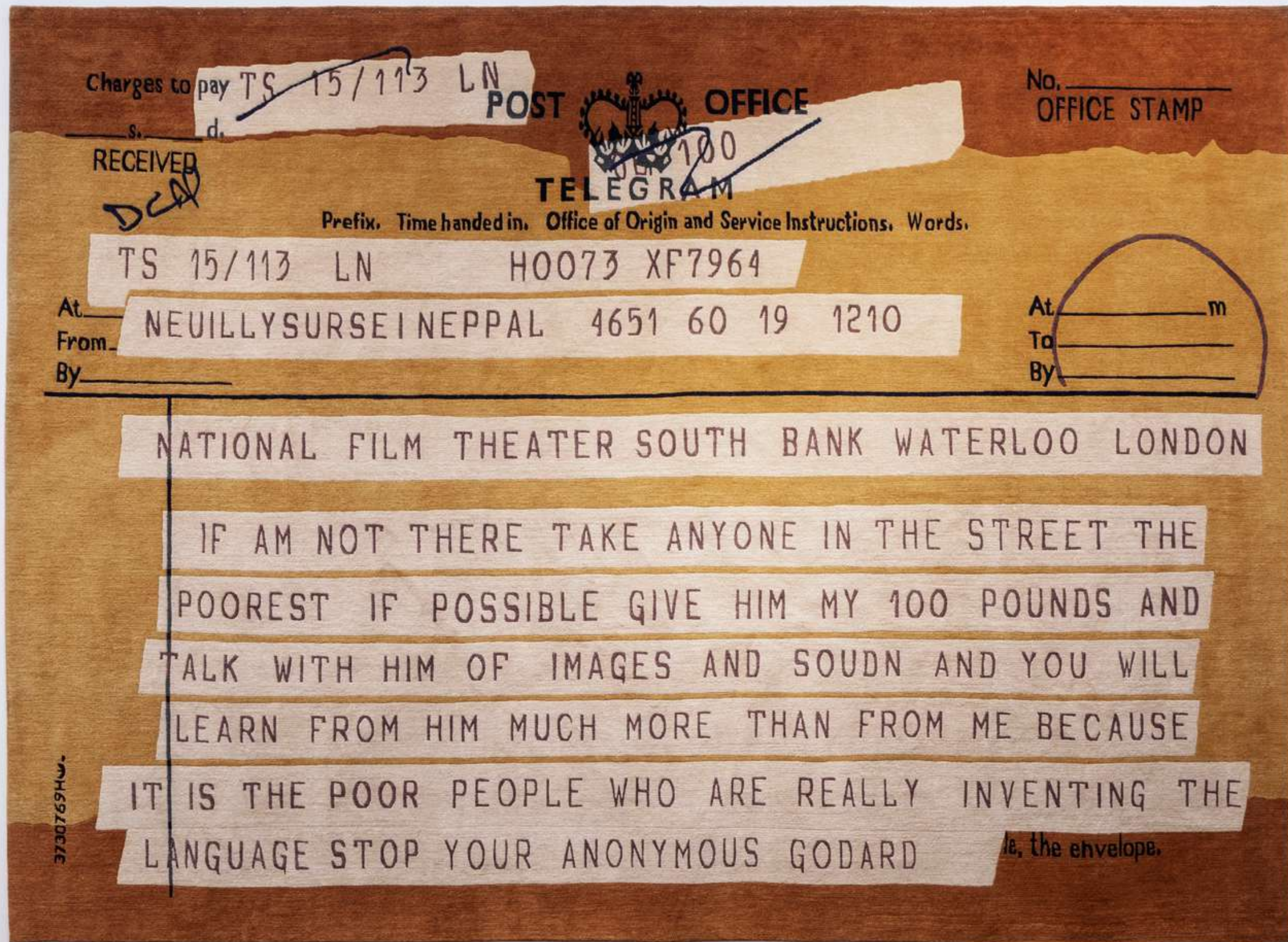
*La città sale*

2019-2020

Rock salt, mechanical lifters

Installation view at MAXXI L'Aquila, 2021





Elisabetta Benassi

*Anyone in the street*

2018

Hand-woven wool carpet  
250 x 347 cm





Elisabetta Benassi

*Mimetica*

2018

Installation view at Galerie Jousse Enterprise, Paris, 2018





Elisabetta Benassi

*Mimetica*

2018

Installation view at Galerie Jousse Enterprise, Paris, 2018



MAGAZZINO

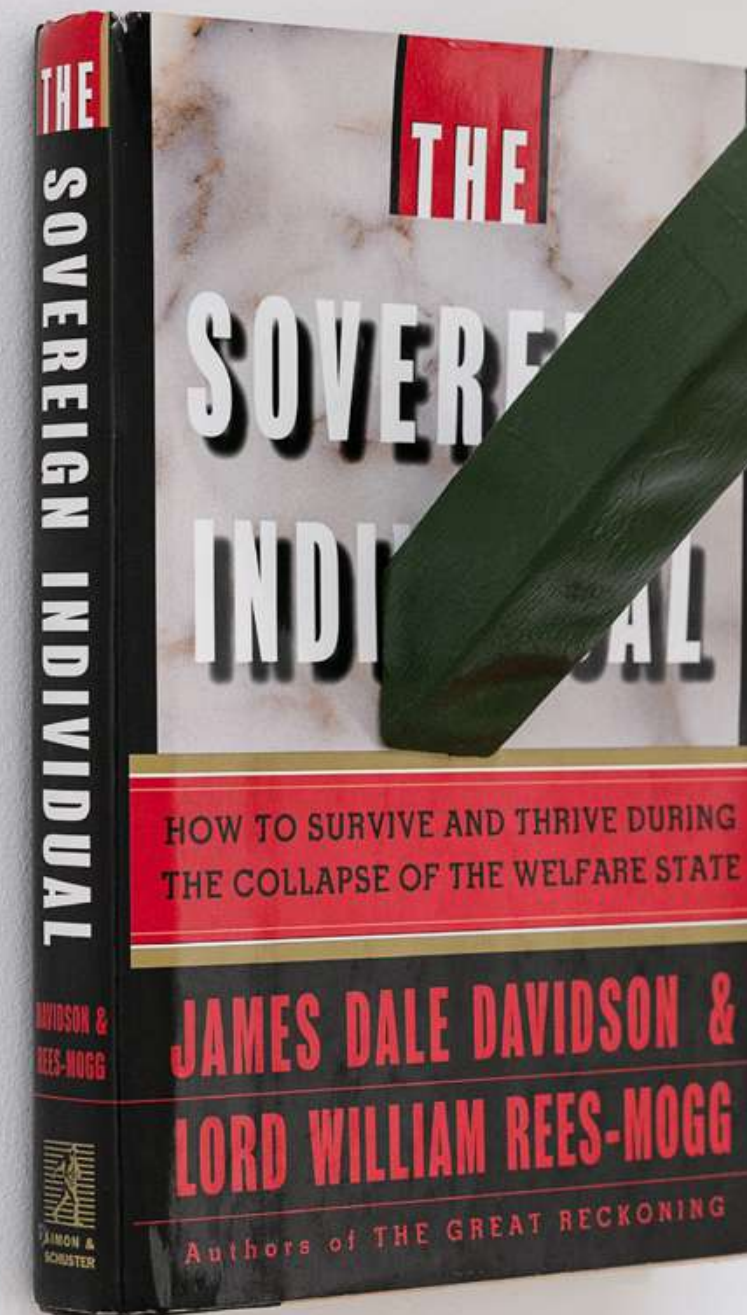
Elisabetta Benassi

*The Sovereign Individual*

2018

Artificial palm leaf, book, resin, natural fiber,  
polypropylene

24 x 16.5 x 177 cm



Installation view at Galerie Jousse Enterprise, Paris, 2018



Elisabetta Benassi

*The Sovereign Individual*

2018

Plaster, steel, natural fiber

320 x ø 71 cm

At the heart of the artist's line of thinking lie the concepts of 'self-ownership' and the individual's 'absolute sovereignty' over himself, and in relation to the social world. As a central myth of 19th century liberalism, the sovereign individual is capable of achieving an absolute mastery of his destiny, while displaying a mistrust of social bonds as well as any universal emancipation project. In the contemporary debate, the model of an extremely liberalist subject—thoroughly at ease in a smithereened world where all collective passion is blurred and only individual will and private ventures have any value—returns in the form of invisible and indisputable ideology.

