

THE VIEW: THE UNIVERSALITY OF DIALOGUE

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"Dialogue" is one of the primal human needs, and it is ubiquitous in the world, consisting of words, thoughts, and actions. In this issue of *The View*, we invite Rudy Pulcinelli, an Italian artist who has lived in many countries, to talk about his creations and ideas centered on "Dialogue".

Human beings have always been defending themselves from difficulties and challenges posed by humanity or by the surrounding environment: they survive just if they are willing to accept changes and transformations. The biggest challenge faced by humanity on a daily basis is the ability to establish a form of dialogue and communication, rather than building walls.

As soon as we are born, we start establishing a dialogue with the surrounding space, with our mother, with the light, with our body and with others. While we grow up, the dialogue established with the world around us becomes increasingly complex. To tackle this complexity, we should adopt an open minded and fluid approach, aimed at achieving a symbiotic coexistence with the surrounding environment.



Art moves freely, overcoming barriers and limitations. Art unfolds and generates memories, regardless of geographical boundaries or linguistic and cultural differences. Art has always been considered as a means of communication, which generates a wide spectrum of connections and questions.

The artistic research which I have carried out for more than 30 years is underpinned by three pillars: the conceptual research aimed at identifying the message; the ongoing experimentation in terms of material and language aimed to strengthen the evocative power of the work of art and to establish an emotional connection with the viewers; the emphasis placed on the importance of travelling and working in different countries with the aim to satisfy my curiosity, through the connection with different people, environments and contexts.

Nowadays, the fundamental value of dialogue is often overlooked and undermined. To highlight the importance of dialogue, I developed my artistic research focusing on the willingness to convey universal and fundamental messages.

The individual, who uses written and spoken language to communicate, is the unit of measurements in my research. In my works, I decided to incorporate the alphabets of the seven most spoken languages in the world, thus symbolically addressing a large audience with neither barriers nor geographical limitations.



Taking into account the distribution, the aesthetic characteristics, and the visual harmony of their juxtaposition, I decided to select the following alphabets: Latin, Cyrillic,



Chinese, Arab, Japanese, Hebrew and Greek. From a visual and semantic point of view, these alphabets represent the basis of my sculptural language. By blending them together, my aim is to talk to everybody and to create an inclusive and omni- comprehensive alphabet that can provide anybody with the opportunity to experiment a form of dialogue.

In my works, different letters from different alphabets are assembled and welded together to create a unitary work of art: in that very moment, individual letters establish a dialogue between themselves, without necessarily saying anything specific. In my installations, there are neither slogans nor sentences, on the contrary letters are intertwined together for their intrinsic aesthetic and symbolic value.



Once the work is completed and presented to the viewers, it tries to communicate a concept and to trigger emotions. The empathy and the connection established with the viewers are strengthened by the universal character of the work itself, which has neither linguistic barriers nor specific written words.



Since the beginning of my artistic activity, I was extremely lucky to have been given the opportunity to travel and to exhibit abroad, therefore engaging in a vibrant exchange with the local context. Each time, I would go back home with a rich cultural experience.

Since my first exhibition abroad in the US in 1997, I started to develop an international career and to engage in artistic projects in different countries around the world: France, United Arab Emirates, Holland, Germany, Uruguay, Thailand, China, Morocco, Argentina, Canada, Brazil, Japan, India, Turkey, Spain and Austria.

By participating in international projects, I had the opportunity to realize and create my works in foreign countries, outside of my comfort zone: I faced many exciting challenges which gave me a sense of accomplishment.

In 2011, I had the chance to work in Thailand, at the Silpakorn University of Bangkok, where I realized a site- specific installation called "*Time Alphabet*". In the work I also included letter from the Thai alphabet, with the aim to strengthen the link with the local audience and to show inclusiveness and respect.



In 2013, together with 10 international artists, I participated in the Ifitry Artists Residence at the Essaouira Centre for Contemporary Art: this project laid the ground for my inclusion to the Second Biennale in Casablanca the following year, where I presented the work "*Les Repas Quotidien*".



In 2013 I engaged in my first project in China: with the support of the Italian Cultural Institute, I spent one month in Beijing to realize the installation titled "White Connections". Since then, the work is permanently exhibited at the Baimamedo Tibetan Art Centre at 798 Art District in Beijing.

My first artist residency in Beijing was short, however I was really impressed by this fascinating country I was not familiar with at that time, and by the warm welcome I had received. Once back to Italy, I promised to myself that I would have gone

back with my wife and son. The year after, I was invited back to Beijing to host children's workshops of drawing and sculpture at the 798 International Children Art Festival. For the following years, I was given more and more chances to propose and develop projects in China.

One of the most successful projects was the site-specific installation titled "*Creating Dialogues*", realized in 2015 at 798 Art District in Beijing.



The work was showcased from the 1st to the 7th of October 2015, during the National Holidays, a very vibrant time of the year for the capital. "*Creating Dialogues*" was a temporary installation stretching for 90 square meters. Composed by 7 giant letters in white lacquered wood, the work was conceived as a social experiment aimed at awakening and stimulating people's need for dialogue and exchange, very often overlooked because of our frenetic and individualistic way of living. With the aim to promote values of harmonious and respectful coexistence regardless of the linguistic, religious, and ethnic differences, I selected seven letters from seven different alphabets: Latin, Greek, Chinese, Cyrillic, Hebrew, Japanese, Arab.

