

## PAOLA PIVI. World record

curated by Hou Hanru and Anne Palopoli

A captivating site-specific project in which historic works alternate with more recent sculptures and installations.

*In general, I see that the people who like my work are people who love life or dreams. They are people similar to me, people without fear. - Paola Pivi*

**3 April 2019 – 8 September 2019**

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*Rome, 2 April 2019.* A gigantic expanse of mattresses covering more than 100 square metres, topped by another expanse, identical but overturned to create a padded cave, a narrow space for play or meditation into which the public is invited to climb. At the entrance, suspended above the heads of the public is a dense web of cushions knotted together and coloured in red and yellow. Intense fragrances are diffused in the air from sculptures of minuscule sofas drenched in perfume. The space is totally rethought, large and small confront one another and the works encourage interaction on the part of the public. This is the exhibition **PAOLA PIVI. World record**, the monographic show that MAXXI, the National museum of 21st century art, is dedicating to this surprising artist, winner of a Golden Lion at the 1999 Venice Biennale, curated by **Hou Hanru** and **Anne Palopoli** and open from **3 April to 8 September 2019** in MAXXI's stunning Gallery 5.

Conceived specifically for the fluid spaces of the museum, the exhibition presents the imagery of an artist who, through her works, gives life to a new form of reality, ironic and exaggerated, composed of intense contrasts, overwhelming gestures, objects taken from our quotidian existence which acquire a new role, demonstrating other possible ways of interpretations of meaning. Whether they are colossal or minuscule pieces, the engaging works of Paola Pivi change the spirit of the place housing them and activate the senses of visitors, subverting the classical confines between public space and intimacy.

The exhibition layout begins under a vast grid of hundreds of soft, intertwined forms suspended in mid-air: **Share, but it's not fair** (2012), a work composed of yellow and red cushions, made with the fabrics of Tibetan monks' tunics, forms an abstract and simultaneously three-dimensional pattern. "The title is like the lament of a child obliged to share an ice cream when he really didn't want to", says the artist, "Walking under the great expanse of cushions is enchanting, it's like exploring a magical world."

The path then winds past works from the late Nineties; the series of miniature sofas faithfully reproduced to scale and drenched in perfume. The fragrance, which drips on the floor, pervades the air and the olfactory sphere. From the work **Did you know I'm single?** (2010), a bear skin that references hunting trophies but is actually made from synthetic fur, we arrive at the gigantic **World record**, the latest installation conceived by the artist, which gives the title to the exhibition and occupies around a third of the gallery. More than 100 mattresses arranged on two levels create a narrow space into which visitors are invited to enter, lie down and abandon themselves to the muffled sounds and the unusual perspective. There is not enough room to stand up, occupants are obliged to lie down, roll or crawl: making these gestures of regression, play or abandon, or simply observing the other visitors while they interact with the work creates involvement and unexpected connections between people. Fun, as Pivi has often said, is one of the possible keys to her work.

Almost as if to close a symbolic temporal short circuit, one of the very first works created by the artist is also on show: **Scatola umana** (1994), a cubic sculpture in Plexiglass just 10 cm per side that, with the benefit of hindsight, seems to contain all the creativity of the artist, then freed to the full extent of its expressive power through a multitude of forms, dimensions and media.

Paola Pivi has exhibited in museums and galleries in many parts of the world and her works belong to prestigious permanent collections, including that of the Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. From February 2018, MAXXI will be hosting her monumental installation **Senza titolo (aereo)** (1999) that brought her the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale at just 28 years of age (received together with four other artists for the Miglior Padiglione Nazionale, the Italian pavilion): an example of the Fiat

G-91 jet aircraft that defies the laws of physics with its perfect and incredible equilibrium, suspended in time and almost magically installed upside down in the museum piazza.

Paola Pivi's works are authentic experiences of wonder, enterprises that mould and personalise the context surrounding them, transforming it into a pure artistic moment, imaginative and unexpected, generating and affirming new and impossible realities. Constructing situations at the limit of the surreal through simple but decisive gestures and titles as ironic as they are paradoxical, Paola Pivi creates her personal version of reality, "reality, not realism" as she tends to point out, claiming the right to play with the world and allow her art to be experienced for that which it is, without stories or references, like any fragment of quotidian existence.

"I firmly believe that all human beings are equal and I hate the separation of cultures. I do not like the fact that certain aspects of knowledge become incomprehensible to some. The fact that my art can be understood by anyone is not planned. I think it is simple: I make my art and people are free to look at it or not look at it; to understand or not understand; to appreciate it or not like it; to think it is art or that it is not. It is not something I plan. That is how it comes out, but this is an added value." - Paola Pivi

The exhibition has been produced with the support of Galerie Perrotin and Massimo De Carlo, Milan/London/Hong Kong.

The museum is participating together with The BASS Museum of Miami and the Anchorage Museum in the production of a catalogue edited by Justine Ludwig that will be published shortly and will present the artist's work in thematic chapters, with a section devoted to the exhibition at MAXXI.

**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/en/area-stampa/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

**MAXXI PRESS OFFICE** +39 06 32.48.61 [press@fondazionemaxxi.it](mailto:press@fondazionemaxxi.it)

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