BOWMAN SCULPTURE TO REVEAL FIRST UK EXHIBITION OF ITALIAN SCULPTOR MASSIMILIANO PELLETTI DURING FRIEZE WEEK

By Lee Sharrock • 25 September 2023
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Bowman Sculpture Gallery in Mayfair are presenting the first UK solo exhibition of contemporary Italian sculptor Massimiliano Pelletti.

Massimiliano Pelletti, 'White Noise'Courtesy Bowman Sculpture/ Copyright Massimiliano Pelletti

The gallery will also be participating in Frieze Masters 2023 in Regents Park where their stand will feature important works from the 18th century to the present day including works by Auguste Rodin, an artist the gallery specialises in, Pietro Calvi, Camile Claudel, Henry Moore and Emily Young. Bowman Sculpture director Mica Bowman recently signed Massimiliano Pelletti for exclusive representation in the UK, where he plans to exhibit a new series of sculptures inspired by iconic sculptures of Greek and Roman antiquity while instilling each piece with a contemporary twist. Pelletti has exhibited to critical acclaim in Italy, including an exhibition with Italian Renaissance Sculptor Canova (December 2021 to April 2022). Pelletti is the second contemporary sculptor Mica Bowman has signed to Bowman Sculpture since she joined as a director in 2019.

Eredità precedes an exhibition at the distinguished museum Palazzo Doria Pamphilj in Rome, where Pelletti's work will be exhibited alongside that of artistic giants such as Caravaggio, Titian, and Raphael. This juxtaposition of contemporary with old masters is a unique endeavour for the Doria Pamphilj and this will be the first time that the museum has allowed a contemporary artist to be shown alongside the old masters in residence which truly highlights the calibre and importance of Massimiliano as an artist.

Eredità' is a captivating solo exhibition by Italian artist

Massimiliano Pelletti, featuring contemporary sculptures carved from exotic stones sourced from around the world that emulate antique models. Pelletti deliberately incorporates visible flaws, cracks, and fissures inherent in the material into his sculptures, inviting viewers to contemplate mankind's relationship with the past and question the idealisation of past cultures. The classically ideal body was established in Classical Greek sculpture of the 5th Century B.C., and while Pelletti draws influence from Greek and Roman sculpture of antiquity, he emphasises flaws and imperfections to subvert the classical ideal. Through his meticulous craftsmanship and thought-provoking compositions, Pelletti unveils a nuanced exploration of time, imperfection, and our collective fascination with bygone eras.

Mica Bowman

Massimiliano Pelletti 'Optical Venus'. Courtesy Bowman Sculpture/ Copyright Massimiliano Pelletti

Pelletti (Born. 1975) studied at the Stagio Stagi Art School in Pietrasanta, going on to graduate from the University of Pisa with a degree in Philosophy. He began a career as an artist in 2006, getting off to a flying start by winning the 12th edition of the Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean, which led to high profile exhibitions in Italy and abroad, including the Alexandria Biennale in Egypt and the 54th Venice Biennale as part of the Italian Pavilion, curated by Vittorio Sgarbi.

'Eredità' is curated by Mica Bowman, whose exhibition recent all women show 'The Power of She' (co-curated with Marie-Claudine Llamas of Guerin Projects) received a warm reception in the spring and was featured in Forbes as an 'Essential Highlight of International Women Artists' Art Week' and by the Evening Standard as a highlight of London Gallery Weekend. Mica Bowman is introducing a new generation of gifted sculptors to Bowman Sculpture and will present the unique sculpture of Massimiliano during Frieze Week in London.

The exhibition titled 'Eredità' plays on the theme of heritage and the artisanal legacy Pelletti is continuing with his expert knowledge of the art of direct stone carving, a traditional and increasingly rare skill that Pelletti inherited from his grandfather Mario. Massimiliano was educated from a young age in the art of stone carving, spending much of his childhood in his grandfather's studio surrounded by plaster models of ancient sculptures. His grandfather, an esteemed stone carver in his own right, was one of the traditional Italian artisans called upon to work on the infamous restoration of Michelangelo's Pietà in The Vatican after it was attacked in 1972 by a man armed with a hammer in the church of San Pietro in Rome.

Massimiliano Pelletti explains: "*…a group of sculptors from Pietrasanta was called upon, and they had the innovative idea of sourcing the material to reconstruct the damaged parts directly from the sculptural group by conducting a core drilling beneath the Pietà at a well-hidden point. Michelangelo's sculpture was restored using this technique, and it still retains the memory of this intervention.It was a favour, that the sculptors of Pietrasanta, returned to the Master who, many centuries earlier, had discovered the marble in our region, thus laying the groundwork for a long professional tradition. One of the sculptors called upon for the restoration was my grandfather, Mario, and this is one of the many fascinating stories that characterised my childhood and motivated me to embark on my artistic career…*"

Massimiliano Pelletti in his studio

Pelletti applies his skills and his inherited artisanal knowledge to a love of iconic sculpture from Antiquity, taking inspiration from Greek and Roman sculpture and subverting Roman-Greco iconography with an unusual marriage of materials and exposure of imperfections in the stones and minerals he uses. His sculptures marry tradition with a passion for pushing the boundaries of sculpture and are carved not from traditional marble, but from rough, porous, or unusual stones, with colourful striations and crystalline fissures which interrupt their beautiful faces and distort their otherwise idealised torsos.

Pelletti finds beauty in imperfection and plays with the ancient Greco belief in Idealism, a metaphysical view that our reality is based upon our own perceptions. The ancient Greek obsession with idealized beauty and physical perfection was conveyed through their sculptures, and Pelletti brings these visions of beauty into the present day by creating sculptures whose beauty if focused on the imperfection inherent in the material. Many of his sculptures are familiar figures from history, inspired by the collection of plaster classical models inherited from his grandfather's Glyptotheque.

> *My grandfather taught me to be humble, to fill the work with poetry and to face problems by transforming them into resources. Thanks to these teachings, in my work every defect has turned into merit.*
>
> *Massimiliano Pelletti*

The VIP opening of 'Eredità' will take place on Tuesday 10th October in the presence of the artist, and on 25th October, violinist Alda Dizdari will give an invitation-only performance at the gallery surrounded by Massimiliano's sculpture.

Massimiliano Pelletti 'Eredità', 11th October to 10th November 2023, Bowman Sculpture, 6 Duke Street, St. James's, London

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