



**MAXXI and Bvlgari join forces to support young talents in the arts**

## **THE SECOND EDITION OF THE MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE PRESENTED IN LONDON**

**The three finalists selected by the international jury are  
GIULIA CENCI, TOMASO DE LUCA, RENATO LEOTTA**

**Their site-specific works will be exhibited at  
MAXXI – National Museum of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Arts from May 2020**

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*London, 1 October 2019.* **Giulia Cenci** (Cortona, 1988, lives and works in Amsterdam and Tuscany), **Tomaso De Luca** (Verona, 1988, lives and works in Berlin) and **Renato Leotta** (Turin, 1982, lives and works in Acireale, Sicily) are the three shortlisted artists for the **MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE**, the project bringing together MAXXI – National Museum of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Arts and **Bvlgari**, an emblem of Italian excellence for over 130 years to support and promote young artists.

The three finalists and the new edition of the PRIZE, the outcome of the long standing partnership between MAXXI and Bvlgari, were presented today at the Bvlgari Hotel in London by **Giovanna Melandri**, President of the Fondazione MAXXI and **Nicola Bulgari**, Vice President of the Bvlgari Group, a great supporter of the MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE, a passionate collector and patron of the arts.

The members of the international jury **Hou Hanru**, Artistic Director at MAXXI, **Bartolomeo Pietromarchi** Director of MAXXI Arte, **Manuel Borja-Villel**, Director of the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid and **Emma Lavigne**, President of the Palais de Tokyo, along with **Lucia Boscaini**, Bvlgari Brand and Heritage Curator, illustrated the PRIZE in a conversation with the journalist **Suzanne Trocme**.

Present were the shortlisted artists **Giulia Cenci**, **Tomaso De Luca** and **Renato Leotta**, along with **Giulia Ferracci**, curator of the exhibition with the site-specific works created for the PRIZE on show at MAXXI from 7 May 2020. In October 2020, the jury will decree the winner, whose work will be acquired by the museum.

An evolution of the MAXXI Prize, which was responsible for the founding nucleus of the museum collection and which since 2000 has launched numerous new talents on the international scene, thanks to Bvlgari's precious support, the prize has been renewed, strengthened, and launched ever more on the international art scene. The first edition of the MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE organized in 2018 was won by Diego Marcon with the powerful video installation *Ludwig*, which is now part of the MAXXI collection.

"In 2020 the museum will be celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday", says **Giovanna Melandri**, "and the MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE will be one of the events celebrating this important anniversary, emphasizing the commitment to supporting young talents in the arts as one of the key aspects of the mission of this National Museum of Contemporary Art. The works of the three finalists, Giulia Cenci, Tomaso De Luca and Renato Leotta, intense and evocative, reflect on today's society and explore the future. It will be a pleasure to have them at MAXXI and a privilege to have alongside us Bvlgari, a company that has contributed so much to Italian and international creativity, further evidence of the importance of a strategic rather than ephemeral cultural alliance between public and private."

As **Jean-Christophe Babin**, Bvlgari CEO, says: "Once again, the MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE is an exceptional platform for the most promising talents in the contemporary art scene. The multiple languages adopted by artists stimulate a reflection on today's complex social and cultural situation, triggering a different perception of reality, and of the values that inspire it. The constant tension towards experimentation and the commitment to promoting young artists are the common ground of BVLGARI and MAXXI: I am sure that this new edition of the award will mark an important moment in international artistic research."

**Hou Hanru**, remarks that "This year's selection of the candidates reflects a significant generation turn with artists born in the 1980s. They share a new sense of critique facing an increasingly uncertain world in imminent crisis — political, economical, ecological and psychological. They represent a new tendency of the

# MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE

young artists who are deeply concerned about the danger of the destruction of our living environments, both physical and virtual, and manage to develop plastic languages to cope with such a momentum, by reintroducing materiality, in fluid but intense change, tainted with anxiety. This implies a certain obsession with the exploration of a new global Zeitgeist. Again, the MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE plays its role as a leader to demonstrate the upcoming future in the Italian and international art scene by putting forwards these individual but organically bound destinies of creative minds”.

## MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE 2020: THE FINALISTS

**Giulia Cenci** (Cortona IT, 1988, lives and works in Amsterdam and Tuscany) was chosen for “the aesthetic tension present in her work that restores sculpture to its central role within the visual arts debate, as well as for her reflection on society’s future scenarios.”

She was proposed by Marianna Vecellio, Curator at Castello di Rivoli, Turin, who writes: “The works of Cenci are hybrid forms, resulting from the coexistence between living beings and an environment that is violently attacked by human beings. Through the study of form, the works of Cenci address the idea of the living being in the light of contemporary philosophical theories, which refer to the current age as the Anthropocene, a geological era that is the product of an irreversible action by human beings on the environment. Her works are the result of a formal, political and ontological “composting” process, and encourage us to change the way we look at the world, matter and human beings.”

**Tomaso De Luca** (Verona, 1988, lives and works in Berlin) was chosen for “his ability to explore history’s different identities through the investigation of the role of objects in the contemporary social and political context”.

As Lorenzo Benedetti, Curator at Kunstmuseum in St. Gallen, who proposed him writes: “Through the use of drawings, sculptures, videos and installations steeped in literary, philosophical and general culture references, Tomaso De Luca experiments with formal solutions in which the collective imagination is placed in a dialogue with a broader cultural spectrum. De Luca questions the symptoms of our society. A character of obsolescence seems to be present in his works creating a form of resistance to the consumerist nature of our time.”

