

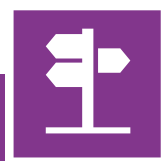
Interreg - IPA CBC

Italy - Albania - Montenegro



EUROPEAN UNION

MONET



MONET

exhibition catalogue



Project MONET

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artists
Bosiljka Bakočević
Snežana Bulatović
Ervin Dauti
Francesco Di Tillo
Andreas Dushi
Antonio Finelli
Esmerilda Herovi
Manuel Iallonnardi
Francesca Macina
Cristina Mangini
Mirjana Marsenić Vujović
Antonio Pallotta
Emanuel Palushaj
Jelena Pavičević
Ermal Rexhepi
Francesca Speranza
Sara Stijović
Francesco Strabone
Mato Uljarević
Valeria Vallone
Alessandro Vangi
Ergys Vela
Leonardo Vita
Raffaele Vitto
Ivana Volpe
Vlatka Vujošević
Amir Xhaković

Exhibition catalogue of the
MONET project

texts and images by
MONET project curators

MONET lead partner
Ministry of Education, Science,
Culture and Sports of Montenegro

MONET project partners
Pino Pascali Foundation Museum
of Contemporary Art

ARATRO – the University of
Molise's Archive of Electronic
Arts and Laboratory for
Contemporary Art

Puglia Region - Department
Tourism, economy of culture and
valorisation of territory

Ministry of Culture of Albania

Marubi National Museum of
Photography

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Project MONET – Culture in
Motion in Adriatic Networks
of Museums is financed under
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Montenegro.

The overall objective and
the main goal of the project
is the creation of a network
model among museums
in Montenegro, Italy and
Albania, by using a common
methodology and developing
new services and tools. In
that regard, the project
aims to promote natural and
cultural heritage through the
valorisation of museums, in
terms of management and
services. Allowing museums to
join a new cross-border type of
management should improve
the touristic and cultural offer
and, consequently, visitor
flows. As a result, this will
increase the tourist growth,
as well as sustainable and
economic development in
the involved areas that have
different natural and cultural
opportunities.

Museums that joined the
MONET Network and that will
benefit from new integrated
services, mainly Museum pass
and web platform are: National
Museum of Montenegro;
Centre for Contemporary
Art Montenegro; Maritime
Museum of Montenegro; Pino
Pascali Foundation Museum
of Contemporary Art; ARATRO
– the University of Molise's
Archive of Electronic Arts and
Laboratory for Contemporary
Art; Archeological Museum
Ribezzo; Sigismondo
Castromediano Museum;
Modern and Contemporary
Art Gallery of Foggia;
House of leaves, Tirana and
Marubi National Museum of
Photography.

One of the principal
activities of the project is the
organization of an exhibition
of the 28 artworks created
during the 2-week-long
artistic residencies that were
organized by seven museums
of MONET Museum Network:

- › National Museum of
Montenegro (Cetinje,
Montenegro);
- › Center of Contemporary Art
(Podgorica, Montenegro);
- › Pino Pascali Foundation
(Polignano a Mare, Puglia,
Italy);
- › Archeological Museum
Ribezzo (Brindisi, Puglia, Italy);
- › ARATRO (Campobasso,
Molise, Italy);
- › House of leaves (Tirana,
Albania);
- › National Photography
Museum “Marubi” (Shkoder,
Albania).

Selected artists had
a chance to perform
laboratories and to co-
operate for the production
of unique and innovative
pieces of art with the
support of the tutor-
mentor as coordinator.
Artistic products,
created with respect of
professional techniques and
methodologies previously
defined by each participant
museum, will be presented
in virtual exhibitions due
to COVID-19 pandemic and
later will become part of the
permanent collections of
the involved museums.

ARTWORKS



Ermal Rexhepi, *Mi manca*, 2019
41 x 41 x 13,5 cm, earth and vinyl glue

Migration, like death, is a double drama, which affects both those who leave and those who remain. Ermal Rexhepi in his work intertwines the history of his countries, Albania and Italy, the first the land of origin, the second the host territory, where he studied and lived. In *Mi manca* while the footprint left in a clod of earth alludes to emigration, to the passage of those who are forced to leave, the foot-shaped stone used by the artist to imprint the shape appears as a relic, a material memory that those who remain can keep awaiting a return that may never happen.

