



Museo nazionale  
delle arti del XXI secolo

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC SERGIO MATTARELLA  
AT MAXXI  
TO CELEBRATE 75 YEARS OF THE ITALIAN CONSTITUTION**

**WITH THE INAUGURATION OF THE INSTALLATION *NON UCCIDERE*  
BY EMILIO ISGRÒ AND MARIO BOTTA  
WHICH 'ERASES' THE 10 COMMANDMENTS**

**THE ITALIAN MINISTER FOR CULTURE GENNARO SANGIULIANO  
WILL BE PRESENT**

**MAXXI AWARDED WITH THE MEDAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
FOR THIS PROJECT**

**FRIDAY 27 OCTOBER, 4:15 PM**

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Rome, 27 October 2023. **MAXXI National Museum of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Arts** is celebrating the **75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Italian Constitution** with the production of a major project commissioned from two of the greatest exponents of contemporary culture, i.e. artist **Emilio Isgrò** and architect **Mario Botta**.

Their unprecedented collaboration has resulted in the installation ***Non uccidere*** (Thou shalt not kill), which will be inaugurated on **Friday 27 October at 4:15 pm** in the presence of the President of the Italian Republic **Sergio Mattarella** and the Italian Minister for Culture **Gennaro Sangiuliano**. For this occasion, President Mattarella has awarded MAXXI with a Medal of the President of the Italian Republic.

**Alessandro Giuli** said, "I am grateful to masters Isgrò and Botta for this powerful, necessary project, which amplifies a primary imperative, now more urgent than ever to reiterate: THOU SHALT NOT KILL. It is the most solemn of ethical and moral obligations, as well as an inescapable principle underlying our Constitution. The installation *Non uccidere* will become part of the Museum's Collection, the heritage of all Italians. Hosted in Piazza Alighiero Boetti, where hundreds of people will be able to visit it every day, it will be exhibited again in other venues and institutions so that its universal commandment of peace will continue to spread."

***Non uccidere*** is a museum project consisting of a large work by Emilio Isgrò, a monumental bas-relief in Sinai stone articulated in eleven elements, and a spectacular piece of architecture in cedar from Lebanon designed by Mario Botta and placed in the large Museum square. Emilio Isgrò's work reflects on the theme of the principles of social coexistence underlying all constitutional charters. The artist re-proposes the biblical tablets of the Ten Commandments, as interpreted as the moral foundation of civil society; he has erased – the hallmark of his work for almost sixty years – nine of them, leaving only the fifth commandment in evidence: **THOU SHALT NOT KILL** – a fundamental message, which is increasingly urgent to express in all the languages of the world.

On the eleven pairs of stone tablets, whose shape follows that of classical iconography, the commandments have been translated into as many languages to make the message of peace more universal. They are engraved in red "the colour of blood and resurrection" as Isgrò himself writes, for which "erasure is not an act of destruction. It means rejecting something in order to embrace the things that matter, it is an element of reflection."

Together with Botta's large circular pavilion, Isgrò's erased panels stored there create a *unicum* in which art and architecture resonate.

Botta's Pavilion, consisting of twenty-one arches over eight metres high to create a powerful, iconic space, is made of wood from the salvage of plants cut down in private gardens or fallen as a result of atmospheric phenomena.

*As an artist, I have always worked with a thousand open and outstretched hands – those of the public and the critics – which supported me in the most difficult moments of my cultural and creative career. Even my harshest critics helped me, as I turned their erasures into opportunities for growth, whether their opinions were well-founded or unfounded. This is the ultimate meaning of my erasures. To reject death in order to powerfully embrace life. As a not easily aligned artist – something I regret – I had not hoped that one day I would find a friend, a wonderful travelling companion who would work with me on a joint project, putting aside the vanity that we artists carry within us because of our loneliness and insecurity.*

*Architect Mario Botta was suggested to me by MAXXI. It was exactly what I wanted: for at least thirty years, he and I had expressed the desire work on a joint project every time we met.*

*I had my idea ready, he had his. They blended together as in a cold fusion whose only sanctity lies in the love for art and for the Republican Constitution we were asked to celebrate.*

*The commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' is most precious in a world where killing does not even seem to be a crime. It applies to everyone, starting with the public, who sometimes rely more on their guts than their brains. Yet, it mainly applies to us artists, writers, musicians and architects.*

*This is the commandment that I decided to share with Mario Botta, who effortlessly erases the weight of matter by just touching it.*

**Emilio Isgrò**

*The collaboration with artist Emilio Isgrò has come to consolidate a relationship of friendship and respect that has marked our acquaintance for many years. I have always been intrigued and fascinated by Isgrò's expressive register:*

**ERASE TO HIGHLIGHT!**

*In response to MAXXI's request – to design a work to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Italian Constitution – we did not talk for long. Through our own language, each of us came up with an idea – a meeting pavilion and the tablets of the law – that struck an immediate mutual interest, with few doubts, much complicity and the creative pleasure proper to a 'noble' cause, which is perhaps even timely in these troubled times.*

*The tablets of the law inspired by Moses and written on Mount Sinai still preserve the relevance of the commandment 'THOU SHALT NOT KILL', a basic principle of civilised living.*

*Bringing the admonition 'THOU SHALT NOT KILL' to the fore in the symbolic panorama of the different languages of the peoples scattered across the Earth seemed to us a way to make our commitment urgently relevant.*

**Mario Botta**

The project was realised with the support of the *Struttura di Missione Anniversari Nazionali della Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*.

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