**Renato Leotta** (Turin, 1982, lives and works in Acireale, Sicily), was chosen for “the independent nature of his research within the Italian national art scene and for the narrative force of his works that echoes the existential condition of contemporary human beings.”

He was proposed by Marianna Vecellio, Curator at Castello di Rivoli, Turin, who writes: Like a true archaeologist of reality, he observes the landscape to study its constitutive elements and capture its transient phenomena. Using different media, such as sculpture, photography, video, drawing and primary materials such as earth, sand and salt, he captures fragments of experience and turns them into mental pictures. In his works, he presents the reconstruction of an imagery, and through it he also provides a reconstruction of the cultural identity of today’s humanity, Moreover, his practice creates a poetic combination of apparently distant elements, such as history and the Mediterranean, the memory of places and reality, the sea and the earth, the North and South of the world.”

**Bartolomeo Pietromarchi** comments: “This year too we have young artists whose work already has a very well defined identity. For them, the challenge of the PRIZE – which continues to grow and has become the most important recognition for contemporary artistic research in Italy – is an extraordinary opportunity to test themselves and to develop. The finalists were selected from a list of names proposed by some of the most attentive and internationally well-known young Italian critics and curators. I would like to thank them all.”

**Lucia Boscaini** added: “The commitment alongside the MAXXI is in the wake of the patronage activities that Bvlgari promotes to preserve the artistic and cultural heritage of the Eternal City. The MAXXI is a museum that was born in Rome and has always been open to the world, just like Bvlgari. This partnership in the name of innovation and constant creative research stems from shared values. For each edition, the Prize boasts the collaboration of leading international professionals and contributes to making Rome a pole of attraction for those who love the art of the past, present and future.”

## MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE INTERNATIONAL JURY

**Hou Hanru**, MAXXI Artistic Director; **Bartolomeo Pietromarchi** Director MAXXI Arte; **Manuel Borja-Villel**, Director Reina Sofía Museum, Madrid; **Emma Lavigne**, President of Palais de Tokyo, Paris; **Victoria Noorthoorn**, Director Buenos Aires Museum of Modern Art (who was unable to attend the event in London due to prior commitments).

# MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE

The three finalists for the 2020 edition were chosen from a selection of names put forward by: **Cecilia Alemani**, Director of High Line Art in New York, **Laura Barreca**, Director of the Civic Museum of Castelbuono in Palermo, **Lorenzo Benedetti**, Curator at Kunstmuseum in St. Gallen, **Stefano Collicelli Cagol**, Curator for the 17th Rome Quadriennale d'arte, **Caterina Riva**, Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Singapore, **Marianna Vecellio**, Curator at Castello di Rivoli, **Ilaria Marotta** and **Andrea Baccin**, founder of the independent platform **CURA**, Rome.

## HISTORY OF THE PRIZE

The Prize, created in 2000 as the 'Premio per la Giovane Arte', represents the point of departure and the birth of the MAXXI Arte collection. Over the years it has been an important springboard for many artists. Between 2001 and 2018 **42 artists** have taken part in the nine editions and include; **Mario Airò, Yuri Ancarani, Giorgio Andreotta Calò, Stefano Arienti, Rosa Barba, Massimo Bartolini, Vanessa Beecroft, Rossella Biscotti, Bruna Esposito, Lara Favaretto, Piero Golia, Adelita Husni-Bey, Avish Khebrehzadeh, Liliana Moro, Marinella Senatore, Nico Vascellari, Vedovamazzei, Francesco Vezzoli** among many others. The first MAXXI BVLGARI Prize (2018) was awarded to Diego Marcon, with the powerful and evocative video installation *Ludwig*, now part of the MAXXI Collection. The other finalists were Talia Chetrit and Invernò, whose work *Calendoola: SURUS* was acquired by MAXXI thanks to the contribution of the Friends of MAXXI.

## MAXXI AND BVLGARI TOGETHER FOR YOUNG ART

Bulgari's involvement with this award represents a continuation of the tradition of prestigious partnerships with contemporary artists such as Zaha Hadid and Anish Kapoor who reimagined, with their unmistakable styles, one of the *maison's* most admired icons, the *B.zero1* ring. Zaha Hadid was also responsible for a virtuoso reinterpretation of Bulgari's celebrated *Serpenti* motif with an evocative artistic installation that debuted in 2011 in the Bulgari pavilion at the Abu Dhabi Art Fair.

Relations between MAXXI, the first Italian national museum dedicated to contemporary creativity, and Bulgari, were first established in 2014, on the occasion of the exhibition *Bellissima. The Italy of high fashion 1945-1968*, of which the maison was the main partner. With the **MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE** this partnership – based on shared values such as excellence, innovation, passion, creativity and experimentation and on an awareness of the importance of support for culture and the strategic role of the public-private alliance – is being renewed and consolidated. As **Giovanna Melandri** and **Jean Christophe Babin**, agree, "supporting young talents means investing in the creativity of our time and our future".

**The press kit and images of the exhibition** can be downloaded from the Reserved Area of the Fondazione MAXXI's website at <http://www.maxxi.art/area-stampa/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

## MAXXI – National Museum of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Arts

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