Trained as a painter at the Albertina Academy of Fine Arts in Turin, Ermal Rexhepi frequently expresses himself with conceptual works endowed with their accurate aesthetic value. In his work, the artist freely takes material from the world, contaminating genres and techniques. Performances and installations are appropriate ways to give meaning and value to his creativity as much as the canvas and brushes. Personal and collective memory, discriminations, cultural diversity, political satire, are some of the themes he addresses in works that are not constrained within the limits of the chosen media, related to the context for which they are conceived but at the same time open to multiple interpretations. These are works with which the artist lives his time coherently, knowing that through art the past can flow into the present, continuing to give us the life it still contains.



Francesca Macina, *Reinforced*, 2019
180 x 200 x 80 cm, iron

The installation, consisting of three thistles supported by three metal structures, is a tribute to Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, a city wounded by multiple bombings but promptly resurrected; a city suspended between the memory of a past of which it no longer retains anything and the need for rebirth. On iron rods, used to reinforce the concrete of new buildings, the artist places a thistle flower, an element that connotes the Apulian territory. Thistles and metal structures support each other, alluding not only to the possible coexistence between man and nature, but also to the mutual support that can bind land of origin and host land, past and present, memory and life.

For Francesca Macina "sculpture is everywhere". For the artist, sculpture is not shaped, it happens naturally. It can reveal itself anywhere, closer to a geological or biological phenomenon than to an epiphany. Time, Earth, Nature are the first sculptors. The transformation of the creation, inevitable and constant, is a hypertrophic sculptural act of which we are not aware but which has a powerful influence on everyone's existence. The artist investigates underground energies, unexpressed atmospheres, shared memories. He practices sculpture not as a volume in space but as an event in the motions of the earth. It acts in ancestral scenarios to obtain the forms of this constant transformation, the signs of passage and hybridization, the results of what has been and what could be again.



Forty years after the devastating earthquake that hit Montenegro on April 15, 1979, Francesco Di Tillo builds a monumentum to the memory. The artist escapes the rhetoric of grandiloquence, with the resources of contemporaneity and enhances the concept of precariousness. A structure of metal tubes very similar to those used for construction scaffolding, pierces a large canvas. On this canvas the artist, using solvents, transfers a collage of visual fragments that recall the earthquake. The work is at the same time a reminder of destruction and a hymn to rebirth.

The earthquake, the death, the existential precariousness, the real lack of free will, the dramatization of the contemporary world, man as part of the whole, as element of transition, of passage, of impermanence: these are the themes on which is based the work of Di Francesco Di Tillo, who dismantles and reassembles events and imaginary ideas. The artist uses different techniques and materials, organic and inorganic, in order to look for new forms, visions that are far beyond a first sensory experience. By focusing on processes as well as results, Francesco Di Tillo suggests transience and dynamism, showing us how the realities that surround us are not static but in continuous movement. The artist establishes an interaction between symbolic and evocative elements, generating living and non-living sculptures, places for thought with a strong emotional and conceptual impact. Each his work contains a large amount of connections and its own ability to trigger questions about the present.



