

Francesco Arena *Cubic Metre of Seawater as a Diagonal*

exhibition 2 oct - 15 nov
preview 1 oct 6:30 - 8 pm

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Sprovieri is delighted to present *Cubic Metre of Seawater as a Diagonal*, the third solo show at the gallery of Italian artist Francesco Arena.

"The internal dimensions of a metal tank are specifically designed to contain within it a cubic metre of sea water. Internally the tank is 13 metres and 60 centimetres long, as long as the diagonal of the gallery space. Given this length and establishing that the inner section of the tank is a square, the internal depth of the tank is 27.2 cm; in this tank the cubic metre of seawater can fill all the space without needing any other supporting element. The liquid adapts to its container and the unstable and mobile element stabilises thanks to the metal the tank is made of. The work is clearly a piece of landscape, it is a sculpture that is both full and empty, the fullness of water exists thanks to the empty space in the tank". (Francesco Arena, 2019)

Central to this work is the relationship that the artist establishes between an immense space, such as the sea, and the enclosed, concentrated space created within the metal tank. Arena juxtaposes the natural landscape with the architectural space, in this case the gallery, with the measurements of the human body acting as a meeting point. The precise volume of seawater in the tank (1 cubic metre - 1000 litres) reveals its humanness, the artist purposely uses standard measures in his works, precisely because they were created by human beings to give order to the elements of nature. "Arena's sculptures draw ever closer to their own origins, because prior to sculpture there exists only landscape, which is the historical or, to put it another way, the human form that nature takes when she manifests herself. It is no accident that the landscapes Arena interrogates, continually deconstructing and reconstructing it in these pieces, is a landscape not innocent, but the results of calculations, conveniences, elaborations, comparison and readings, at the heart of which there sits the physical, corporeal dimension of the artist himself...from these works we learn how tall Francesco is, how much he weighs, the distance between his eyes, the size of his feet, the length of his legs. Yet there is no trace of narcissism in this frenetic declaration of self. Because his work, in speaking of the self, speaks of something else, by which I mean it speaks of the captious and reversible universe that is reality". (Mario Fortunato, 2017)

"Numbers that take shape. If you wanted to summarise a large part of Francesco Arena's work into a simple and direct formula, you could certainly use this one. Because if it is true that from the linguistic point of view his work can be read as a development, a personal "drift" of sculptural processes that start from the geometric forms typical of Minimal art and from the more archetypal forms of Arte Povera - whose abstract and impersonal key is mixed with the lived, the narration of historical facts or private - it is equally true that from a thematic point of view, his works are often the translation of formulas and numbers linked to those facts or those stories from which it starts". (Vincenzo de Bellis, 2016')

About the artist:

Francesco Arena was born in Torre Santa Susanna, Brindisi, in 1978. He lives and works in Cassano delle Murge, Bari. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Lecce and was a fellow of the Corso Superiore di Arte Visiva at the Ratti Foundation, Como (2005); Villa Arson, Nice (2010) and ISCP, New York (2013). To create his works he starts from the history, in particular from the political and social facts that characterised the recent past. Episodes, too many times hidden or hushed up, that in the works by Francesco Arena gain a new life thanks to the synthetic and metaphorical forms of his sculptures.

His work has been exhibited internationally and in 2013 presented at the 55th Venice Biennale in the Italian Pavilion. Solo exhibitions include: TRA Treviso ricerca arte, Treviso (2016); Palazzo Baronale, Novoli, Lecce (2015); OSAP Olnick Spanu Art Programme, Hudson Valley (2014); Frac Champagne-Ardenne, Reims (2013); Museion, Bolzano (2012); Peep Hole, Milan (2011); Fondazione Ermanno Casoli, Fabriano (2010), Nomas Foundation, Rome (2008). Group exhibitions include: Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2018); Sculpture Projects Ping Yao, Pingyao (2018); MAXXI, Rome (2017); Mario Merz Prize, Fondazione Mario Merz, Turin (2017); La Capella, Barcellona (2016); Par tibi, Roma, nihil, Area archeologica del Palatino, Rome (2016); The 3rd Nanjing International Art Festival, Baijia Lake Museum, Nanjing (2016); Triennale di Milano (2015 and 2007); Palazzo Strozzi, Florence (2015); Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2014 and 2012); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2012); GAMEC, Bergamo (2011); Premio Furla, Palazzo Pepoli, Bologna (2011); Nomas Foundation and IMF Foundation, Rome (2010); Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella (2010); Kunsthalle Mulhouse (2010).