The "sovereign individual's" desire to escape from the chaos of the real world, its constraints and its inevitable conflicts, comes up with an imaginary solution to the contradiction between individual salvation and collective catastrophe. This involves individual "refuges", shelters hidden in the trunks of large artificial trees, which might be scattered and hidden in nature, inspired by those observation points used in World War I by lookouts and snipers. Three tall shafts made of white plaster each have a "door" giving access to a hidden space, the "refuge". The real size of all these elements creates a powerful visual contrast with the architecture.

Installation view at Galerie Jousse Enterprise, Paris, 2018







Elisabetta Benassi

*The Sovereign Individual*

2018

Installation view at Galerie Jousse Enterprise, Paris, 2018





Elisabetta Benassi

*The Sovereign Individual*

2018

Installation view at Galerie Jousse Enterprise, Paris, 2018



LT MADAME OLGA PICABIA 26  
RUE DANIELLE CASANOVA PARIS=

81 5067

PARIS

LE PORT EST GRATUIT;

LE FACTEUR doit délivrer un récépissé à souche  
lorsqu'il est chargé de recouvrer une taxe.

TÉLÉGRAMME : WESTERN UNION WESTERN UNION

PSW4 12 NJ NEWYORK NY 14 4 3P

A BIENTOT CHER FRANCIS= MARCEL.

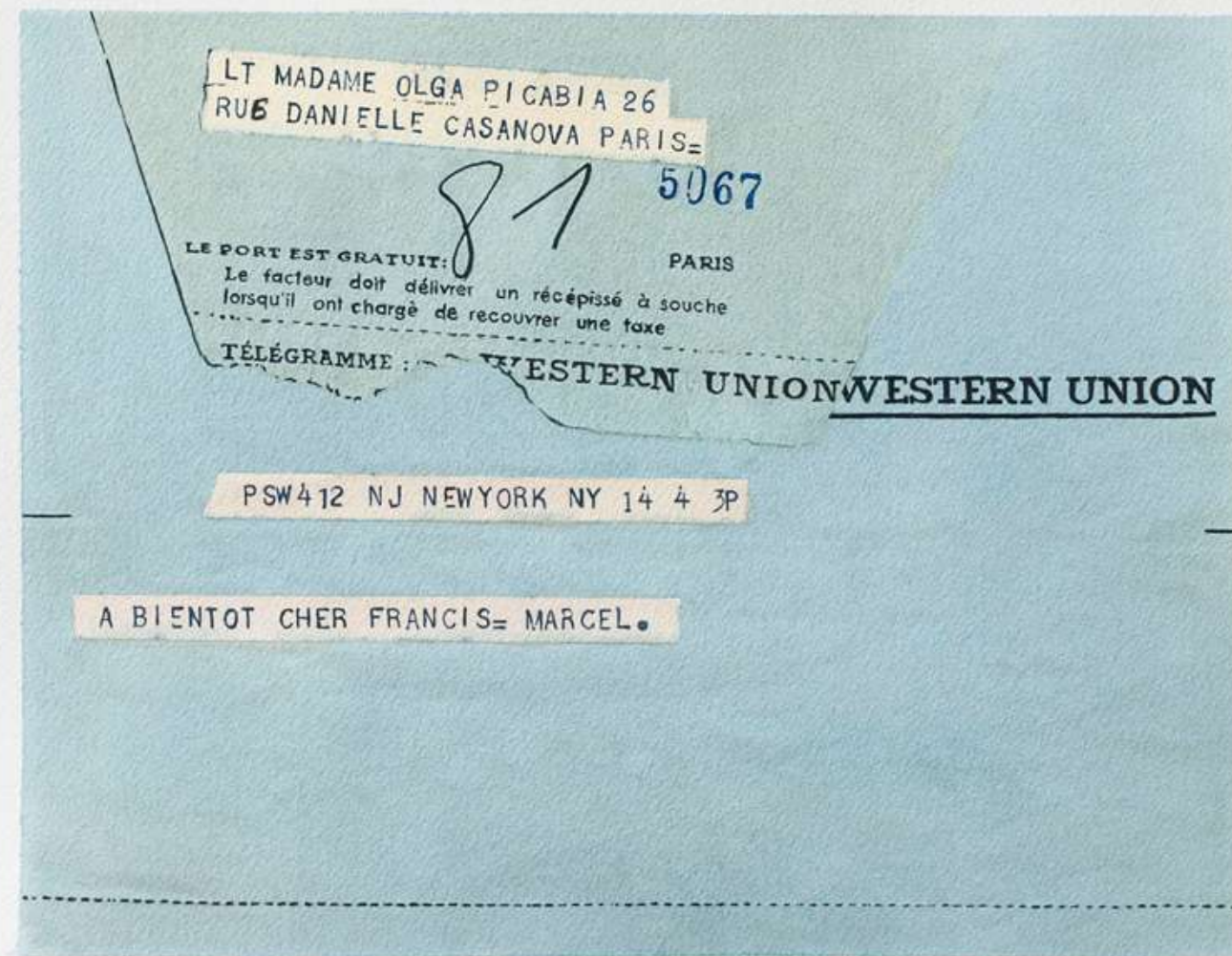
Elisabetta Benassi

*A Bientôt*

2017

Hand-knotted wool carpet  
287 x 212 cm





Elisabetta Benassi

*Untitled (A Bientôt)*

2017

Watercolor on paper

41 x 48,5 cm

Collection Philadelphia Museum of Art



Elisabetta Benassi

*Zeitnot*

2017

Five thousand English firebricks

175 x 500 x 380 cm

Made up of five thousand English firebricks in a range of colours, from ochre to violet, *Zeitnot* is an unstable and temporary construction in which the bricks are simply placed next to one another or overlap to create a singular, hard-to-describe shape, that is part sandcastle, part bunker, and part fantastical construction. The title refers to an international term for a chess move, combining the German word "zeit" (time) and the English word "not"; it refers to the final move of a player who has run out of time to make his final move.

View of the site specific installation at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, 2017  
Collection Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy  
Courtesy the artist and Collezione Maramotti







Elisabetta Benassi

*Zeitnot*

2017

Installation view at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, 2017





Elisabetta Berassi

*Zeitnot*

2017

Installation view at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, 2017





Elisabetta Benassi

*Prosperity*

2017

Automated ironing machine, control circuitry, steam

Installation view at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, 2017

In the solitude of the exhibition space, on display in semi-darkness, an industrial pressing machine rhythmically opens and closes its 'arm' while releasing large steam jets. The machine's brand name serves as the title of the work. The noise of the mechanisms, the heat, and the smell of the steam that continuously mark its breath, all contribute to capture the onlooker's attention.





