

MA

Museo nazionale
delle arti del XXI secolo

Luca Vitone Io, Villa Adriana

curated by **Anne Palopoli** and **Andrea Bruciati**

from 17 June to 12 September 2021

MAXXI, Sala Gian Ferrari and Villa Adriana, Tivoli

in collaboration with Istituto autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este

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Roma, June 2021. Throughout his prolific artistic career, **Luca Vitone** has always focused his research on the complex relationship with places. Now it is the turn of the Villa Adriana archeological area, which is the core of the complex project carried out in collaboration with **MAXXI the National Museum of 21st Century Arts and Istituto autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este – VILLAE**.

The exhibition **Io, Villa Adriana**, curated by **Anne Palopoli** and **Andrea Bruciati**, unfolds between the fluid spaces of the Museum designed by Zaha Hadid and Emperor Adriano's residence in Tivoli, thereby generating a continuous cross-reference between the two places (**from 17 June to 12 September 2021**). The works on display recall and interleave cultural, geographical and spatial references and thus create a connection, an unprecedented itinerary that visitors walk not only physically, but also by creating new imaginary worlds.

The crux of Vitone's progressive encounters with Villa Adriana are the **nine canvases on display at MAXXI**, which lend their title to the exhibition: these large canvases, which the artist has placed around the Villa, have been left exposed to atmospheric agents for months, for these latter to produce the images that can now be observed. On their surface, the canvases capture their contact with the surrounding environment and the action of time and weather, thereby becoming self-portraits of Villa Adriana.

At MAXXI, Vitone **has painted one of the walls of the Gian Ferrari Hall**, which houses the exhibition, using the dust collected from Villa Adriana as an atypical watercolour: the dust is used as though it were an 'anti-pigment', its grain and different shades of colour representing the environments from which it was taken. The walls also feature the **Capricci** (Whims), namely two prints of Villa Adriana conceived by Piranesi, on which the artist has intervened.

At the centre of the Hall is the extraordinary **Crocodile-Fountain dating back to the 2nd century AD**, which emerged from the pool of water in the Canopus of Villa Adriana, where it was found in the 1950s. It was probably carved from a single block of *cipollino* marble, whose veins were masterfully used to realistically portray the chromatic and material aspects of the animal's skin.

As **Anne Palopoli**, curator of the exhibition, says: Like an explorer, Vitone traverses place, recounting its tale through his works, expanding its imagery physically, geographically, symbolically, socio-historically, unifying the practice of exploration with analytical and ironic practice. That said, Vitone's works have long invited us to reassess the characteristics representative of a locality's identity, its specificity, rendering that place identifiable through personal experience, as if to say that it is through cultural intervention that places become subjective, part of the lives of the people who access them, enabling us to recall forgotten landscapes and experiences.

The works in Villa Adriana are located in various parts of the site, like traces of the artist's passage: witness **Ricondursi al luogo. Bussola** (Back to the Place. Compass), namely

seven photographic samples representing a compass placed in the path leading from the Mouseia to Rocca Bruna, or **Le cinque pietre di Davide** (The Five Stones of David), that is, a work that hints at the biblical story of David and Goliath. Only four of them can be found, placed on a cloth and protected by a rainbow-coloured umbrella, since the fifth was used to strike the giant's forehead. A hymn to the muses composed by Mesomedes of Crete, a freedman of Emperor Adriano, emanates from the interstices of the pavement of the **Small Baths**, while all around we see what seem to be the traces of a cleaning job left unfinished by archaeologists.

Finally, from three telescopes placed on the **terrace of the Roccabruna tower**, it is possible to observe three views of Rome. The telescopes, which have been 'rigged' by the artist with slides mounted on the lens, direct attention to specific places in the city, with Pasolinian and poetic references.

Andrea Bruciati, the Director of Istituto autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este and curator of the exhibition, says, "Villa Adriana is an archaeological complex of rare beauty, a veritable place of imagination for 20th-century culture that projects itself into the future in a visionary and germinal way. We must thus make reference to a reflection by Pier Paolo Pasolini: the whole truth never lies in a single dream, but in many dreams. Narratives overlap, thereby giving new meaning to things; this layering is where the profound meaning and the intrinsic strength of Luca Vitone's work and the project *Io, Villa Adriana* lie".

in collaborazione con

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