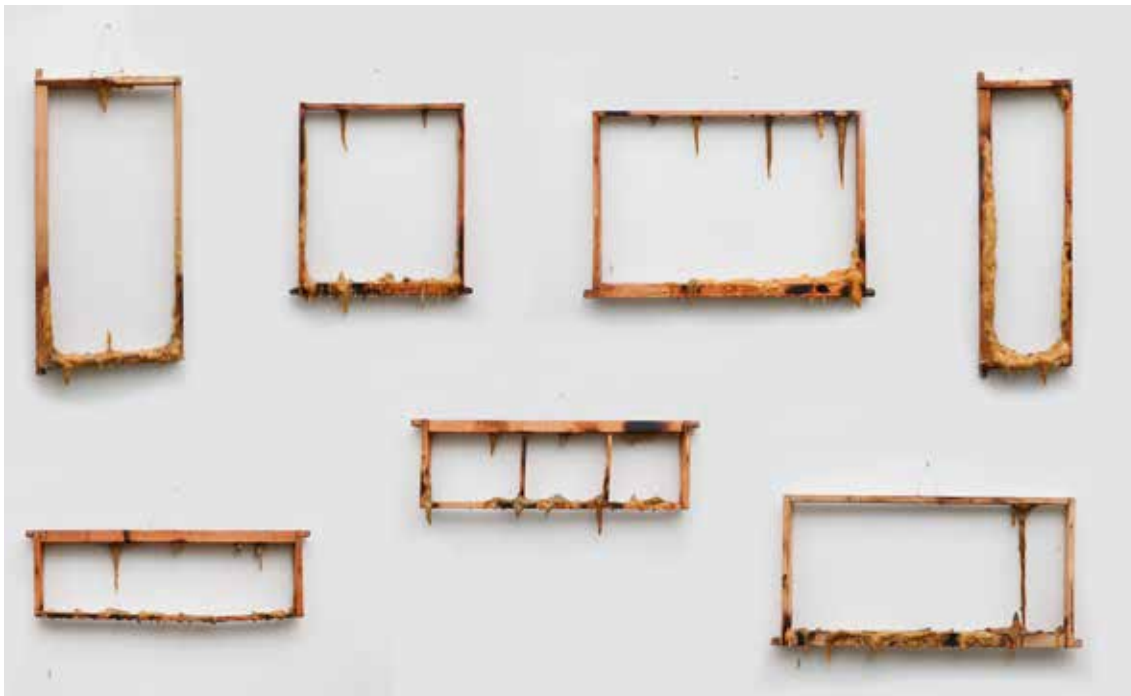
The work combines past and present of the city of Brindisi. The oil lamp evokes its archaeological richness while the yellow color and the impressed symbols (such as the six-legged dog) refer to the industrial present of the city. Just as the oil lamp burns fuel to illuminate, in the same way ENI uses fossil fuels to produce energy. If the shape of the lamp speaks about the past, the materials used (the polluting spray paint and clay mixed with contaminated earth from a land near the industrial plant) allude to the present. The land taking operation, similar to an archaeological excavation, is retraced in the video *Dig a hole dig a hole dig a hole...*

For Francesco Strabone, art is faith and artwork is the highest form of prayer. Inspired by the devotion of his grandmother and sincerely fond of his native places, whose he tries to restore the soul, the artist contaminates visual research and beliefs (no matter if in a god or in otherwise), arguing that "when you stop believing you also stop living". Starting from this belief, Strabone freely takes from archeology, folklore, religiosity, primitive art, creating works that go beyond contingency to reach a timeless dimension, between humor and tragicity. He digs between eras, techniques, symbols and cultures, crossing and hybridizing different identities and contexts. Landscape is one of Francesco Strabone investigation favorite themes. While treating it, he escapes the anecdote and the postcard shot to recreate ancestral and metaphysical landscapes in multiple ways.



In full coherence with Jelena Pavićević's sculptural research, *Fossil*, was born from the suggestions determined in the artist by the landscape of Cetinje. Trees (mainly Linden tree), architecture, the roofs of the local factories are combined each other and with the history of the city to be then by the artist returned in a complex terracotta sculpture, a "fossil", as the title states, generated from the sedimentation of the visions in her imagination. The artwork, in addition to representing the extreme synthesis of the starting points, is an autonomous organism, with its own existence and, for this reason, a generative nucleus for new and unprecedented expressions.

The landscape is a repository of unexpected and unexpressed energies, inspirations and formal links beyond time and space. Jelena Pavićević's artwork move from this principle by tracing her own themes of investigation into the deepest layers of the places where they are born, passing from a local to a global and cosmic dimension. Through the enhancement of full and empty relationships and the alternation of curved and straight lines, the artist creates hybrid forms, where the study of volumes is combined with folkloric elements, collective archetypes and esoteric and anthropological research. Jelena Pavićević mainly uses terracotta, a ductile material that allows her to better grasp the suggestions and images that overlap in her mind. The sculptures, unlike her works on paper, are never colored, because the colors could compromise their character of timelessness and universality.



Only the empty frames remain for the photographic portraits of the ancestors hanging on the walls of the house. Images such as memory tend to gradually disappear under the blows of the digital revolution. In the same way, in the contemporary world bees are disappearing, as victims of pollution and pesticides. The frames, similar to those that the beekeeper places in the hives, allude to the disappearance of the ancient images of family worship while the pieces of melted beeswax evoke the broken balance between man and nature.

Trained as a sculptor, Mato Uljarević expresses himself with multiple techniques and materials, from stone to terracotta sculpture, from installation to video, from drawing to street art. For the artist, creativity is not an activity but an attitude that cannot be schematized in strict procedures but simply is a way of being. The result is a polymorphic aesthetic in which issues related to existence, memory, collective identity, the man-nature bond are reflected. Nature is the first artist. The works created by nature are flanked and sometimes replaced by those generated by man. Interpreting the uninterrupted relationship between nature and history, Uljarević investigates the flow of one into the other, referring to mythical and ancestral themes, originating archetypal works, able to overcome the specificity of the chosen means.