Elisabetta Benassi

*Prosperity*

2017

Detail of the installation at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, 2017



Elisabetta Benassi

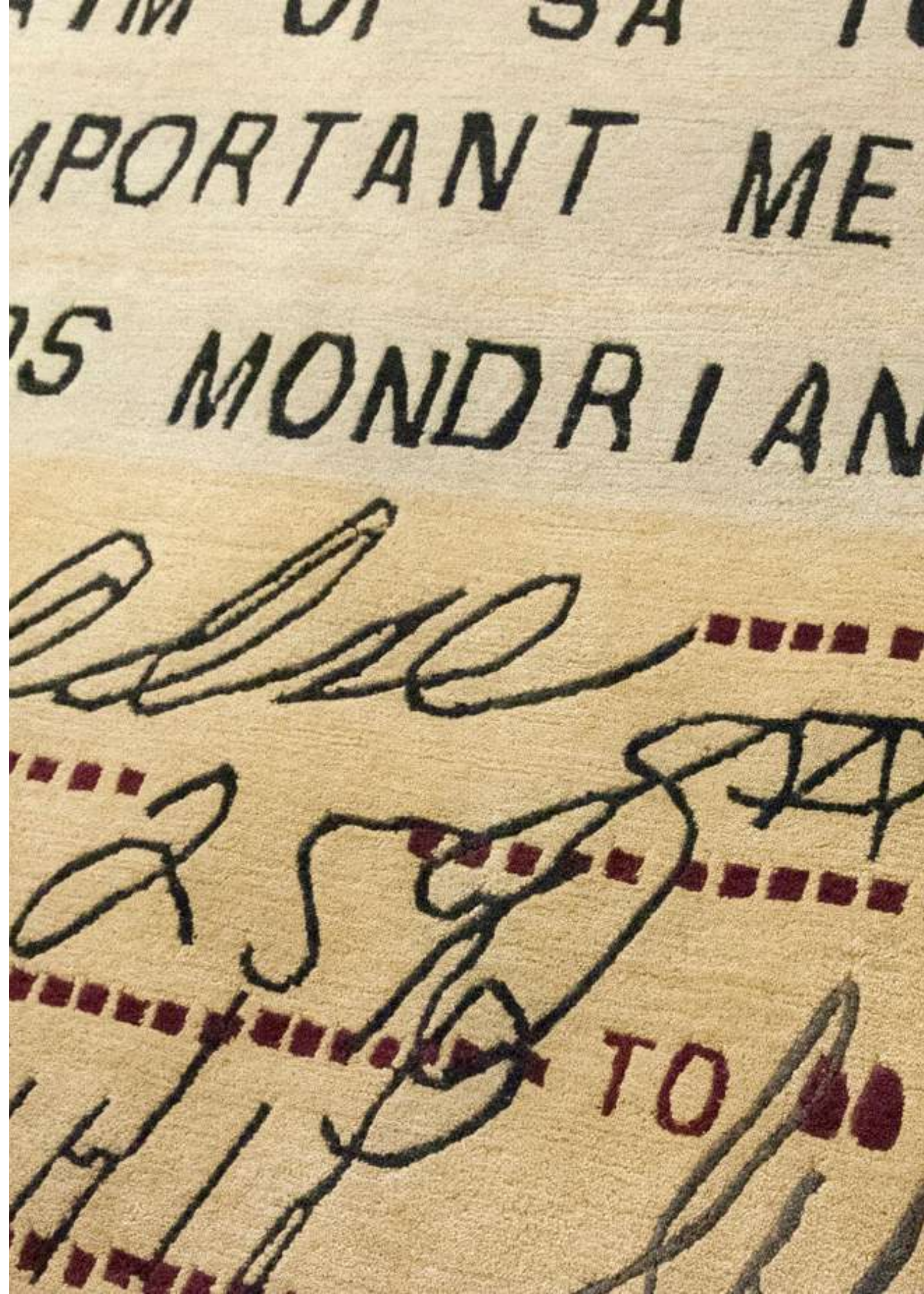
*Unknown Here*

2016

Hand-woven wool carpet  
300 x 415 cm

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

Unkown Here (2016) is the telegram that Marcel Duchamp wrote to Katherine Drier in 1948 proposing the making of an exhibition of modern art with an international character, suggesting the names of at the time "unknown" artists in the States such as Schwitters, Mondrian, Kandinsky, Villon, Mirò.





# CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

# WESTERN UNION

JOSEPH L. EGAN  
PRESIDENT

Jan 16, 1948

## SYMBOLS

DL=Day Letter

NL=Night Letter

LC=Deferred Cable

NLT=Cable Night Letter

Ship Radiogram

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

N131 DL PD=NJA NEWYORK NY 16 150P

KATHERINE DRIER=

130 WEST RIVER ST MILFORD CONN=

ALREADY 1920 NEED FOR SHOWING MODERN ART STILL IN CHAOTIC  
STATE OF DADA IN NON COMMERCIAL SETTING TO HELP PEOPLE  
GRASP INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE STOP AIM OF SA TO SHOW  
INTERNATIONAL ASPECT BY CHOOSING IMPORTANT MEN FROM  
EVERY COUNTRY UNKNOWN HERE SCHWITTERS MONDRIAN KANDINSKY  
VILLON MIRO=

DUCHAMP.

1920 DADA SA.

Elisabetta Benassi

Unknown Here

2016

Hand-woven wool carpet

300 x 415 cm

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

TIME

BY

ATTENTION

RECEIVED

TO



*Mimetica*

2016

Artificial palm tree, steel, resin, natural fiber,  
polypropylene

310 x 300 x 690 cm

*Mimetica* is a large-scale sculpture articulated in two main rooms of the gallery. It is realized using an artificial palm tree, like those commonly employed to camouflage mobile phone masts within urban and natural landscapes. This camouflage uses natural elements, like the fibers covering the trunk, as well as elements that are exaggeratedly fake like the leaves, the branches, the resin part of the trunk, thus rendering an ambiguous "tree". The artist positions the object transforming it into a spatial element, capable of expanding the space around it rather than simply being contained within it.



Installation view at Magazzino, Rome, 2016





Elisabetta Benassi

*Mimetica*

2016

Installation view at Magazzino, Rome, 2016





Elisabetta Benassi

*Mimetica*

2016

Installation view at Magazzino, Rome, 2016





Elisabetta Benassi

*Mimetica*

2016

Installation view at Magazzino, Rome, 2016



*Autoritratto a lavoro (Self-Portrait at Work)*

2016

Motor Hoe Benassi

The artist plays on homonyms and the personification of an object. A vintage motor hoe, produced by Italian brand Officine Meccaniche Benassi, thus becomes a self-portrait of the artist "at work" (autoritratto a lavoro), ironically referring both to the artistic tradition of self- portraiture and to Andy Warhol's idea of the artist as a machine who, however, can escape the influence of functionality and resist reification.

