



Travelling circular labyrinths **Salvatore Arancio** curated by Luca Cerizza

opening: Thursday August 4th 2016 at 7.00pm
August 5th – October 3rd 2016
Museo Civico di Castelbuono
Piazza Castello – Castelbuono (Palermo)

On **Thursday August 4th 2016, at 7.00pm**, on the occasion of the **20th edition of Ypsigrock Festival**, the Museo Civico di Castelbuono, welcomes **Salvatore Arancio's solo show, *Travelling circular labyrinths*, curated by Luca Cerizza**, in line with the institution's aim to promote contemporary art, and the intertwining of this with the territory.

The exhibition, that celebrates the opening of the 20th edition of **Ypsigrock**, is included within the programme of collateral events, "**Miglior Festival d'Italia**", which will that will animate the beautiful and sought-after scenarios of **Castelbuono from the 4th to the 7th of August**. **Ypsigrock** is one of the most charming boutique festivals of Europe, built on an original format, which is the result of a mixture between selected music research and the rediscovery of the beauty of the area. Many exclusive gigs will animate this year's lineup, which will alternate **Crystal Castles, The Vaccines, Daughter, Mudhoney, Kiasmos, Savages, Minor Victories, Giant Sand, LUH** and many others on the stages of the Festival.

During the evenings of the Festival (August 4-7), a selection of Salvatore Arancio's videos will be projected onto the facade of the Ventimiglia Castle, to seal the partnership with Ypsigrock and enhance the evocative relation between art and contemporary music Castelbuono

Through a variety of techniques (sculpture, film, video, collage, print-making, etc.), the work of **Salvatore Arancio** (Catania, 1974) defines an aesthetic imagery in which the natural landscape is viewed through what **Luca Cerizza** defines as a form of "psychedelic sublime". Here is an excerpt from Cerizza's text:

"In Arancio's work, the natural landscape is read at least by a dual point of view. On the one side, it is felt in its most erotic, intense and energetic form. The prints that the artist continues to create since 2006, installed in the former stables are derived from the late nineteenth century book *Wonders of the Volcano* by the English writer Ascott R. Hope and describe stories and legends related to volcanoes and other geophysical phenomena related to them (earthquakes, sulphurous gas springs, fire springs, etc.), similar to other Victorian-era books that the artist collects. On these images, Arancio has made a number of manipulations, albeit in barely perceptible ways, that contribute to erase the human presence, to increase the terrifying aspects of the landscape, typical of the aesthetics of the Sublime, or to define new hybrid forms, inserting geological types belonging to other latitudes.

Another alteration is operated by Arancio applying a coloured vinyl surface, over the glass covering the medieval road visible in the same room of the former stables. With a simple gesture, the artist highlights this historic relic and – at the same time – gives it a new connotation as the picture of a distorted memory, a dream, a hallucination that reflects its colours in the room and the surrounding works (*What I Saw*, 2016).

On the other hand, nature is sacred in Arancio's work, seen as an expression and the subject of religious, magical and esoteric instances. An example of this is the short film *Cathedral* (2014), presented in the S. Giorgio room. Filmed on the island of Staffa, part of the archipelago of the Scottish Hebrides, the film portrays the so-called Cave of Fingal. This takes its name from the Irish legends about Finn mac Cumhail, a giant who was believed to have built a bridge to take him from Ireland to Scotland, of which the cave would be the place of landing. With this story the ancient Irish narratives

explain the continuity of the same geological basalt formations on the two sides of the same sea that divides Ireland and Scotland, cliffs, which are indeed derived from the same lava flow of about sixty million years ago.

In Arancio's short film, this amazing geological structure of hexagonal columns becomes the place of a possible pagan worship. After exploring closely the rocky surface, the camera moves away, giving a better idea of the context. While a repetitive and hypnotic soundtrack grows in the background, almost in a subliminal way, the artist inserts some geometric designs of scientific studies on the geological formations of the island itself. Other chromatic alterations applied to certain visual images, help to increase the hallucinatory atmosphere of these sequences. When the camera shows us the cave from the inside, a cabbalistic symbol, hexagonal in shape like the basalt columns, appears at its entrance. At this point it is clear how this cavity is considered a mystical place, as Arancio suggests also by the title, the cathedral a site of a possibly esoteric cult, a place for the rites of a religion devoted to natural forms to which man can only give mythological explanations. Playing with the quality of the media used – the Super 8 film seems like documentary material at the end of some scientific exploration – and with chromatic alterations superimposed on the image, the artist defines an alienating temporal ambiguity, the climate of a past perfect future, as in the series of prints previously mentioned.