Raffaele Vitto, *Thirst*, 2019
H mm 58 - 46 - 40, D base mm 34, turned brass with 24 kt gold bath

"When it rains Christ hoe". So goes the proverb at the origin of the work. Water is a divine gift for men of all times, similar to gold that falls on the earth quenching its thirst and making it fruitful and luxuriant. The artist pays homage to water, a vital element of excellence, summarizing in three conical gold-bathed elements (one element for each four-months) the average amount of rain that fell in 2019 on his countryside, in the north of Puglia, "land of family" that the artist cultivates with his father since his childhood.

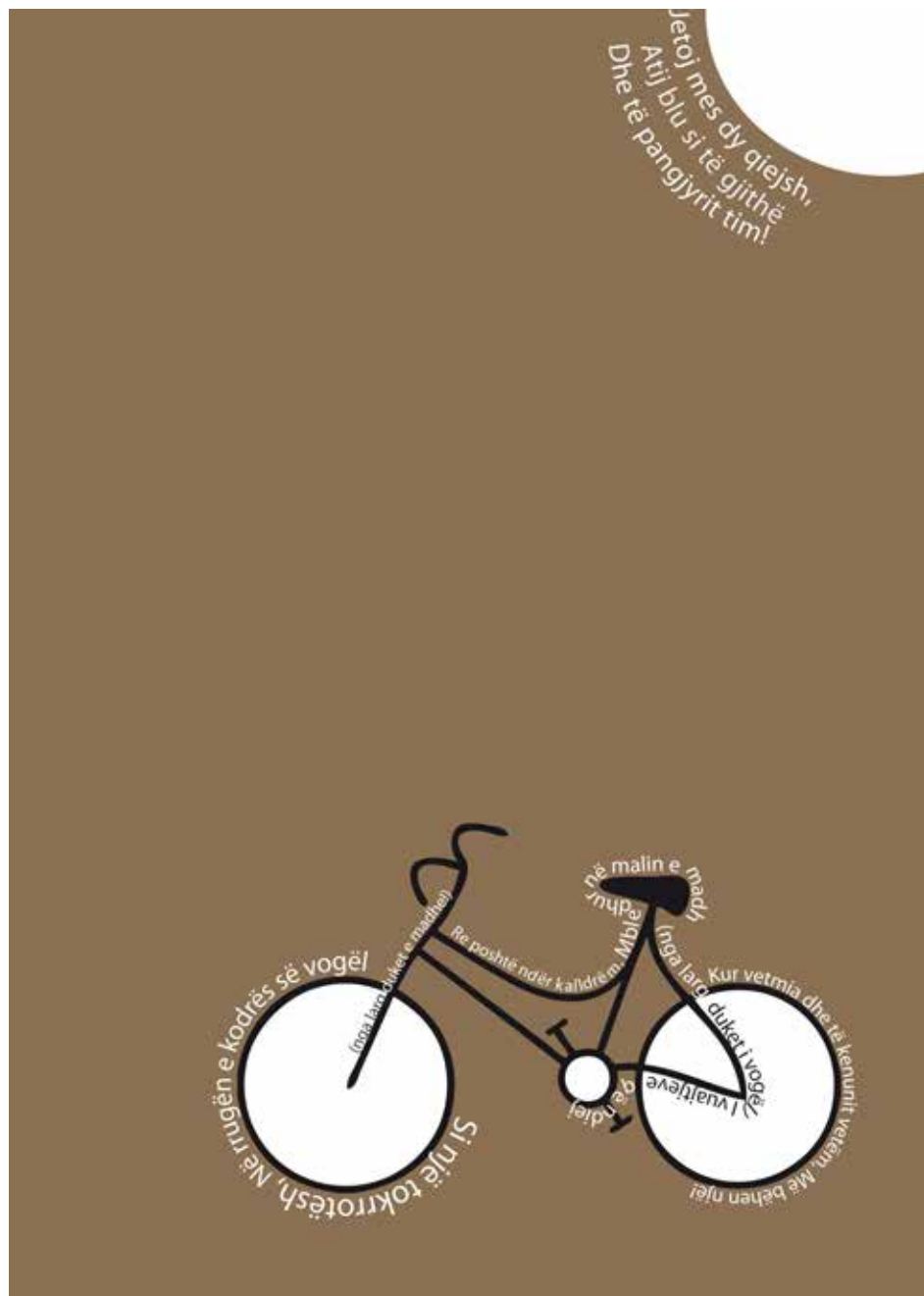
Raffaele Vitto's sculptural research starts from the forms and the processes of Nature. It is not an irrational, primitive and hostile Nature, but an ordered Nature, that loves man and is loved by him. The countryside in particular is for the artist the place of life, but it is also the repository of memory and the main source of inspiration. His land, that he has cultivated with his family since his childhood, is the origin of all his artworks. From the land Raffaele Vitto extracts concepts, materials and colors. Rather than the generic relationship between man and nature, he celebrates the land-peasant bond, feeling the artistic activity as a natural continuation of the agricultural one and vice versa. His research also paraphrases the land in its forms, sometimes minimal, other times monumental, and is able to express itself both in a small format, in sculptures with a minimalist imprint, and also in larger formats, creating real land-art interventions.



