

Ambienti 1956-2010

Environments by Women Artists II

**10.04.24
—20.10.24**

curated by **Andrea Lissoni, Marina Pugliese, Francesco Stocchi**

On show are works by **Micol Assaël, Monica Bonvicini, Judy Chicago, Lygia Clark, Laura Grisi, Zaha Hadid, Aleksandra Kasuba, Kimsooja, Christina Kubisch, Léa Lublin, Nalini Malani, Marta Minujín, Tania Mouraud, Pipilotti Rist, Martha Rosler, Esther Stocker, Nanda Vigo and Tsuruko Yamazaki.**

**You are in the heart of the Museum.
Feel the space around you.
Focus on your body. Listen to it.
It will guide you discover the works.
Physical perception is a form of knowledge.
Each work suggests different
feelings and behaviours.
Choose the one that makes
you feel comfortable.
Remember, the works are delicate,
treat them with care.
Some will welcome you,
others may challenge you.
Each work speaks to us in a different way.
Every person is different.
Every experience is unique.
Some transform us.**

This is an invitation to engage.

te [Past. p. *ambiens -entis* from the Latin word *ambire*, "to surround"] the space in which a body is located, or where a phenomenon occurs, consisting of any material, including lights, sounds, and colours.

in a nutshell

AMBIENTI 1956 - 2010. Environments by Women Artists II, curated by **Andrea Lissoni, Marina Pugliese, Francesco Stocchi** is an exhibition developed by the MAXXI and by the Haus der Kunst in Munich. It is the first major exhibition of 2024 at the MAXXI, chaired by **Alessandro Giuli**, in Francesco Stocchi's first year as Artistic Director. It represents the next chapter of *Inside Other Spaces: Environments by Women Artists 1956–1976*, a project conceived by the Haus der Kunst in 2023, which highlighted the fundamental contribution of women to the history of what is perhaps one of the least explored forms of artistic expression. At the crossroads of art, architecture and design, these environments are three-dimensional and immersive works. They are activated thanks to the interaction of the audience and completed by human presence. The exhibition at the MAXXI continues the research of the German museum and expands its original timeline (1956 - 1976), extending it to 2010, the year of completion of the Museum's architecture designed by Zaha Hadid.

In this second chapter, **Judy Chicago, Lygia Clark, Laura Grisi, Aleksandra Kasuba, Léa Lublin, Marta Minujín, Tania Mouraud, Nanda Vigo** and **Tsuruko Yamazaki** are joined by **Micol Assaël, Monica Bonvicini, Zaha Hadid, Kimsooja, Christina Kubisch, Nalini Malani, Pipilotti Rist, Martha Rosler** and **Esther Stocker**.

Innovation partner of the exhibition: **Almaviva**, Italian leader in Information & Communication Technology.

voices

Alessandro Giuli, President of the MAXXI Foundation, states: «Today we inaugurate MAXXI's 2024 season in the name of prestigious collaborations with other cultural institutions in Italy and around the world: a fruitful and constant dialogue that enriches us and is part of our mission as the National Museum of XXI Century Arts. I am particularly proud that the first major exhibition of the year is presented by female artists, recognizing and celebrating the centrality of women artists in this research and in the history of art in general».

Francesco Stocchi, Artistic Director of MAXXI and curator of the exhibition, states: «The exhibition represents a unique opportunity for both artists and the public to work with a living, evolving material, in contrast with the very definition of a finished work. A sculpture, a painting, a drawing or a film are inherently 'closed'. On the contrary, the environment, by definition and through its interactions, is alive, and this vitality is celebrated in welcoming and meeting the spectator».

Andrea Lissoni, curator of the exhibition, comments: «The environments have taken shape through a long period of experimentation, openness, and immersion in a visionary future, as technological, assertive, and escapist as it may be».

Marina Pugliese, curator of the exhibition, remarks: «Despite being within the context of an incomplete history, the lack of documentation of environments created by female artists attests to a double subordination. A subordination made paradoxical by the fact that on several important exhibitions and in different geographical contexts, many female artists have created complex environments, characterized by layers of meanings, sometimes focusing on political issues and yet subject to public and press attention. Other spaces, indeed».

tour

Welcoming the visitor in Piazza Alighiero Boetti is **Monica Bonvicini's** artwork ***Don't Miss a Sec***, which invites the audience to reflect on the boundary between public and private. To the left the MAXXI, designed by Zaha Hadid, is effectively part of the exhibition project as both an envelope and an environment.

