



FONDAZIONE
PASTIFICIO CERERE

Namsal Siedlecki

Mvah Chā

exhibition curated by Marcello Smarrelli
in the ambit of *Crisalidi*

Opening: Thursday 16th January 2020

PATAN MUSEUM

Kathmandu, Nepal

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 16 th January 2020 *Mvah Chā* is inaugurated, personal exhibition by **Namsal Siedlecki**, curated by **Marcello Smarrelli**, by the **Patan Museum** (Kathmandu, Nepal), promoted by the **Pastificio Cerere Foundation** in collaboration with the **Siddhartha Arts Foundation**.

The main focus of this exhibition is made up of a **series of bronze sculptures** realized by the artist during different periods of his Kathmandu residency in collaboration with the local foundries. The artworks derive from the moulds used by the Nepalese artisans for the lost wax castings of the votive statues.

The exhibition is part of the **Crisalidi** project, winner of the sixth edition of the **2019 Italian Council** announcement, contest originating from the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity and Urban Regeneration of the **MIBACT** – Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, to promote Italian contemporary art in the world, in addition to increasing public collections with new productions.

“The choice to invite Namsal Siedlecki -as Marcello Smarrelli states- sprouts from the great appreciation and deep knowledge of his artistic research, which is characterized by a scientific, anthropologic interest towards phenomena, and by a quite alchemic approach to matter and its “phase changes”: as a matter of fact, lots of his works concern the transformation of materials, de-constructing them until their embryonic stage”.

With *Mvah Chā* the artist tests and elaborates on the technique of lost wax casting, a technique which has developed differently during the ages and cultures due to various factors, the most significant being the raw materials available to the artisans. Unlike the process, which has spread through the Occident, where during the preparatory phases grinded brick and chalk are used, in

Nepal such materials are replaced with Mvaḥ Chā, a mortar obtained by kneading clay, cow manure and chaff, rice grains casings.

Siedlecki was fascinated by the steps preceding the fusion, the moment in which the wax model is covered by layer over layer of Mvaḥ Chā, forming a casing so thick to completely hide the original shape.

Working in close contact with Nepalese artisans, the artist has converted these artefacts into artworks, artefacts which, though necessary to the creation of the sculptures, would never have become art, for they must be destroyed in order to bring the casting process to an end.

Objects with no defining mass result from this conversion process, undefined, forms showing a powerful, primitive expressiveness, free from proportional canons, from precise anatomical references, which however keep a faint relation with Buddhist and Hindu religious iconography, and at the same time remind us of the archaic aesthetic of early twentieth century sculpture.

The recovery of ancient traditional techniques and the use of primordial shapes breathe life into this series of sculptures that converse with past and present, Orient and Occident, underlining how the fascination with the unknown and spiritual has always accompanied humankind, regardless of eras or latitude.

Centro per l'arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci di Prato will be the final recipient of the artworks created within the scope of the project. "I'm delighted that Namal Siedlecki's artworks join our collection thanks to the Italian Council"; that's what Cristiana Perrella states, adding that "*Crisalidi* shows not only a rare sensitivity on the reflection on sculpture materials, techniques, and processes but it is also interested in confronting with other cultures' traditions and artistic practices. This makes these works highly representative of our idea of a museum: open to different languages than creativity, which are able to embrace diverse voices, cultures and points of view and to connect with each other".

After the exhibition at the Patan Museum, a rich calendar will be issued, containing national as well as international appointments in order to present the project:

- Italian Institute of Culture of London (United Kingdom) 26th February 2020;
- Kronika, Bytom (Poland), 28th February 2020;
- In Extenso, Clermont-Ferrand (France), April 2020.

A series of lectures by the artist have also been planned that will take place in the Academies of fine arts of Rome, Florence, Carrara, as well as an open citizenship meeting in collaboration with CAP – Centre of Plastic Arts of Carrara.

A workshop will also be held with the students of the Rome Artistic High School for the project "Collezione di Classe" in February 2020.

In June 2020 the sculptures, further elaborated, will be on display by the **Pastificio Cerere Foundation** and on that occasion there will be a presentation of a book about the project, edited by Nero.

Biography of Namsal Siedlecki

Namsal Siedlecki was born in Greenfield (USA) in 1986. He lives and works in Seggiano (GR). In 2015 he won the fourth edition of the Moroso Prize and the Cy Twombly Italian Affiliated Fellow in Visual Arts by the American Academy in Rome; in 2019 he won the Club Gamec Prize as well as the Cairo Prize. In the last few years his art was put on display in numerous national and international institutions including: In Extenso, Clermont-Ferrand; MAXXI in Rome; Villa Medici, Rome; Luigi Pecci Contemporary Art Centre, Prato; Galeria Boavista, Lisboa; Villa Romana, Florence; Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation, Turin; 6 Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, Moscow; Chertludde, Berlin; Magazzino, Rome; American Academy in Rome; Museo Apparente, Naples; Pastificio Cerere Foundation, Rome; Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, Venezia; Antinori Art Project, Bargino; Galeria Madragoa, Lisboa; Frankfurt am Main, Berlin; Cripta747, Turin. From 2008 to 2013 he has managed the Independent GUM studio space, first in Carrara, then in Turin.

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