Amir Xhaković, *Go as further as you can*, 2019
sound installation (circular shape, 05:10 min audio)

A reality full of semiotic and visual values have a need for keeping alive the primitive dialogue with the artwork in the space and time of its maturing. "Go as further as you can" is an experience of perception beyond the dissonance of proximity and distance. A symbolic reference to the mystery of the unknown. A black circular shape within the performance of *Musica Ricercata No. 7* composed by György Ligeti with the peculiar ostinato, envisioning an encounter with art in the form of synaesthetic experience.

The artistic career of Amir Xhaković (1985, Shkodra) combines concert activity with experience as a lecturer at University of Arts in Tirana and Shkodra. His interest in the interpretative aspects of music led him to complete his musical studies with a doctoral degree in Interpretation at the University of Belgrade. His stylistic research also looks closely at the visual arts, exploring the aesthetics and processes of reading as well as the perception of the artwork by the public. Apart from winning at the piano competition organized by the EPTA in Tirana and the *International Competition* in Prishtina, he has been invited to different events including the *Chopin Festival* in Albania, *Ultra Padum* in Italy, *Festival Grad Teatar* in Montenegro, and the *Joy International Festival of Music* in Japan.



Andreas Dushi, *Parku i ikjies* (*Park of Leaving*), 2019
visual poem

Distances, abandonment, solitude and childhood nostalgia, returns. Emotions awakened by the vision of the Molisean landscape gathered within the boundaries of a garden, a space protected by the passing of time, standing in front a church facade, in the arms of an ancient land that evokes the past. Dushi's visual poetry is made up of intimate visions on which the gaze lingers, autumn leaves and sky, imperceptible sounds, words barely spoken in the time of expectations and returns, rediscovering memory.

For Andreas Dushi (1999, Shkodra), writing is a means that allows us to access the past, representing it. The past, as such, is a land that can be explored on a literary level, for which the events can be translated, rereading them, meeting oneself. Writing is therefore a need through which to grasp details of space, fragments of personal experience and of the history of the place, to trace narratives or poetic images. He is currently studying Albanian Language and Literature at the University of Shkodra. He is the author of the novels "Marrja e gjakut" (Bloodletting), "Pragu i braktisjes" (Abandonment Threshold), "Kur vdekja të na bashkojë" (When death unites us) and a theological-philosophical poetic cycle "Krishti vesh me t'kuqe" (Christ wears red).



In Prometheus, geometrics and colors allow us to return into the immediate paths of perception caused by physicalness. A video backwards documents a performative action that stages the destruction of eight polystyrene cubes in red, yellow, green and blue. A "superficial" discovery of the space that runs through the specific weight of presence and of gesture rituality getting rid of laws of consequentiality, leaving a fragment-artifact of our passage. Dying and regenerating, things happen continuously.

For Antonio Pallotta (1981, Isernia), architect and visual artist, the direct interaction with the artwork is a primary, free and analogical precondition, which makes spontaneous the experience of artistic fruition by the public. Shapes and geometry are aesthetic and functional key elements which can be translated into installations that activate paths of perceptual discovery, visual and tactile itineraries free from the pretense of suggesting meanings. With his works he has participated in various exhibition events throughout the country. Since 2018, his work "Tiramolla" has been displayed at the MAAM - Museo dell'Altro e dell'Altrove di Metropoli in Rome. Since 2013 he is the president of the SMART - *l'arte sm! association* in which he organizes the P.A.C.I. *Premio Auditorium Città di Isernia*.