There are several possible entrances to the exhibition, which occupies the entire first floor of the museum. The first is the staircase rising from the hall, directing the gaze towards the succession of environmental works. We start with **Tsuruko Yamazaki's** artwork ***Red (Forma di una zanzariera)***, consisting of a suspended red vinyl tent reminiscent of traditional mosquito nets used in Japan. On the following terrace, **Martha Rosler's** work, ***If You Lived Here...***, highlights urgent social issues such as housing emergencies.

On the third terrace, **A casa é o corpo** by **Lygia Clark** is a sensory journey that goes through the experiences of conception and birth. **Nalini Malani's** first participatory installation, **Alleyway, Lohar Chawl**, compares the working-class neighbourhood of **Lohar Chawl**, where the artist lives and works, with the upscale and trendy neighbourhood of South Mumbai. **The Bird Tree**, an important sound installation by **Christina Kubisch**, is a large tree made of electrical cables that allows listeners to hear bird songs from around the world. With **To Breathe** - in the glazed portion of the gallery - **Kimsooja** makes light and reflection essential components of the space. Continuing into Gallery 2, we encounter **Ambiente spaziale: "Utopie" nella XIII Triennale di Milano** created by **Lucio Fontana and Nanda Vigo** - a relaxing space where the visitor can lie down, enveloped in a soft dreamlike space - and **Ambiente cronotopico vivibile**, where the visitor's image multiplies infinitely. **Laura Grisi's** artwork **Vento di s.e. velocità 40 nodi** surprises the visitor with a strong sudden airflow. **Lea Lublin's Penetración / Expulsión** addresses the theme of human reproduction through various elements, including a tunnel resembling an umbilical cord. In **Micol Assaël's Sleeplessness**, the visitor is forced to ponder in the dimness of an empty and cold environment. Conversely, in the area behind the elevator, **Tania Mouraud's** steel tower **We used to know** emits ultrasound and infrasound; it is illuminated and heated up to 45 degrees. At the exit, **Judy Chicago's Feather Room** fills the space with nearly 150 kilograms of feathers, 50 centimetres high. At the exit of the elevator in Gallery 4, which is another possible entrance to the exhibition, **Esther Stocker's** first environmental artwork created in 2004, **Il termine "affine" attrae la nostra attenzione anche se in realtà non significa nulla**, expands into space, taking up the floor, the walls, and the ceiling. **Alexandra Kasuba's** monumental artwork **Spectral Passage** offers the viewers the opportunity to enter a rainbow. To its left, the inclined floor leads to **Sip My Ocean**, **Pipilotti Rist's** video environment featuring underwater bodies, shapes, and objects, doubling and drifting away before reassembling and disappearing into the gap between the two walls. Moving on towards the Foyer at the entrance of Gallery 3, in **Marta Minujín's** environment **¡Revuélquese y viva!**, hand-painted mattresses of various shapes resonate with the iconic timeless hits of the Beatles.

the narrative

The exhibition project is enriched by **Ambiente Archivio**, an **in-depth exploration** created by the MAXXI Art Archives Center, which narrates the evolution of spatial research through the various interpretations of the term "environment" from 1949 to 2010. Accompanying the exhibition is a program of **performances** held within its spaces, a packed schedule of **meetings**, and **film screenings** designed to reflect on the concept of environment and how it has been interpreted over time by different generations of artists. Furthermore, there will be **exploration-visits** dedicated to nurseries, primary and secondary schools, as well as weekend **activities for families** with children aged 5 to 10, and a **cultural mediation** service. In an exhibition where participation and engagement of audiences are central themes, numerous projects are **accessible**, multisensory, and welcoming. The MAXXI A[R]T WORK project offers high schools the workshop "How an Exhibition is Born" to discover the main professions involved. Formacamera – A Special Company of the Rome Chamber of Commerce collaborates with the MAXXI A[R]T WORK. For the occasion, a **catalogue** edited by Quodlibet has been produced, bringing together essays, a conversation on the theme of environments from 1956 to 1976, a visual chronology, a comprehensive section of apparatuses including a list of exhibitions and specific bibliography, as well as critical notes on the exhibited works.

Informations and images
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