Detail





*Letargo*

2016

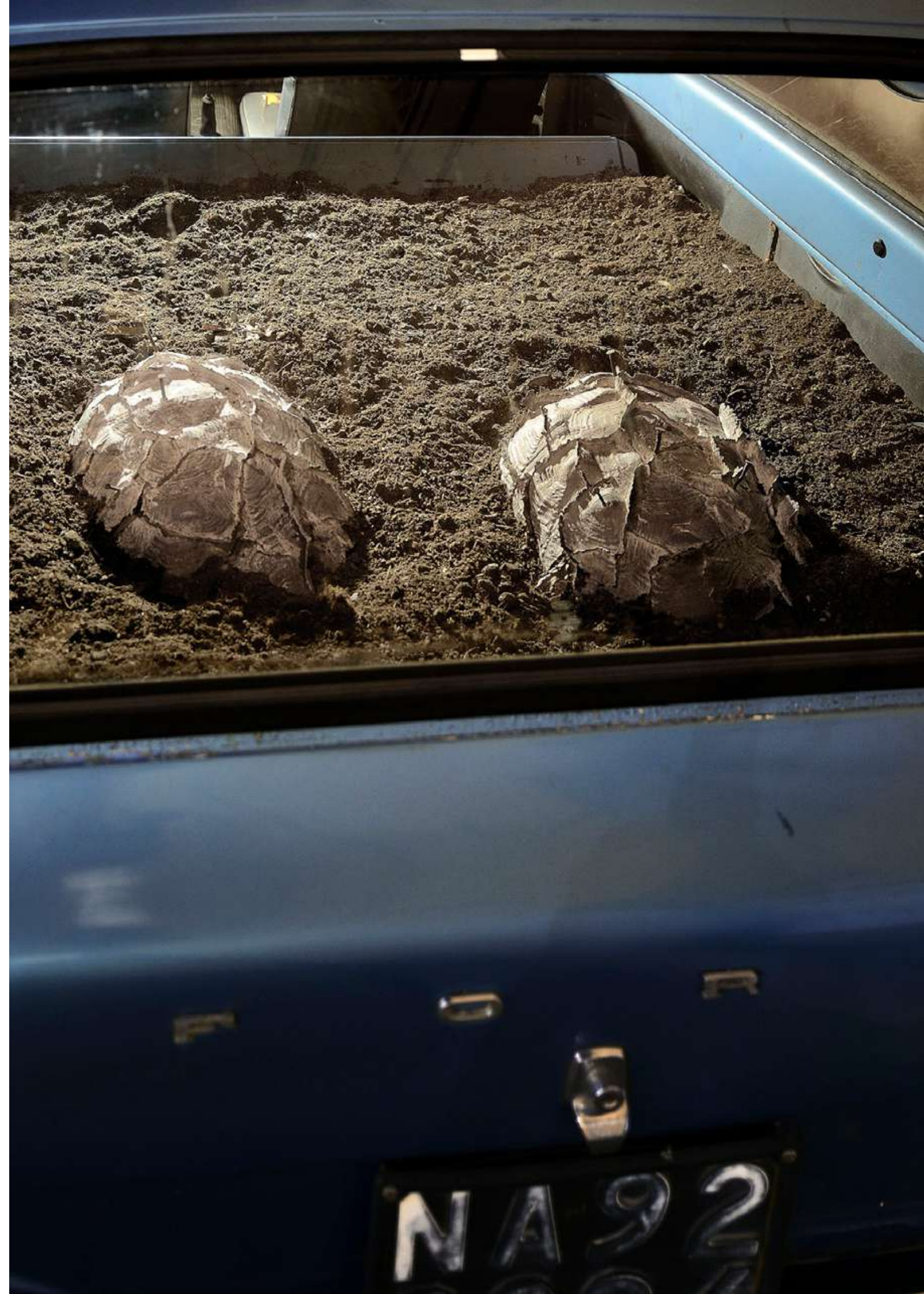
Ford Escort, bronze, soil

Enviromental dimensions

Two elements, each 23 x 33 x 62 cm

Benassi's *Letargo* was part of the eponymous exhibition by the artist at Magazzino in 2016, where it was exhibited in the gallery courtyard giving life to an almost timeless, oniric mise en scène. An old, rusty Ford Escort used as a container for two bronze- cast tortoise shells, left as raw as they come out of the furnace. The shells are placed in the trunk of the car in a bed of soil, positioned the same way tortoises hibernate, creating a fragment of nature. The work is significant of the artist's fascination with cars, as "condensation of time", and uses the reference to hibernation in a political meaning: the right to sleep can be considered a form of resistance, even though only passive, as sleep, as Jonathan Crary writes, «interrupts the robbing of our time constantly perpetrated by the capitalist system». Here displayed as a naked sculpture, the two shells do look like a haunting figure, almost emerging from a shapeless matter. The shells are left as raw as they came out of the cast, where the process becomes part of the sculpture and adding alien elements to the object, shading its features.

Detail of the installation at Magazzino, Rome 2016







Elisabetta Benassi

*Letargo*

2016

Detail of the installation at Magazzino, Rome, 2016





Elisabetta Benassi

*Gorilla Gorilla Gorilla*

2015

Installation view, Galerie Jousse Entreprise Paris, 2015



Elisabetta Benassi

*M'Fumu*

2015

Cast ceramic plaster, ink, steel

250 x 220 x 150 cm

"Tramline 44 in Brussels runs from Montgomery Square to the village of Tervuren, 12 kilometers away. It symbolically joins two separate worlds: Europe and Africa, Belgium and Congo, center and periphery, colonizers and colonized. It was built by Belgium's King Leopold II for the Universal Exposition of 1897 to connect the main venue of the fair at Cinquantenaire Park with the Palais des Colonies, which in 1908 became the Musée du Congo Belge and finally in 1960 the Royal Museum for Central Africa, showcasing the spoils gleaned by the king from his personal property, the Congo Free State. Benassi's work for the Belgian Pavilion, *M'Fumu* (2015), pays homage to Paul Panda Farnana (1888–1930), aka M'Fumu, a Congolese intellectual and activist whose thoughts and actions marked relations between Belgium and the Congo between the two World Wars. He was the first Congolese to receive a higher education in Belgium, fought in World War I, and in 1919 founded the Union Congolaise. He was active in the Pan-African movement and helped organize the 2nd Pan-African Congress in Brussels in 1921. M'Fumu's intellectual contribution remains among the most lively, original, and contradictory of the Belgian colonial affair.

The ghost stop is also a metaphorical shelter, taking under its protection "the others"—those who disappeared in the margins of colonial history—and letting their ghosts return to the world from which they were once excluded. It is a place for contemplation and the suspension of time, as well as a monument against amnesia."

Katerina Gregos

Detail of the installation at the Belgian Pavillion in the 56th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2015







Elisabetta Benassi

*M'Fumu*

2015

Detail of the installation at the Belgian Pavillon in the 56th  
Venice Biennale, Venice, 2015





Elisabetta Benassi

*M'Fumu*

2015

Detail of the installation at the Belgian Pavillion in the 56th  
Venice Biennale, Venice, 2015



GGGSSSPPPPPPTTTRRRRRRRGGGNNN

2014

Bronze

Variable dimensions, h 45 cm (each)

This work is inspired by Italian architect and designer Giuseppe Terragni (1904-1943), one of the key figures of the Italian Rationalist architecture developed during the Fascist period. His name and work were obliterated for decades, until the output of such architects was judged outside the premises of ideology, rediscovering their original and extraordinary value.

Benassi conceived this sculpture by interlinking three different children's chairs designed by Terragni for the famous Sant'Elia Asylum in Como, Italy. The sculpture is a puzzle that can be combined in several ways, never clearly resolving or restoring the functionality of the original objects.