Leonardo Vita, *Femininity's AudioVision*, 2020
audiovisual experience (03:12 min video)

In *Femininity's AudioVision*, the photographic material extracted from the Marubi archive, that is a multiform mirror reflecting the Albanian reality of the past, is translated into a sound event by using a graphical development environment to then extrapolate a new image from the spectrogram. Thus, the sound-image is situated at the center of a research that digs into micro-processes of sound and visual events, revealing a space of tensions and digital reverberations assembled into a final video.

Leonardo Vita (1994, Mola di Bari) is an Apulian musician and composer. His research is characterized by an interest in visual arts and technology, multimedia, and graphical development environments, which has led him to experiment forms of contact between visual and sound media. His creative approach looks at the Sound Art field, particularly in exploring the expressive and perceptive effects of sound in compositional practice. The guitar studies at Conservatorio "Niccolò Piccinni" in Bari are complemented by the participation in masterclasses and workshops in both musical and dramatic scene, as well as in technique and vocal interpretation. He counts various participations in musicals and dramatic performances, arrangement works, and live concerts and festivals with the "Overflowing" band.



We are intimately part of nature. Deep connections bind us to the physical landscape that we are immersed in. From the observation of a concrete natural pattern or details, artistic research can arise for the purpose of recognizing these precious and inseparable affinities to protect. The *Water Landscapes* are abstract compositions made with mixed media, collage and watercolors. Aquatic stratigraphies that reveal chromatic reflections and fluctuating transparencies hidden in lakesides.

It is in nature that Mirjana Marsenić Vujović (1988, Podgorica) finds patterns and details, allowing her to develop an artistic reflection on the connections that bind us to the surrounding environment, where the energies of the natural elements trace new physiognomies. A close and intimate observation which push her to immerse into the creative act, generating installations in dialogue with the spatial context. After completing his artistic studies in Painting at the University of Montenegro, she engages in creative research and exhibition activity by participating in numerous group and personal exhibitions, as well as artistic projects, in Italy and abroad, including exhibitions in France, Holland and Great Britain. Since 2011 she is a Member of the *Association of Visual Artists of Montenegro*.



From a dual paradigm of Utopia, the artist develops a project intended for exhibition: an installation projecting a Mediterranean city with monochromatic architecture and mirrors that refer to the relativity of perspective and truth. A current but prophetic vision about an imminent future, in which the anthropic component animates, interacts, and gives impulse and color. A place, yet, non-place that becomes a reflection on the sense of community, about connections and distance in the present scenario.

Snežana Bulatović (1996, Berane) lives and works in Podgorica, Montenegro, as a visual designer and art director combining creativity and the use of multimedia technologies. In her creative career, the research on the power of visual media and communication processes is a constant and a starting point for reflecting on different ethical and social aspects of life. The excellent results in her studies and recognition have led her to travel to China exploring interdisciplinary artistic practices. Knowledge of Chinese writing is an input to reflect on design as a form of universal language. At present she is continuing her studies in the field of product design by deepening the relationship between art and design. Her works have been published in art magazines in Germany, China and Great Britain.



Mystery, depth, and indomitable fear of the unknown melted with faith and vital thrust of salvation. In *My Beautiful Jesus*, the ambivalent dualism of the sea, rings in the dual human-ichthyomorphic nature of a legendary siren who is also a human-divine Christ, seated on a rock to reference the Scoglio dell'Eremita in Polignano. An artwork made up of simple materials, such as wood and self-hardening clay that becomes a call out to arose reflections on critical environmental issues which cannot be ignored.

Vlatka Vujošević (1978, Titograd) uses sculpture as a means to intervene in reality by creating works that, thanks to the creative act, take on a new and exigent presence. The three-dimensionality of sculpture is an indispensable factor in transforming the message into matter, the thought into a tangible object. The emotional and introspective states of the subjects are fixed in works made of various materials such as polyester, paper, self-hardening clay. The artist lives and works in Montenegro, where she participates in solo and group exhibitions, receiving recognition and awards, including in 2017 the *Salon Award* at the *Montenegrin Art Salon* "13 November" in Cetinje. In Italy, she participates in the Montenegrin days of culture "Interazioni" which took place in Bari in 2014.

