

Off Site Art - OSA: L'Aquila - A Rebirth with Art

Mila Tenaglia (September 11, 2014)



Off Site Art recently presented at the town of L'Aquila with a "call for art," where Italian and international artists were invited to send their works. The scaffolding of the historic center of L'Aquila, destroyed by an earthquake back in 2009, comes to life with a beautiful selection of international artwork. The project is supported not only by the associations of L'Aquila, but also by a New York-based non-profit public art organization, Artbridge. i-Italy TV is preparing a segment with the founder of Artbridge, Rodney Durso, and other members of the international intellectual committee involved in this beautiful project.

No one is missing at the press conference in the town of Villa Gioia in L'Aquila. [Veronica Santi](#) [2] sits at the center of the table, her eyes shining, her hands fidgeting. The passion and the tenacity she has put into the creation of [Off Site Art \(OSA\)](#) [3], a public art project by [ArtBridge](#) [4] - organization based in New York, is finally being presented and appreciated.

On the right side of the curator, sit the politicians and the officials:

Mayor [Massimo Cialente](#) [5], the Councilor for Culture, Betty Leone, President of [ANCE](#) [6] L'Aquila, Gianni Frattale, and the [President of the Order of the Architects](#) [7], Tarcisio Fornaciari.



To the left are the intellectuals: the rector, Paola Inverardi, the Director of the [Gran Sasso Science Institute](#) [8], Eugenio Coccia, and finally Antiniscia di Marco of the [Department of Informatics](#) [9] at the University of L'Aquila, who started the Off Site Art project. Everyone has been essential to the visible success of the project.

Among those present are some of the artists, who were selected for participation.

Off Site Art was created when Veronica and [Rodney Durso](#) [10], founder of the New York [Artbridge](#) [4], joined together. Rodney immediately was enthusiastic about the idea of being able to promote the cultural debate between art and the city, supporting the first responders overseas in Europe. In fact, Artbridge "uses scaffolding, fences and fabric covered bridges as a blank canvas on which to display posters of works by emerging artists."

Off Site Art, conducted in the state capital of Abruzzo, has proven to be an initiative of a great depth and value, as over 300 artists attended and more than 1,200 images were submitted.

The scaffolds of various sites in the historic center of L'Aquila, which was destroyed by an earthquake back in 2009, came to life with the pieces of art. The works strike the attention of passersby that are a part of a still deeply wounded city.

"These images, reminiscent in some ways of the earthquake," states Veronica, "touch upon something terribly monstrous that has happened and give it warmth. The buildings are cold. Inside there is nothing. You can still smell the earthquake in the air."

A beautiful example of restoring life to this space is Federica Pavrolo's piece, one of the first works installed.

Federica's artwork portrays a constellation of objects from her own room that form a robot – a human in motion who seems to be running from home.

"Almost like a dance in the last few days, colorful images have begun to appear all over this city that has been experiencing a very serious situation for the past five years. The posters will go up and be taken down just like the scaffolding will, until the work is completed," Veronica Santi adds.

An international intellectual committee evaluated and selected the works of 19 emerging artists. The jury was composed of [Ida Panicelli](#) [11] (Director of ArtForum 1988-1992, New York), [Cecilia Alemani](#) [12] (Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Curator & Director of High Line Art, New York), [Cecilia Guida](#) [13] (Independent Curator and Professor of History at the Academy of Fine Arts of L'Aquila), [Giuseppe Lignano](#) [14] (Founder and President of [LOT-EK](#) [15], Naples and New York).

"The magic of public art is that it does not hide in a closed box but triggers a process that leads people to look away from their battles and toward the direction of contemporary art."

"This message needs to be reinforced in and out of L'Aquila and talked about during international conferences. This operation," points out Veronica Santi, "is not new in the world of art, but is unique in a city as disintegrated as L'Aquila."

When it comes to rebuilding, it is easy to shift the focus to the future, but we should instead live in the present of this city, where people walking around this destroyed and devastated city center are affected.

The mayor, Massimo Cialente speaks out: "Finally the closed and destroyed historic center begins to



have the first glimpses of life. The city wants to make a presence, regardless of its wounds. The intention is to recover the space and the desire to live there again. It took someone like Veronica, with her determination, to bring together the people and the cultural resources."

Soon, an application designed by the Department of Engineering and Computer Science and Mathematics University of L'Aquila will be created and will become a virtual guide of the works installed in the city. This week, during Perdonanza, a civil and spiritual event of strong importance to the citizens of L'Aquila, was the perfect timing to present this project to the city.

It is now possible to walk in Piazza Regina Margherita and enjoy the works of Federica Peyrolo and Carmen Mitrotta. Turn onto Corso Vittorio Emanuele and observe the giant works of Daniele Davitti, Arianna Lodeserto and Antonella Finucci and many others who will soon appear in the streets.

We should not forget the tragic natural disaster, but in order to move forward, we need this seductive power of contemporary art. L'Aquila is a city that does not want to fall into oblivion, but instead wishes to rise again and be more beautiful than before. Veronica "OSA", L'Aquila, Abruzzo and Italians: Dare in the name of art!

Here is a list of names of the 19 artists involved: Dritan Hyska, born in 1980 in Korce (Albania), Federica Peyrolo, born in Susa in 1989, Iacopo Pasqui born in 1984 and resident of Abruzzo, Elena Adamou from Cipro, born in 1991, Daniele Davitti of Florence, born 1987, Edoardo De Falchi, Pietro Del Bianco, 1948 from Marotta, Iolanda Di Bonaventura, from Aquila and born 1991, Sandro Di Camillo, born in 1976, Federica Di Carlo, 1984, Marjan Fahimi, Teheran (Iran), 1982, Antonella Finucci, Rome, 29 years old, the duo G&G, composed of Gabriella & Giannicola from Abruzzo, Giannicola De Antoniis and Gabriella Sperandio, Arianna Lodeserto, Carmen Mitrotta from Grottaglie, 1987, Danilo Susi, doctor and artist, Claudia Esposito, born in Rome in 1991, Lucia Uni, from Lecco, and Gianni Zanni from Bari.

With the collaboration of: [Terraemutatae](#) [16], GlobalIA, [Department of Engineering and Computer Science and Mathematics](#) [17], [Smartly](#) [18] and [MU6](#) [19]

To learn more visit: [Off Site Art - OSA](#) [3] and [Artbridge](#) [4].

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- [5] http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massimo_Cialente
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