Installation view at Villa Mondolfo, Como, 2014





Elisabetta Benassi

GGGSSSPPPPPPTTTRRRRRRGGGNNN

2014

Installation view at Villa Mondolfo, Como, 2014





*Corsaro*

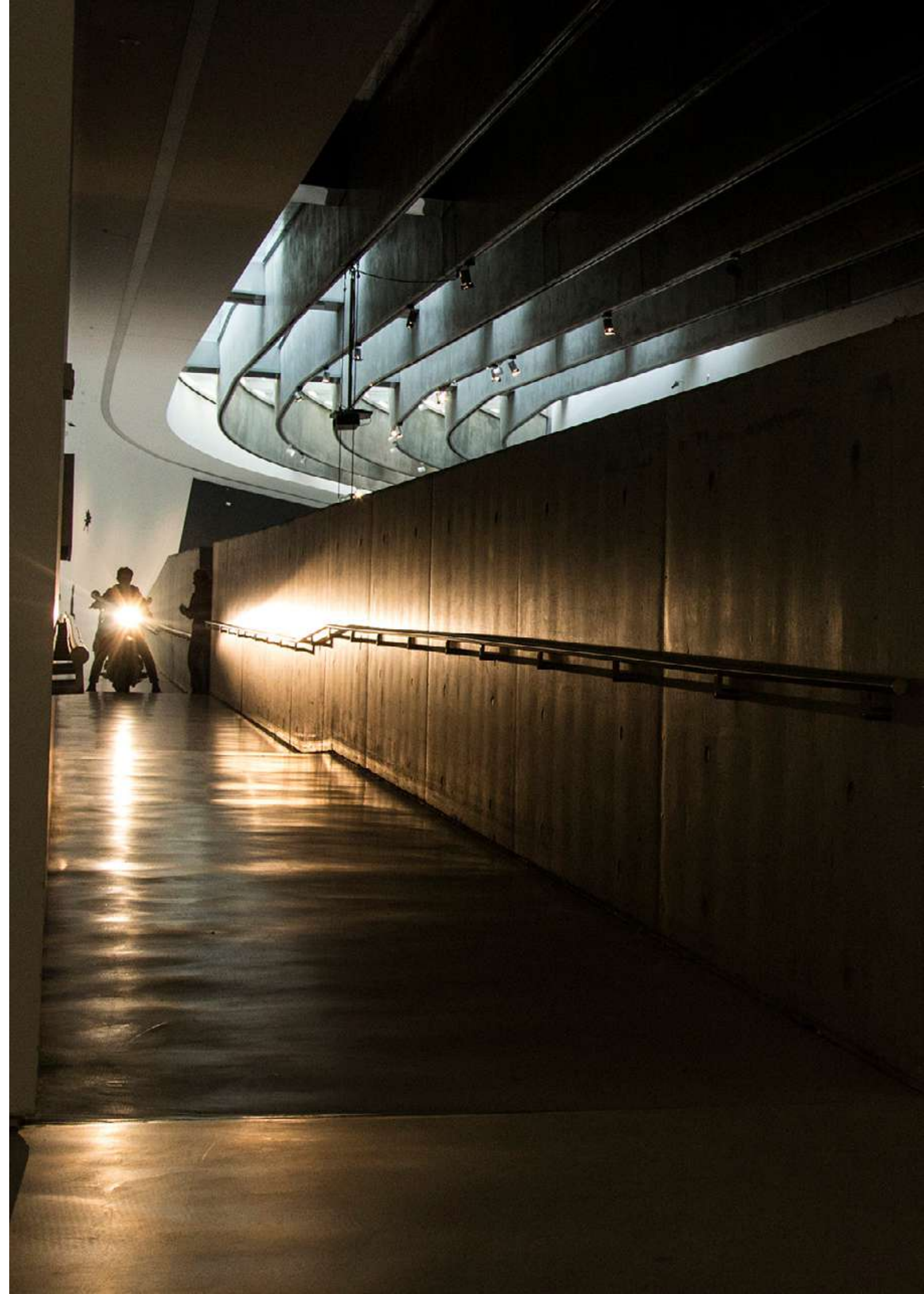
2014

Performance

"As with the video *You'll Never Walk Alone* (2000), in which Benassi plays football with a young man who resembles Pier Paolo Pasolini, with *Corsaro* "Pasolini" comes back again, this time riding a motor-cycle through the museum's galleries. The noise and the smell of the exhaust fumes invade the museum before we even see the bike. The action gets repeated for three consecutive days, from 6 pm to 8 pm during the museum's opening hours.

*Corsaro* is an action that presents and investigates some of the themes analysed in the Benassi's works: the meaning of the past in the present, history and the importance and power of images. Elisabetta Benassi re-activates our ability to observe, through a reflection on the relationship established between what we know, what we see, and what we imagine. As with the videos *Timecode*, 2000, or *You'll Never Walk Alone*, 2000, in which Benassi plays football with a young man who resembles Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Corsaro* returns to the theme of desire; Pasolini riding a motorcycle through the Museum's galleries. Her work expresses a need to represent that which cannot be seen, as the artist seems to suggest, "to look at things a second time", revealing a density, a hidden, in an unexpected way."

Anne Palopoli







Elisabetta Benassi

Corsaro

2016

Performance





Elisabetta Benassi

*Corsaro*

2016

Performance

© Cecilia Milza





Elisabetta Benassi

*Corsaro*

2016

Performance



## *The Dry Salvages*

2013

10.000 hand-made bricks, sand and 1 book

## Variable dimensions

On November 14 1951, following the strong rainfalls that swelled the course of the Po river, the region of Polesine was devastated by catastrophic flooding that hit most of the Rovigo province and a portion of Venice's province. It was the biggest catastrophe of post-war Italy. Elisabetta Benassi has constructed her work for the Italian Pavilion in the 55th Venice Biennale with that same clay from Polesine, a region close to Venice. A space measuring approximately 15x15 meters, a slightly inclined flat surface, like a sort of upside down sky, over which the audience is allowed to walk; a floor made of ten thousand bricks, each measuring 12x25 cm and with a variable height from 5 to 10cm, that transforms the ground into an uncertain space. Each of these "dry salvages" bears the name of a space debris, a single fragment of a satellite or spacecraft that is left in outer space and orbiting around the Earth, possibly for eternity. The installation is built around an unusual archive of the human presence in space: the catalogue of ten thousand pieces of "space debris". These peculiar objects bear a symbolic signification for the artist, not only as remnants of the "Space Race" of the past fifty years, but also as material and metaphorical traces of the unintended consequences of the technological development: a revolved mirror, a sort of "catalogue of errors" that fascinates and threatens us at the same time.

The installation includes a book, a kind of guide to the biggest ten thousand of space debris orbiting around the Earth. Inside, each fragment will be identified through its cataloguing information: International ID designator, Name, Debris Size, Launch Time etc., with all the indications about inclination of the orbit, Apogee, Perigee, Radar Cross Section, Mother Body Name.

