

Press release 18.11.2016

## OMAR GALLIANI - LORENZO PUGLISI CARAVAGGIO, THE TRUTH IN THE DARK

curated by *Raffaella Resch and Maria Savarese*  
with text by *Mark Gisbourne*

**Palermo**, Cappella dell'Incoronazione, Palazzo Belmonte Riso - Polo Museale Regionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea  
**14<sup>th</sup> December 2016 – 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017**  
**Opening** on wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December, 18.00h  
**Naples**, Pio Monte della Misericordia, 1<sup>st</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017

The exhibition "Omar Galliani – Lorenzo Puglisi. Caravaggio, the truth in the dark" opens on the **14<sup>th</sup> December 2016**, with two autonomous institutions such as the **Polo Museale Regionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Palermo** and the **Pio Monte della Misericordia di Napoli** united for the first time in a planning network.

The exhibition project is backed by the support of the Municipality of Naples, of the Council Department for Culture and Tourism and with the Matronage of the Donnarregina Foundation for contemporary art.

The exhibition, curated by **Raffaella Resch** and **Maria Savarese**, with an essay by the critic **Mark Gisbourne**, was set up in order to pay homage to two contemporary artists inspired by Caravaggio: **Omar Galliani** and **Lorenzo Puglisi** trace the journey of the Lombard painter ideally through the most significant places he touched upon in Palermo and Naples in the last four years of his life, fleeing from the death sentence by beheading pensino on him.

The exhibition is divided into two phases: from the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 at the Cappella dell'Incoronazione in Palermo and on the **1<sup>st</sup> of April 2017** at the Pio Monte della Misericordia in **Naples**. "The exhibition – states **Valeria Patrizia Li Vigni**, Director of the Polo Museale Regionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea of Palermo – is in line with the aims of the *Museum Centre*, the only regional Institution appointed to spread, sustain and promote contemporary art in Sicily and reaffirms the function of art, which looks at the past in order to build a better future, setting up a network and museum system able to spread its message in the best way possible. An institution which is always intent on linking countryside and Museum, through the activity performed by the Aumale Museum, Centre of Territorial Interpretation and an integral part of the museum Centre".

Some of the works exhibited at Palermo are purposely created for the occasion by the two artists: **four large works, two of which are new**, are placed side by side, furnished with **drawings, paintings and preparatory studies**, a unique opportunity to get to grips with the genesis of the two artists' work. Omar Galliani presents an *after* Caravaggio of large dimensions with the title *Agnus Dei*, alongside the monumental triptych *Breve storia del tempo (Brief history of time)* from 1999 (pencil on poplar board, 300 x 600 cm) and Lorenzo Puglisi exhibits a new painting entitled *Nativity* (oil on canvas, 300 x 200cm) dedicated to the Palermo *Nativity* by Caravaggio himself, together with *Matthew and the Angel* from 2015 (oil on canvas, 200 x 150 cm).

In Naples, the works are placed in direct dialogue with the **Caravaggio masterpiece** *The seven works of Mercy*, a painting commissioned by the Pio Monte della Misericordia in 1607 and kept there since that date.

On one hand, as an introduction to the exhibition, there is the period of time that Merisi spent in Palermo in 1609 painting the canvas dedicated to the *Nativity with St. Lawrence and St. Francis of Assisi* and hunged in the Oratorio of San Lorenzo, a masterpiece which was stolen in 1969; on the other hand, there is the Neapolitan period, when he painted some of his most evocative works, like *The Martyrdom of Saint Ursula*, *the Flagellation of Christ* and *The seven works of Mercy*.

The aim is to bring together inspiration, cross references and counterpoints in a constellation of meaning, which encompasses the work of Omar Galliani and Lorenzo Puglisi, compares their aesthetics and recognizes their great debt to the great master of the Baroque.

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Caravaggio is the undisputed master of light, he was the first to model figures chiselling their features and making them emerge from the underlying darkness in a dramatic illumination. The great subject of his canvases is the light which appears from the blackness. Or, in other words, blackness perforated by light.

In this simple, strong antithesis between light and dark lies the research of Galliani and Puglisi; it seems they have made Caravaggio the origin of their aesthetic experience.

The contrast between light and shade puts us in front of another couple of antinomies, posed by the two artists in reciprocal dynamic rapport: the use of pencil on light background in Galliani discloses the bodies which constitute an aggregate of dark matter; while the brush strokes in light colour on a black background in Puglisi reveals the light, which, hidden by black, makes fragments of reality visible.

