

Mathilde Rosier

Le massacre du printemps

24 October - 16 November 2020

Piazza Madre, ground floor

Preview presentation of the work donated by the artist to the Madre collection

Curated by Andrea Viliani

In collaboration with Residency 80121

The collection of the Madre Museum will receive the donation by the artist **Mathilde Rosier** of her new video work *Le massacre du printemps* (2020). The presentation is curated by **Andrea Viliani** and realized in collaboration with **Residency 80121**.

In her video work *Le massacre du printemps* (2020), the artist Mathilde Rosier (Paris, 1973) creates a personal narrative from existing narratives. Called 'an agricultural dance on Naples', the work is inspired by the *Rite of spring* (*Le sacre du printemps*), a ballet created by **Vaslav Nijinsky** for the Ballets Russes in 1913 to a musical composition by **Igor Stravinsky**. The theme is also connected to the figure of the set designer and costume designer of the original ballet, **Nicholas Roerich**. As the artist writes: 'The atmosphere of the play is catastrophic, Roerich thought of an imminent end of the world but with the hope of rebirth for a wiser humanity'.

Three different locations constitute the narrative the work: the greenhouses of Pompeii, 'metaphors of how intense productivity can be part of a deadly process'; the industrial port and the city center of Naples, where 'pollution and incoherence of human activity dance on the volcano'; finally the former industrial site and the bay of Pozzuoli, 'seriously contaminated land and an abandoned maritime area, whose desolation contrasts with its seductive beauty'.

The work is divided into two parts, which question the very principles of the original ballet.

In the first act of Stravinsky's work, entitled 'The Adoration of Earth', the choreography recalls the agricultural dances of pagan Russia. For Rosier the dancers, imitating the movements and gestures of farmers in the act of cultivating fields, connect the act of worshiping the land with the beginning of its progressive exploitation. For this reason the 'worship' of the original ballet is revealed as the beginning of an unstoppable 'exploitation': 'the peasants become ears of wheat, the destiny of humanity is linked to that of plants'. We treat ourselves as we treat plants, industrialized, commodified. The blind pursuit of growth, avidity, greed, only reflect our inability to ever be satisfied. This bottomless dissatisfaction is the reason for the disaster'.

In the second act of Stravinsky's work, entitled 'The Sacrifice', a woman is designated to perform a sacrifice to the Earth to plead for the return of spring after winter and ensure the perpetuation of the well-being of the human species. In Rosier's reinterpretation, the sacrifice of the young woman does not take place and is transformed into the metamorphosis of all the farmers and wheat fields into a forest of trees that spreads over the city and the industrial site previously known as Naples. The artist recalls its millenary culture, almost as if to close a circle or, better, to reopen it: 'in the Baroque paintings present in the numerous churches in the city, as in the ex-voto paintings, the Virgin Mary and angels float above the mortals, with the intention to protect, save the chaotic world. For many of us, the catholic message failed to answer the ontological question but the image stays with us, the image of an invisible realm of supra human creatures capable of filling the feeling of void that makes our chest empty, our heart dry. Maybe those supra human creatures are to be found in natural forms, in trees and forest that would inhabit our chest. We have to re-oxygenate our chest with this forest, feel the plenty within us, the lungs and the heart full'.

Accompanied by music she composed using drum and samples from **Jean Sibelius'** symphonies, *Le massacre du Printemps* draws on multiple sources. From the colorful imagery of the **Russian Ballets**, whose greatest exponents resided on the Amalfi coast, to **Pablo Picasso's** inspirational journey to Naples, after



which he created scenes and costumes for the ballet *Parade* in 1917, with music by **Erik Satie**, text by **Jean Cocteau** and choreography by **Léonide Massine**.

From the passage of the Ballets Russes in the Amalfi Coast, to the anecdotal episode of Picasso's visit to Naples and a ritual reformulation that looks at the drawings of oceanographer **Anton Dohn**, Rosier's performance proposes a hymn to the dance of all forms of natural existence - animals, plants and minerals.

Biography of Mathilde Rosier

Mathilde Rosier's work is pervaded by her interest in physical and psychological experiences and ancient rituals, by anthropological research dedicated to the study of the recovery of these rituals in contemporary European society. Her artistic practice often manifests itself through fictitious branches or parts of narrative in which the mystical representations of animals, plants and every creature of nature seem to come from disused sets and become solitary protagonists of an unusual but significant reality. Through the mixture of painting, cinema, dance and theater, Rosier constructs dreamlike situations that allow the audience to lose cognition of space and time, opening a portal between the realms of consciousness and the unconscious. After the presentation at the Madre, the work *Le massacre du printemps* will be included in the artist's solo exhibition at the **MASP-Museu de arte de São Paulo**, focusing on the relationship between agriculture and dance, body and soil, the Brazilian agricultural industry as opposed to the cosmological relationship of indigenous cultures with the earth.

Rosier has held solo exhibitions and performances at the Camden Arts Center in London, the Abteiberg Museum in Mönchengladbach, the Serpentine Gallery in London, the Kunstverein in Hanover and the Jeu de Paume National Gallery in Paris. He has participated in group exhibitions at the Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Turin, the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Milan, the Kunsthau in Graz, the Museo Abteiberg in Moenchengladbach, the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart and the Kunsthalle in Baden-Baden.

The Residency 80121 Association

Residency 80121 is a platform for research and experimentation through the formation of temporary collectives with the intent to investigate alternative ways to the dominant system of living a place, domestic or of origin. Founded in 2017 by the artist Raffaella Naldi Rossano (Naples, 1990), the platform follows two lines: the artistic practice of Naldi Rossano, which develops into a project for the transformation of her grandmother's house - the apartment in Via Martucci 48 where the association is based - and the opening of multidisciplinary community living practices in the stratified context of a city like Naples. In its first year of activity Naldi Rossano and the German artist Zerha Arslan (Hamburg, 1985) re-read the house-space with the opening exhibition *Sulle Forme dell'Abitare*, and then continued the program with the collective project *Otium - Corruption and the Dash*, in collaboration with the Relais Regina Giovanna of Sorrento, until the performance event *Monaciello Disco*. In 2019 Mathilde Rosier and Lydia Ourahmane were invited to close the first chapter of the residencies. Lydia Ourahmane (Saïda, 1992) is the protagonist of a further site-specific intervention in the rooms of Residency 80121. The domestic space, in 2019, adds a further stratification to the home-studio with *Sibilla Cabinet*, designed by Iacopo Taddeo, a studio and bookcase with a dynamic and convivial character.

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