Site specific installation, Italian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale







Elisabetta Benassi

The Dry Salvages

2013

10.000 hand-made bricks, sand and 1 book  
Site specific installation, Italian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale





Elisabetta Benassi

*The Dry Salvages*

2013

10.000 hand-made bricks, sand and 1 book  
Site specific installation, Italian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale



*Mareo Merz*

2013

Fishing boat, car previously owned by Mario Merz,  
fishing net

1200 x 900 x 300 cm

The exhibition *Voglio fare subito una mostra* (Torino Fondazione Merz 2013) features site specific installations by Elisabetta Benassi alongside works that Mario Merz created between the 1960s and '1970s. Standing out among the former, is the work *Mareo Merz*, around which the entire exhibition revolves. It consists of an installation made with a fishing boat and a significant everyday object that belonged to Mario Merz, specifically his last car: Benassi celebrates its reappearance as the object becomes the link of a personal story that, due to unusual circumstances, blends into our collective history.

Installation view at MAXXI, Rome 2017-2019





Elisabetta Benassi

*Mareo Merz*

2013

Fishing boat, car previously owned by Mario Merz, fishing net

Installation view at MAXXI, Rome, 2017-2019





*Passato e Presente*

2013

Book, wrought iron nail

18,5 x 11,5 x 9 cm

The book *Passato e presente* (1951) by Antonio Gramsci, writer and political theoretician, founding member of the Italian Communist Party and a prisoner of the Mussolini regime, is nailed to the wall. The work and the gesture it embodies act, among other things, as a temporal metaphor: "We are nailed down between past and present," says the artist, "and we live in an age with no history and no future."





*Pausa lavoro (mensa in fabbrica)*

2013

Metal, laminated wood, motor, electronic switch,  
electric wires

76 x 600 x 90 cm

This work makes reference to *Fibonacci Napoli* (Fabbrica a San Giovanni a Teduccio), 1971, by Mario Merz. In 1971, Mario Merz embarked on a series of photographs applying the Fibonacci Sequence to social groups. *Fibonacci Napoli* (Fabbrica a San Giovanni a Teduccio) is made up of ten photographs of workers during their lunch break in a factory canteen in the working-class neighbourhood of San Giovanni a Teduccio, in Naples. A busy industrial district in the 1970s, San Giovanni a Teduccio now suffers from extremely high unemployment and the ascendancy of the Camorra. Each image shows the mathematical construction of subjects ranging from a single person to a group of fifty-five.

Elisabetta Benassi reproduces a canteen table and stools from the work by Merz; vibrating randomly in a space emptied of its occupants, these furnishings allude notably to the political, economic and social context created by the disappearance of manual labourers and their work.

Detail of the installation at Fondazione Merz, Turin, 2013







Elisabetta Benassi

*Pausa Lavoro (mensa in fabbrica)*

2013

Installation view at Fondazione Merz, Turin, 2013



*The Bullet-proof Angela Davis*

2011

Steel and plexiglas structure, tape recorder, electric wire, watercolour on paper

240 x 200 x 140 cm  
watercolor 30 x 29 cm

The installation, whose Plexiglas and steel structure is reminiscent of minimalist sculpture, references the bullet-proof booth that protected philosopher Angela Davis, a Marxist, feminist and anti-racist militant, at the time close to the Black Panthers, when she spoke in Madison Square Garden in New York on June 30, 1972, shortly after the opening of the trial in which she would be declared innocent. A tape recorder plays *Ein Gespenst geht um in der Welt* (1971), dedicated to Davis by contemporary Italian composer Luigi Nono; the work begins with a voice intoning "Uno spettro si aggira per l'Europa" (A spectre is haunting Europe), the opening words of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's *The Communist Manifesto* (1848).







Elisabetta Benassi

*The Bullet-proof Angela Davis*

2011

Installation view at FIAC Paris, Grand Palais, 2011



Elisabetta Benassi

*The Innocents Abroad*

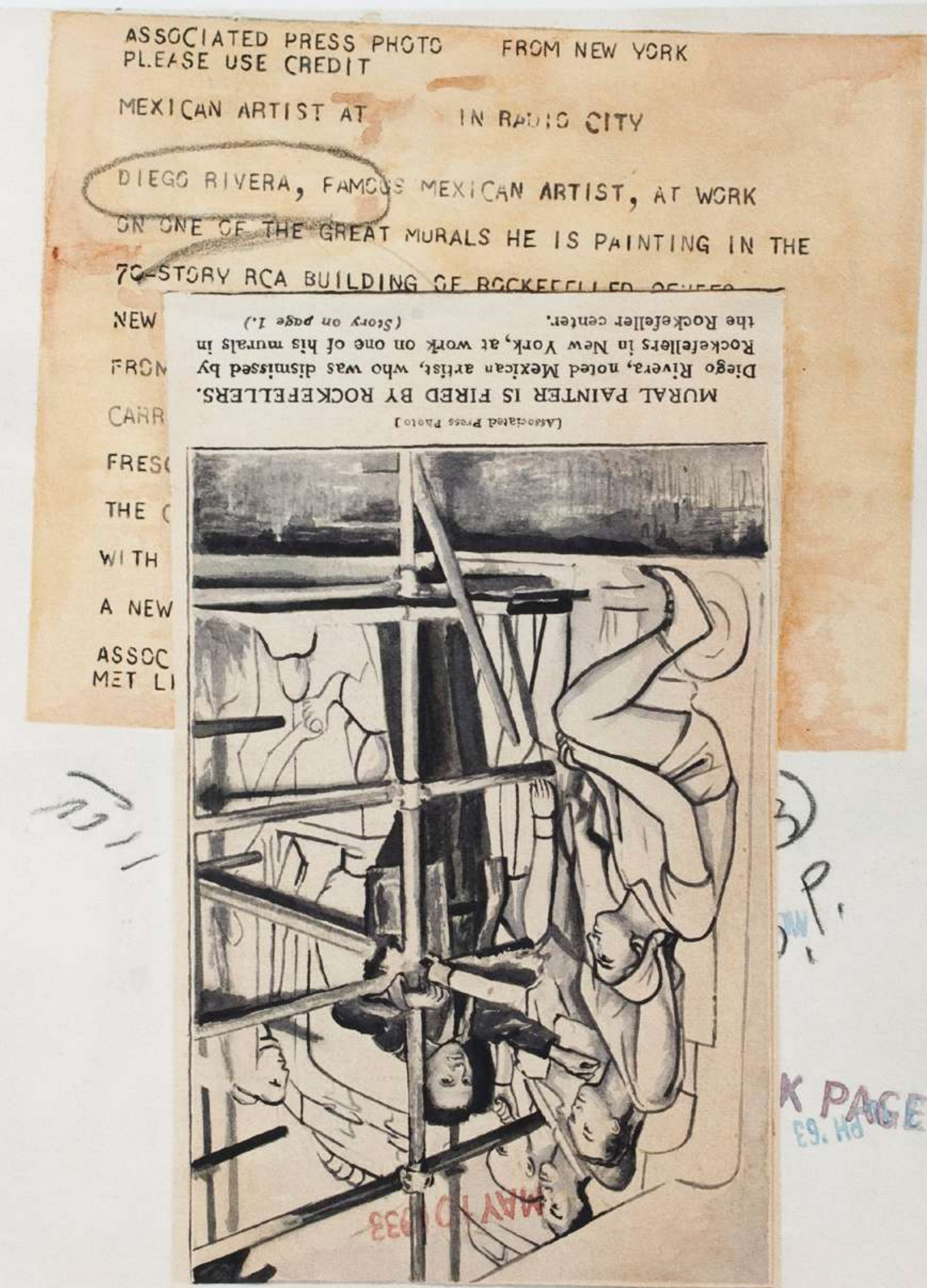
2011

Nine automatized microfiche readers, microfiche, tables, neon lights, electronic unit, electric wires

Each unit 140 x 80 x 80 cm

The installation *The Innocents Abroad*, created for the 54th Venice Biennale, is composed of nine microfiche readers placed on as many tables in a space painted a uniform grey and artificially lit. The images visible on the screens of the readers are captions, annotations, and stamps found on the backs of thousands of photographs collected from Italian and international press archives that refer to history in the broad sense, but also to smaller, forgotten histories. Though evoked by their descriptions, by their enigmatic traces of systems of classification and by the signs of their public existence, the 'images' remain, in reality, invisible and therefore lose their quality as simulacra: they can only be imagined by the viewer. The stories told by the captions, at one point inextricably linked to images on their recto, have been separated from and are now the only surviving traces of these images; the only historical 'indices' that have reached us, real or false, true or invented, and compose a paradoxical blind iconology of the Twentieth Century.

