



GIUSEPPE PENONE

UNIVERSAL GESTURES

MARCH 14TH - MAY 28TH

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Giuseppe Penone. Universal Gestures
Curated by **Francesco Stocchi**

Over thirty works by the Master of Arte Povera weave a new dialogue between Nature and History, demonstrating the immutable vitality of sculpture.

March 14th – May 28th 2023

Rome, March 13rd, 2023. **Over thirty works** created between the 1970s and the early 2000s in an itinerary that crosses the Halls of **Mariano Rossi**, **Apollo and Daphne**, **The Emperors and Aeneas and Anchises** to expand into the **Garden of the Uccelliera** (Aviary) and exceptionally into the **Garden of the Meridiana** (Sundial): with **Giuseppe Penone. Universal Gestures**, curated by **Francesco Stocchi**, from March 14 to May 28 2023 the Galleria Borghese once again opens up to the contemporary, with an exhibition that is a tribute to the immutable vitality of sculpture and to a Master of Arte Povera.

The exhibition stems from the search for **something that is not present** in the splendid spaces of the Galleria, offering a new reading of **the relationship between landscape and sculpture** that the ancient statuary present in the museum's collection embodies according to classical canons. A path that is in perfect continuity with the research on the relationship between Art and Nature that characterizes the direction of **Francesca Cappelletti**.

Giuseppe Penone. Universal Gestures does not propose any comparison but presents works chosen as a "reflection" with respect to the environment, offering a "completion" of elements: in the rooms characterised by a triumph of marbles, sculptures and decorations - magnificent representations of the mineral world - Penone adds an **organic graft of leaves, leather, wood** that connects and defines the two universes. In the Gardens, on the other hand, the integration looks to the **world of metals**, with bronze sculptures that dialogue with the rich surrounding vegetation, enriched by around **forty new potted plants** to support some of the works.

The exhibition itinerary includes **nuclei of lesser-known works** that are less associated iconographically with Penone's work, such as **Vegetal Gaze**, and others exhibited for the first time in thematic groups – **Breath of leaves** and **To breathe the shadow** - inserted into the space as autonomous and original presences. In the **absence of mythology** in Penone's work, the narrative shifts its axis, and the relationship between natural time and historical past gives rise to a new, uncertain present.

Distancing itself from any possible formal or symbolic comparison with the Galleria, Penone's work **observes matter by revealing the forms it conceals**, with the intention of **reactivating the natural osmotic exchange between the museum and the surrounding park**, which inspired many of the works composing the museum's collection.

The artist's interventions do not disrupt the unique balance between form and architecture that characterizes the Galleria, but renew that entirely Baroque game that intertwined landscape, nature and sculpture, activating a new dialogue, presenting a question on sculpture, revealing its historical and contemporary evolution.

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Penone's research investigates the **proximity between human and plant nature**, a central element of his work, and gives rise to a reflection on his language and relationship with Time and History, masterfully preserved in the Galleria. In this mirroring, the vital component of the materials used by the artist alternates with the historical time of those of classical statuary, going in search of the strictly necessary. A transversal and subjective gaze that aims at a renewed balance, guided by pure admiration.

"This exhibition is a dialogue between objects that express thoughts from different eras but which have as their common thread the relationship between man and the matter that surrounds him. This occurs in the action that produces the work and which unites the works of the Galleria Borghese with the reality of today. Only through a reflection with the materials and the spirit that developed those art forms can a dialogue be created that is not a confrontation but an attempt to draw attention to values that can be considered shared," says Giuseppe Penone.

"The exhibition *Universal Gestures* presents a dialogue that takes the form of a graft between the mineral dimension, widely present in the Galleria Borghese, and the organic dimension that characterizes Penone's work. A query on sculpture free from all sensationalism, aimed at investigating the representation of nature in relation to the time of a historical past. A dialogue of ideas and materials, in relation to a confrontation of forms and symbols, expressing all the vitality of human and plant nature," says the curator of the exhibition, Francesco Stocchi.

"With Giuseppe Penone's exhibition we conclude the series of exhibitions that for two years have been trying to communicate to the public of the Galleria Borghese the research on art and nature, on the artist's creativity and natural elements. The itinerary unfolds significantly from some of the museum's rooms to the outdoor space, allowing the visitor to focus on the relationship between matter and the artist's gesture and rediscover the potential alliance between human beings and nature in the cycle of time," says the Galleria Borghese director Francesca Cappelletti.

The exhibition is accompanied by a **catalogue** published by **Electa** with **an interview with the artist by Francesco Stocchi** and an essay by **Andrea Cortellessa**. The volume offers images of the works set up in the four rooms of the museum and in the gardens, describing an osmotic flow between the organic matter and the interior rooms as well as between the bronze works and the botanical richness of the exteriors.

The exhibition was realized thanks to the support of **FENDI, the official sponsor**.

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