The large production of ceramics also developed by the artist from 2011, refers to the forms of an uncontrollable geological vitalism, an erotic nature erupting in increasingly diverse and unexpected shapes. Vice versa, for the new installation conceived for the second room of the Museo Civico di Castelbuono (*Loblolly Knobcone Jack Gray*, 2016), Arancio has presented a series of differently sized ceramics that reflect the shape of the pine cone. On these ceramics, produced in collaboration with an artisan of Castelbuono as an expression of an ancient craft tradition, Arancio has applied colours, which give this work a psychedelic flavour, as if to give an altered, "hallucinated", vision of tradition. If the shape of the pine cone refers, in fact, to the values of birth, immortality, fertility and abundance found in many religions and in the same Sicilian culture, Arancio seems to weld together different chronological moments culturally similar, in their ritual relationship with the cosmos, nature and myth.

Finally, with a curious reversal of perspectives, this installation can also be read as a synthetic and stylized image of the woodland landscape of the Madonie, as if it were viewed from above by a giant creature: the viewer of the exhibition.

It is easy to see how two different visions of nature seem to weld and question themselves in Arancio's work. These correspond to different moments in the artist's own biography. The pantheistic and sacred character, which refers to a certain natural landscape and its pagan and mythological connotations, are certainly linked to the Sicilian origins of the artist, for which the volcano and its energy – fertile and destructive at the same time – represent an essential presence for life in the region around Mount Etna. On the other hand, the long experience of life and study conducted by the artist in London, links him to the poetics for the sublime of northern European origin, to the Gothic tales and the nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon medieval revival, as the perceptual distortions of old and new musical psychedelia, from the '60s until today. In Arancio's work, these two visions overlap, converging the natural to the cultural in a syncretism without laceration, in a continuity of thought that jumps every purely rational explanation in order to walk the paths of myth.

Finally, the prehistoric drawing of a maze, engraved on a fifty cent euro coin inside the Ventimiglia Castle tower, is another reference to this pre-historical time, a previous era of what we now call the Anthropocene, and it symbolizes the difficult attempt of man to orient himself in nature, in the complexity of its forms and its paths. This new and almost invisible intervention suggests a short circuit between alienating forms of production and of modern economy and a "other" time, as if old myths came back to take possession of our new, and often very uncertain, rites".

Luca Cerizza

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We thank **Federica Schiavo Gallery in Rome** for the precious collaboration to the organization of this exhibition, and the Restaurant "Il Giardino di Venere", Castelbuono.

BIOGRAPHY

Salvatore Arancio (Catania, 1974), lives and works in London.

Working across a range of media including sculpture, collage, animation and video, Arancio's main interests lie in the potential of images. Each aspect of his complex work contains an intertwining juxtaposition of the roots and representation of images: natural and artificial, mineral and vegetable, two-dimensional and three-dimensional, scientific and mythological. He has participated in group and solo shows in several art centres including: Kunsthalle Winterthur, Switzerland; Camden Arts Centre, London, UK; Contemporary Art Society London, UK; Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK; Centre d'art contemporain La Halle des bouchers, Vienne, France; Ygrec, Paris, France; De Appel Arts Centre,

Amsterdam, Netherlands; Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, Norwich, UK; Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico; Magasin-Centre National d'Art contemporain, Grenoble, France. Salvatore Arancio has been an artist in residence at CCA, Andratx, Spain; Camden Arts Centre, London, UK; La Cité internationale des Arts, Paris, France; Résidences Internationales aux Recollets, Paris, France, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge, UK; ISCP, New York, USA. In 2009 he was awarded by 'New York' Prize.

Information:

Title: *Travelling circular labyrinths*

Artist: Salvatore Arancio

Curated by: Luca Cerizza

Duration: 5 agosto – 3 ottobre 2016

Summer opening times (from June 22 to August 31): Monday and Wednesday: 09.30 – 13.00; Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 09.30 – 13.00 / 16.30 – 20.00; Saturday and Sunday: 10.00 – 13.30 / 16.30 – 20.00

Entrance fee: € 4,00; reduced € 2,00 (adults over 65 years and youngsters from 8 to 18, schools or groups of more than 12 people); free for children under 7 years of age.

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