Light and shade, therefore, as appearance and disappearance; the epiphany of the figures occurs like that of the Caravaggio angel who descends from heaven, while the background of the scene is dark, cancelled out by the density of black. The most intimate being of the man, his existential condition, the truth of his existence, come close together and appear in a crucial, instantaneous freeze-frame.

The exhibition is accompanied by a **catalogue**, which documents the execution phases of the exhibited works and the various settings in the two exhibiting locations, with institutional introductions by Valeria Li Vigni, director of the Museum Centre, and Alessandro Pasca di Magliano, Superintendent of the Pio Monte della Misericordia, and with contributions by Raffaella Resch, Maria Savarese and the English critic Mark Gisbourne.

## **Biography of the artists**

**Omar Galliani** (Montecchio RE, 1954), now a celebrated figure on the world artistic scene, undisputed master of "Italian drawing", a distinctive label which distinguishes his monumental boards drawn in pencil, harking back to the very fine Renaissance technique of accuracy of outline, using black as the densification of material. The starting point of his work is a white, light surface of sheet, canvas or more often of poplar board, on which he traces marks with pencil or charcoal which accumulate to the point of coming materially to life, revealing a surface in the gloom, whether it be the skin of the human body, a patch of water or an object. In the darkness light oozes with a magical gleam, troubling and seductive. Or it leaks out from a hidden luminous source, obscured from our gaze by an obstacle, and only thanks to this we perceive the consistency of the luminous rays. First masterly exponent of "primary magic", Galliani reconstructs classicism and the painting of the old masters with his contemporary code.

**Lorenzo Puglisi** (Biella, 1971) is a well known artist on the National and International scene, with a series of exhibitions in Milan and Paris, which define his curriculum as that of an emerging original, supported by various critics, amongst whom Mark Gisbourne. His painting is characterized by the widespread use of black, to create an absolutely dark background, from which streams of light appear defining the volumes, faces, and parts of the body, as presences halted in an expression or gesture, fruit of a long path towards the essentiality of representation, abounding in cross references to the history of oil painting from 1600 to nowadays.

In 2015 his stylistic journey arrived at the composition of the pictorial scene in the widest and most classical sense, with large canvases referring to works of the past and filtered by his iconography, like the Last Supper of Leonardo, Saint Matthew and the Angel by Caravaggio, Jupiter and Io by Correggio. In 2016 he held a solo exhibition at Sobering Gallery in Paris.

## **Useful information**

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>                     | <i>Omar Galliani - Lorenzo Puglisi. Caravaggio, the truth in the dark</i> |
| <b>Curated by</b>                | Raffaella Resch, Maria Savarese   |
| <b>With the moral support of</b> | Municipality of Naples, Council Department for Culture and Tourism        |
| <b>With the patronage of</b>     | Donnaregina Foundation for contemporary art                               |

## **Palermo Phase**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Date</b>    | 14 December 2016 – 2 February 2017                              |
| <b>Opening</b> | Wednesday 14 December 18.00h                                    |
| <b>Venue</b>   | Palermo, Cappella dell'Incoronazione, Via dell'Incoronazione 13 |
| <b>Times</b>   | Monday – Friday 9 – 13. Closed Saturday and Sunday.             |

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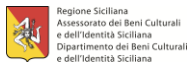


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| <b>Entry</b>               | free   |
| <b>Info for public</b>     | urp.museo.riso.bci@regione.sicilia.it  |
| <b><u>Naples phase</u></b> |  |
| <b>Date</b>                | April 2017   |
| <b>Venue</b>               | Naples, Pio Monte della Misericordia, Via dei Tribunali, 253   |
| <b>Times</b>               | Monday – Saturday, 9 – 18h. Sunday 9 - 14.30h (the ticket office closes half an hour before)   |
| <b>Entry</b>               | Full price € 7,00   Reduced € 5,00 – the ticket gives access to the exhibition, the church and to the picture gallery.   |
| <b>Info for public</b>     | segreteria@piomontedellamisericordia.it  |
| <b>Main Sponsor</b>        | Reda   |
| <b>Catalogue</b>           | Bilingual edition, Italian – English, 30x30 cm, 92 pages.<br>With texts by Mark Gisbourne, Raffaella Resch, Maria Savarese, Valeria Li Vigni, Alessandro Pasca di Magliano |

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