

Premio Meridiana
Santa do pau oco
January 22 – April 6, 2026
museo Madre, Naples

Santa do pau oco, curated by **Gabriella Rebello Kolandra**, will open on **January 22, 2026** at the museo Madre in Naples. The exhibition is the winning project of the first edition of the Premio Meridiana, curated by **Mario Francesco Simeone** and promoted by the Fondazione Donnaregina per le Arti Contemporanee – museo Madre and by the Amici del Madre, with the support of Antony Morato and Fondazione Tridama. The exhibition, which will be open until **April 6, 2026**, brings together the research of artists **Clarissa Baldassarri**, **Maria Luce Cacciaguerra**, and **Anna Maria Maiolino**, opening up an intergenerational and transnational dialogue in keeping with the aims of the Prize. Featuring historical and previously unseen works created specifically for the occasion, *Santa do pau oco* is structured around installations, projections, sculptures, and sound pieces, piecing together an exhibition path that explores what lies beneath the surface of the visible.

Santa do pau oco

The title of the exhibition curated by Gabriella Rebello Kolandra draws on an everyday expression from Brazilian parlance: ‘Santo do pau oco,’ literally ‘saint of hollow wood’ in English, which goes back to the period of Portuguese colonial extraction in the country and referencing statues of Catholic saints used to hide smuggled gold. In popular usage, the term describes someone who appears in a certain manner but who conceals another nature. Setting out from this ambivalence, the exhibition project, designed specifically for museo Madre, brings together three artists from different generations, whose practices share an interest in the deep structures of language and the limits of perception.

‘Having emigrated to Brazil as a teenager, active since the 1960s and trained in the repressive context of the military dictatorship, Maiolino built an artistic practice capable of asserting a female political presence within a system that denied its existence. In her works, the creative gesture is inseparable from the destructive one, each form arising from a tension between opposites,’ says the curator. ‘The speculative interest of Cacciaguerra—poet, artist, and publisher—stems from concrete poetry and continues its principles in a contemporary research that here, for the first time, takes on a physical dimension, linking art history, literature, and a personal archive of images and texts. Baldassarri’s research investigates the perceptual and sensory limits in relation to the transience of the body and time, through a spiritual practice that is expressed above all in site-specific projects, including installations, videos, sculptures, and performances. The exhibition offers a cross-cutting reflection on life and death, understood not as opposites but as coexisting forces.’

With their respective specificities, the research of Baldassarri, Cacciaguerra, and Maiolino brings together diverse experiences and chronologies, presenting a vision of the South, from Latin America to the Mediterranean, as an existential and porous dimension, extending across a large scale, not only in territorial terms, and traversed by common tensions.

Press preview and public opening

The press preview will be held on Wednesday, January 22, at midday, in the presence of artists Clarissa Baldessari and Maria Luce Cacciaguerra. Speakers will include **Angela Tecce**, President of the Fondazione Donnaregina per le Arti Contemporanee – museo Madre; **Eva Fabbris**, Director of the museo Madre; **Renato Magaldi**, President of the Amici del Madre, Mario Francesco Simeone, and Gabriella Rebello Kolandra. The exhibition will open to the public on the same day, Thursday, January 22 at 6 pm. At 7 pm, there will be *Operazioni di niente: l’archivio*, a performative lecture by Maria Luce Cacciaguerra.

Activities and guided tours

During the exhibition period, there will be several guided tours, starting with one led by the curator, scheduled for Saturday, January 24, from 12 to 1pm. The calendar will be available on the museo Madre website, in the 'Visit' section.

Premio Meridiana

Aimed at curators under the age of 45, invited to submit an exhibition project involving three artists—at least two of whom must be under the age of 35—from or who have ties to the regions of southern Italy, the Premio Meridiana aims to support curatorial research and the emerging art scene linked to southern Italy, the southern hemisphere and their multiple imaginaries, promoting new projects and opportunities for discussion and revealing the layered identities of a culturally rich and complex macro-area, a workshop of universal narratives.

Closing on June 30, 2025, the call for entries attracted major participation, with 64 projects submitted and more than 250 curators and artists involved.

The winners of the first edition of the Prize were curator Gabriella Rebello Kolandra (Rio de Janeiro, 1993), with artists Clarissa Baldassarri (Civitanova Marche, 1994), Maria Luce Cacciaguerra (Palermo, 1997), and Anna Maria Maiolino (Scalea, 1942); and curator **Samuele Piazza** (Parma, 1988), with artists **Andrea Bolognino** (Naples, 1991), **Raffaella Naldi Rossano** (Naples, 1990) and **Effe Minelli** alias **Fabio Cirillo** (Pompei, 1986). The winners were selected by a jury composed of **Stefano Collicelli Cagol**, Director of the Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci in Prato, Eva Fabbris, **Luca Lo Pinto**, Artistic Director of the Fondazione Società delle Api, Renato Magaldi, and Angela Tecce.