Installation view, Venice Biennale 54th International Art Exhibition ILLUMInazioni | ILLUMInations, Corderie dell'Arsenale, Venice







Elisabetta Benassi

*The Innocents Abroad*

2011

Installation view, Venice Biennale 54th International Art Exhibition ILLUMInazioni | ILLUMInations, Corderie dell'Arsenale, Venice



*Telegram from Buckminster Fuller to Isamu Noguchi  
Explaining Einstein's Theory of Relativity*

2009

Carpet

500 x 618 cm

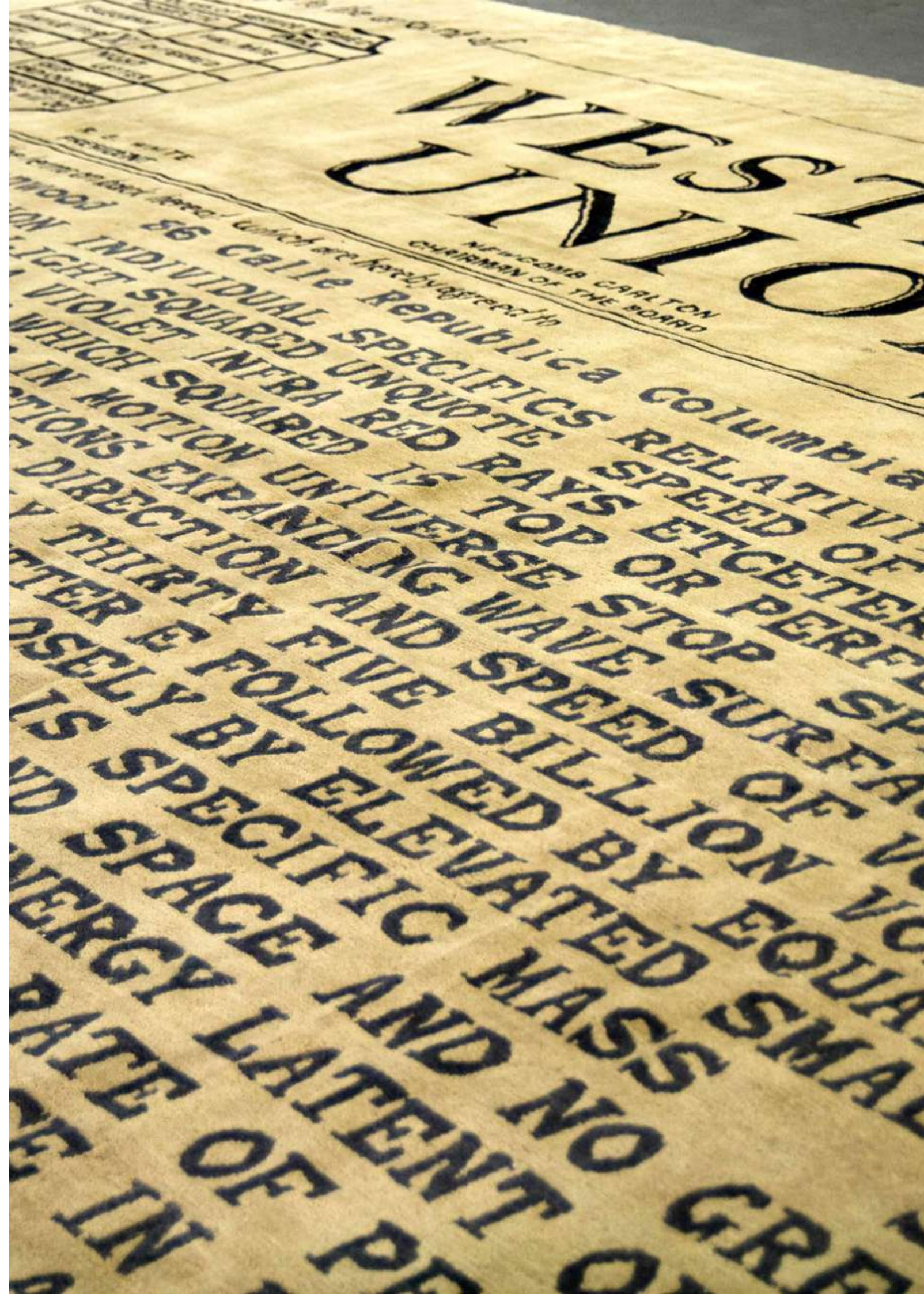
Project for Art Unlimited, Basel 2009

A carpet reproduces the telegram that Fuller sent to Isamu Noguchi in 1936 to explain Albert Einstein's theory of relativity.

A telegram is normally something short, fast, urgent; this, on the other hand, is two hundred and fifty words long, gets there seventy three years later, and has nothing urgent to say; if anything, it sums up a world-old law, continuing, however, to question us, as it did back then, on time and space, and on our place in the world. Richard Buckminster Fuller wrote it to his sculptor friend Isamu Noguchi back in 1936. In this year Noguchi was in Mexico City, where he was completing History as seen from Mexico, a big mural in bas-relief in Mercado Abelardo L. Rodriguez, in which he narrated the struggle for freedom from fascist oppression and exploitation. In the relief, twenty two meters long, political symbols are featured (swastikas, the hammer and sickle) and Einstein's famous equation  $E=mc^2$ .

As Noguchi writes: "in answer to my request, Bucky Fuller had sent me a fifty-word telegram explaining the equation. However I could also appreciate the sardonic humor of the man who used to come by to watch me work, saying that  $E=mc^2$  really meant Estados=Muchos Cabrones<sup>2</sup> ('the States equals many SOB<sup>2</sup>'). In any case I was able to shout and do what I pleased, and I was happy." Today that telegram becomes a large carpet, an object of daily life and a reminder, a sign transmitted from the modern utopias of the 1900s to our current age, a bridge which stretches from the Earth to the universe".