A panoramic view of Polignano a Mare, taken with the help of a fishing boat skirting alongside the city, fully reveals the profile of the village nestled on the millenary cliff. And yet it is an impossible and inaccurate view, the manipulation of details sewn together to develop a total unity. The point of view, obtained by gathering several ones, ends up being inconsistent and imaginary: the excess of vision loses contact with reality, restoring an unnatural as well as inaccessible understanding.

In Francesca Speranza's photographs, each crossed place, each object manipulated and captured in images, each human experience reveals a form of possession and appropriation, a bond, patience and intimacy of living. Everything becomes personal memory, notes and trace left on things in order to retain memory. The artist often speaks about "contingency": birth and urgency of an image as a reciprocal belonging and containment of things and lives.

Moreover, the artist resorts to a frontal view, an axonometric and panoramic view, capable of a direct contact, immediate and authentic relationship with what is in front of her. At times an unreal point of view: the sum and unity of everything that flows in front of her, not just in front of the eyes.





The short documentary film has been shot in the oldest Italian foundry, the Marinelli Pontifical Foundry of Bells, located in Agnone, Isernia, since 1339. The images focus on the manufacturing process of the bells, showing passion and pride for a centuries-old tradition handed down by generation after generation. The result is a cultural portrait with great intensity, a sign of vitality of Italian and Mediterranean craftsmanship and popular culture.

Sara Stijović's film production moves between fiction and documentary through a constant elaboration and contamination of genres. In the inspection of places characterized by a strong coercive value and a condition of recurrence of social actions and functions - from hospitals, to educational institutions, to prisons - Stijovic assumes a critical and participatory gaze, penetrating into the relationships of force, between implicit and explicit rules of human behavior, and turning places into devices of a sociability often lacking in authentic expression.

Stijovic entrusts most of the formal solutions of his production to photography, favoring atmospheric and enigmatic opacity of the environments, places capable of transferring a contained sensitivity, oppressed in the visual manifestation of the sets and its protagonists.



In the photographic reportage *Evo, vidi (As you can see)*, 2019) taken in Cetinje, Iallonardi investigates the recent history of the old Montenegrin capital, wandering among contradictions of a society anchored to traditional values yet driven by the enthusiasm of reconstruction and modernity. Overlapping ruins and traces of war devastation are signs of a pressing progress that affects urban and cultural landscape, not without changing a deep dissatisfaction and a deep-rooted sense of fatalism found in the eyes and lives of its inhabitants.

The photographic research of Manuel Iallonardi (Isernia, 1989) is oriented towards capture of images with a slender testimonial value, expressions of a past capable of revealing having lived,

having consumed places, objects, even emotions.

In a careful survey of remains and traces, the artist documents absences that refer to missed epiphanies, lost opportunities for relationship. Following Roland Barthes thesis, each scene does not find fulfillment in revelation of any event, but rather it extends the end of something, or an untimely encounter with history. An aspect often reflected in architectural photography, a central issue in Iallonardi's choices: industrial archeology, factories or, again, buildings in metropolitan suburbs, designed to aggregate indistinct mass of anonymous lives, sometimes at the expense of landscapes upset by building fury.



Emanuel Palushaj, *Divided*, 2019
 installazione ambientale, tecnica mista e videoproiezione

In the documentary film *Divided* (2019) a girl is caught in the act of crying, while shedding her tears in a small glass bottle, evoking ancient Roman "lacrimatoi" (tears containers) on display in the Ribezzo Museum in Brindisi. The universal language of feelings is connected with the millenary history of these ancient cruets of weeping, so precious to cross history of individuals and reach up to the present alongside mortal remains in Roman graves.

In the individual and social definition of the self, every man elaborates a continuous negotiation of his own needs, fears, conflicts, tensions and desires. These are the most relevant issues in Emanuel Palushaj's (Shkodër, 1994) videoartistic and installation research, played between multiple expressive forms of body, between mutation of feelings and forms of oppression.