It was very interesting to see people of different age and social background interacting with the sculpture: they would stop, sit on the letters to chat, play on the installation, taking photos. The very presence of the installation and the willingness of the viewers to establish an interaction with it, enabled the audience to slow down their rhythm of life, even if just for a short time, and to relate to the others through dialogue, with no prejudices and barriers.



Through my work of art, I managed to create connections between people, make children play, make some people rest, generate a smile: this gave me a great sense of accomplishment.

Since my first trip in 2013, I have visited the country three times with my family, and I have been spending there two years in total, having the opportunity to visit museums and galleries, and to meet artists from all over the world.



Beijing, a dynamic and future- focused metropolis still deeply rooted in its glorious culture and history, provided me with the opportunity to strengthen my artistic experience and my curiosity, the real pivotal force of creativity.



For the past years, I have been getting many opportunities for international projects; unfortunately, with the outbreak of the Covid- 19 pandemic, these projects faced setbacks. I do hope that together we can overcome this challenging sanitary crisis: in this critical time, art plays a pivotal role as it represents a source of escapism and comfort. Throughout history, in critical times art has always had a healing function for humanity.

When the pandemic will be over, I will try my best to establish new connections and to engage in new projects: I am looking forward to going back to Beijing soon, to see

friends I haven't seen for a long time and to wander around the streets of the city.

My artistic research revolves around the necessity to value the individual, his history, and his future: ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences should be cherished and should be considered as opportunities for inclusiveness, rather than as obstacles.

These pillar concepts were embodied in a site-specific installation created in 2016 and titled "*Dialogues*".

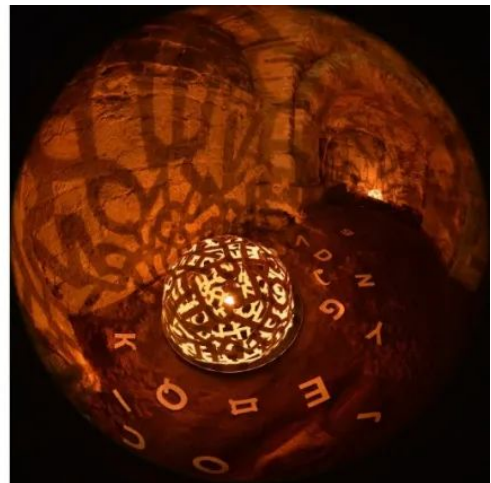


The installation was realized in San Giusto al Pinone Abbey, located in the province of Prato. Built in 1100, the Abbey is an extremely meaningful location for the local community as it has been a point of reference for pilgrims and wanderers since Medieval Times. The Abbey, a space of spiritual shelter for centuries, was closed for the past two decades. I was tasked with completing an artistic project in the Abbey by the Cultural Department of the Carmignano municipality, with the aim to raise the public awareness about the state of decay of the place.

I decided to install my work in the crypt, the most mystical and secret place in the whole Abbey. The installation is composed by seven spherical caps created through the juxtaposition of different letters from respectively seven alphabets: the candle inside the spherical caps projects the profile of the letters on the 13th century vaults.

Every spherical cap represents an individual, a microcosm with unique and distinctive characteristics from an ethnical, linguistic, and cultural point of view.

If we had the ability to turn on our inner light and to get close to the others, dialogue between different individuals could be established in a pacific way, like the shadows of the intertwined letters projected on the vaults of the crypt.



This interesting experience was pivotal in casting light on the condition of the Abbey. Since then, public funds were raised to put in safety the building and its roof and more people made contributed to achieve this goal. The fact that a work of art triggered a reaction and helped raising public awareness made me feel very proud of my work.

Educating about the importance of dialogue, it means to provide people with the concrete means to counteract indifference, intolerance, racism, fanaticism, bullying, and all those phobias which are threatening our peaceful coexistence in the global society. **The value of dialogue is extremely relevant now more than ever.** We need to create connections, to foster and nurture relationships, without being afraid of discussion and exchange. I want to emphasize the intrinsic value of human being, which needs to be cultivated through education and instruction: this human value, based on an inalienable right, is key in addressing the need of communication, which is a primary need and a source of spiritual nourishment for human beings.



This is a treasure we should all defend today: may its legacy be passed down to the future generations.

Rudy Pulcinelli, born in Prato, Italy, in 1970, lives and works between Prato and Beijing. He graduated from the Policarpo Petrocchi Art Institute of Pistoia. In 1990 he enrolled in the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Florence where he started to elaborate his distinctive artistic language imbued with architectural culture. From the 1990s he starts to develop an international career which enables him to exhibit in France, United States, United Arab Emirates, Germany, the Netherlands, Uruguay, Thailand, China, Morocco, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Japan, India, Turkey, Russia, Spain and Austria.



His works are included in prestigious public collections: University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, US .; Museum of Contemporary Art outside, Luicciana, Prato; Paolo VI Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Brescia; Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates; Pinacoteca, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan; Lu.C.C.A Center of Contemporary Art Museum, Lucca; Contemporary Art Museum, Fundación Pablo Atchugarry, Maldonado, Uruguay; Europol Collection, The European Police Office, Den Haag, The Netherlands Silpakorn Art Center, Bangkok, Thailand; Baimamedo Tibetan Art Center Museum, 798 Art Zone, Beijing, China; Center d'Art Contemporain Essaouira, Essaouira, Morocco; Provincial Museum of Bellas Artes Emilio Pettoruti, La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Be.Go Museum Benozzo Gozzoli, Castelfiorentino, Florence.