Conceived by curator Mario Francesco Simeone, the concept behind the first edition, entitled *Ogni cosa è tutte le cose* (Everything is All Things), drew inspiration from

Elio Vittorini's novel *Conversation in Sicily*, a key text for the construction of the modern identity of southern Italy. It evokes the deep connections that intertwine local histories and global experiences, resonating beyond geographical boundaries.

‘...They were as if carved from sky-blue stone, all these prickly pears, and when we passed a living soul, it was a boy who was going or coming, along the tracks to pick the fruits crowned with thorns that grew, like coral, on the stone...’ Elio Vittorini, *Conversations in Sicily*.

Interpreting the concept of the Award in an original way, the winning projects stood out for their original visions, deeply rooted in research and capable of questioning the present through innovative languages.

Biographies of the curator and the artists

Gabriella Rebello Kolandra (Rio de Janeiro, 1993) is a curator currently based in Milan. Her practice spans curating, writing, and research, focusing on the construction of supportive contexts for artistic practices that are not exclusively oriented toward market legitimacy but are attentive to the processes and conditions of artistic work. She has collaborated with institutions such as Savvy Contemporary (Berlin), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW, Berlin), Art Encounters Foundation (Timișoara), ICA Milano (Milan), Platea (Lodi), Archive (Berlin/Milan), among others. From 2022 to 2025, she was assistant curator at the ICA Milano Foundation, and since 2026 she has been a tutor at the Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci as part of Supertoscana: a residency program for artists and curators. In September 2025, she won the first edition of the Meridiana Prize for curators, promoted by the Fondazione Donnaregina – museo Madre in Naples and Amici del Madre.

Clarissa Baldassarri (Civitanova Marche, 1994) is a PhD student and researcher in Visual Arts and Creative Practices at the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples and is currently conducting research on the phenomenon of Glossolalia within the major Pentecostal and Christian communities around the world. Baldassarri's research

focuses on the concepts of perceptual and sensory limits in relation to the transience of the body and time. Within this process, the religious and spiritual sphere plays a central role in her work, constituting from the outset a source of reflection and inspiration for many of her works. She has participated in national and international exhibitions and programs including *Italics Panorama* (Pozzuoli, 2025), *Horanggasy Creative Studio* (Gwangju, 2024), *Liste Art Fair* (Basel, 2022), *Una Boccata d'Arte* (2020), and *Ducato Art Prize* (2020). In 2024, she inaugurated her fourth solo exhibition with *Gian Marco Casini Gallery* (Livorno) and *Exposure Value* at *Galleria Raffaella Cortese* (Albisola).

Maria Luce Cacciaguerra (Palermo, 1997) is a poet, artist, and curator. Her research began in the field of concrete poetry and developed as an ongoing reflection on the possibility of translating the principles of this discipline into different media, contexts, and speculative dimensions. In 2022, she founded the *Murmur* collective and is the director of the *Remedia* series for *Pungitopo* publisher. She recently edited the publication *Almanacco Murmur* (*Paint It Black*). In an attempt to imagine new worlds, Maria Luce's practice, like that of the *Murmur* collective, takes on different forms and occupies different spaces, including: *Castello di Rivoli* (Turin), *Drop City* (Milan), *Gelateria Sogni di Ghiaccio* (Bologna), *La Belle Aurore* (Milan), *MamBo* (Bologna), *museo Madre* (Naples), *Nuova Orfeo* (Palermo), *Paint It Black* (Turin), *Pirelli Hangar Bicocca* (Milan), *Super Attico* (Milan), and *Triennale* (Milan).

Anna Maria Maiolino (Scalea, 1942) lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil. Starting from everyday female consciousness and the experience of an oppressive and censorial dictatorship—that of Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s—the Italian-Brazilian artist has developed a body of work charged with vital energy, articulated in a wide range of languages and media: from performance to sculpture, from video to photography, to installation and drawing. Her works are based on creative processes necessarily linked to destruction and constantly address issues related to identity, both subjectively and universally. Her practice brings opposing and complementary categories into dialogue, dissolving the boundaries between inside and outside, emptiness and matter. Maiolino has participated in numerous international biennials, including: *Foreigners Everywhere*, 60th Venice Biennale; *Lyon Biennale* (2017); 10th

Gwangju Biennale (2014); and Documenta 13, Kassel (2012). In 2024, she received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale.

museo Madre – via Luigi Settembrini 79, Naples

Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10 am – 7.30 pm / Sunday, 10 am – 8 pm / closed on Tuesdays.

Contacts: 081 19528498 / info@madrenapoli.it / www.madrenapoli.it