## Detail





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CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
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NIGHT MESSAGE	NIGHT LETTER
NIGHT LETTER	SHIP RADIOGRAM

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Isamu Noguchi Care Greenwood 86 Calle Republica Columbia Mexico City

EINSTEINS FORMULA DETERMINATION INDIVIDUAL SPECIFICS RELATIVITY READS QUOTE ENERGY  
EQUALS MASS TIMES THE SPEED OF LIGHT SQUARED UNQUOTE SPEED OF LIGHT IDENTICAL SPEED  
ALL RADIATION COSMIC GAMMA X ULTRA VIOLET INFRA RED RAYS ETCETERA ONE HUNDRED  
EIGHTY SIX THOUSAND MILES PER SECOND WHICH SQUARED IS TOP OR PERFECT SPEED GIVING  
SCIENCE A FINITE VALUE FOR BASIC FACTOR IN MOTION UNIVERSE STOP SPEED OF RADIANT  
ENERGY BEING DIRECTIONAL OUTWARD ALL DIRECTIONS EXPANDING WAVE SURFACE DIAMETRIC POL  
AR SPEED AWAY FROM SELF IS TWICE SPEED IN ONE DIRECTION AND SPEED OF VOLUME INCREASE  
IS SQUARE OF SPEED IN ONE DIRECTION APPROXIMATELY THIRTY FIVE BILLION VOLUMETRIC  
MILES PER SECOND STOP FORMULA IS WRITTEN QUOTE LETTER E FOLLOWED BY EQUATION MARK  
FOLLOWED BY LETTER M FOLLOWED BY LETTER C FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY ELEVATED SMALL FIGURE  
TWO SYMBOL OF SQUARING UNQUOTE ONLY VARIABLE IN FORMULA IS SPECIFIC MASS SPEED IS  
A UNIT OF RATE WHICH IS AN INTEGRATED RATIO OF BOTH TIME AND SPACE AND NO GREATER  
RATE OF SPEED THAN THAT PROVIDED BY ITS CAUSE WHICH IS PURE ENERGY LATENT OR RADIANT  
IS ATTAINABLE STOP THE FORMULA THEREFORE PROVIDES A UNIT AND A RATE OF PERFECTION  
TO WHICH THE RELATIVE IMPERFECTION OR INEFFICIENCY OF ENERGY RELEASE IN RADIANT OR  
CONFINED DIRECTION OF ALL TEMPORAL SPACE PHENOMENA MAY BE COMPARED BY ACTUAL CALCU  
LATION STOP SIGNIFICANCE STOP SPECIFIC QUALITY OF ANIMATES IS CONTROL WILLFUL OR  
OTHERWISE OF RATE AND DIRECTION ENERGY RELEASE AND APPLICATION NOT ONLY OF SELF  
MECHANISM BUT OF FROM SELF MACHINE DIVIDED MECHANISMS AND RELATIVITY OF ALL ANIMATES  
AND INANIMATES IS POTENTIAL OF ESTABLISHMENT THROUGH EINSTEIN FORMULA

BUCKY

THE QUICKEST, SUREST AND SAFEST WAY TO SEND MONEY IS BY TELEGRAPH OR CABLE.

Elisabetta Benassi

Telegram from Buckminster Fuller to Isamu Noguchi  
Explaining Einstein's Theory of Relativity

2009

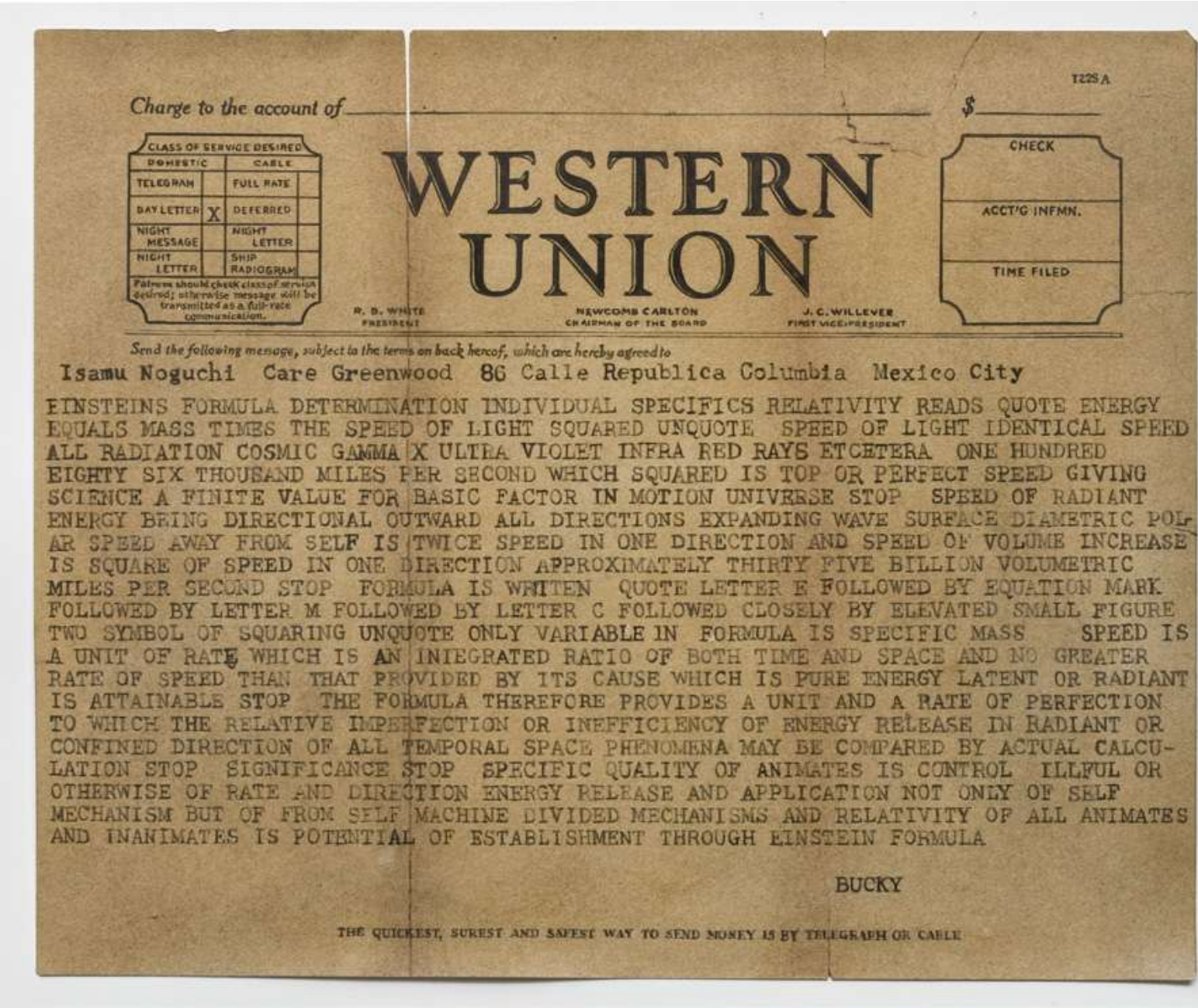
Installation view at Art Basel Unlimited, 2009

Elisabetta Benassi  
2009  
Telegram from Buckminster Fuller to Isamu Noguchi  
Explaining Einstein's Theory of Relativity  
www.artbasel.com



Untitled (Telegram from Buckminster Fuller to Isamu Noguchi explaining  
Einstein's Theory of Relativity)  
2009  
Watercolor on paper

130 x 200 cm





*Alfa Romeo GT Veloce 1975-2007*

2007

Automobile with sidelights, headlights and main  
beams on, transformer, electric cables

150 x 160 x 430 cm

In early 2007 the artist acquired a 1975 Alfa Romeo GT Veloce 2000. The car is identical to that once owned by Pier Paolo Pasolini: the same model and the same metallic grey colour. Empty and with the headlights on, it has been parked in Palazzo Farnese, in Rome, in a subterranean space next to the ruins of a roman mosaic depicting marine scenes. The headlights are the only light source within the space.