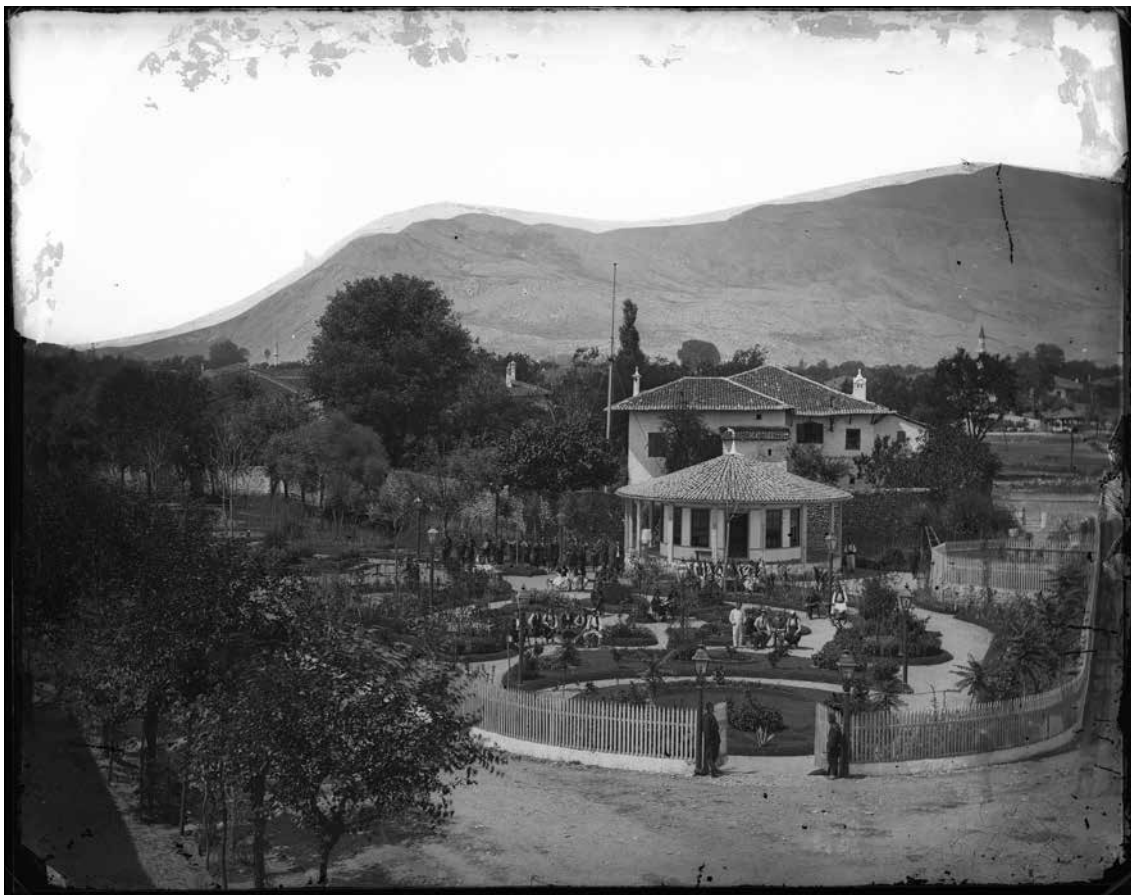
For the artist, every man hides a secret and in everyone there is a multiplicity and an elusive complexity. As in *Me, myself and I* (2017), the most emblematic of recent works: a black book closed and inscrutable from the outside that reveals, once opened, tomographies of the artist's skull. Sometimes even objects can overwhelmingly manifest an apparent stillness, a composure that refers to nature of those who use them, yet hiding the theater of interiority, made of compromises, anger and silent attitudes.



With the video installation *Monuments and Souvenirs* (2019), Vangi pursues a double analytical perspective towards places known and crossed in Cetinje, mixing public monuments and industrial ruins, buildings of culture and power and deserted environments, witnesses of a promise of renewal destined to be banned. In the middle of the images, new tourists arriving in the ancient Montenegrin capital move on, buying souvenirs and memories for a fleeting and inauthentic experience.

Alessandro Vangi's film research goes deep into biographical and social territories explored with the filter - or with the defense - of a camera, a real prosthetic extension of his own personality. The artist takes a negotiating and a dialogic position towards someone always foreign, the other, unknowable and inapproachable. He chooses to focus on secret scars with affection and respect, thoroughly investigating residues of sufferings and mutations men and places bring into their own intimacy.

By adopting double level of a narrative played between truth and concealment, the artist shows duplicity of many social contexts in public life, especially through acute reflections on the changes in architecture and buildings.



Ergys Vela, *Gysi Kurimi*, 2019
 installazione ambientale, stampa analogica, vetro

In the photographic serie *Gysi kurimi* (2019), Vela shows changes of urban landscape of his city, Shkodra, matching archive photos with images taken by the artist from the same point of view. By removing some parts and deeply scraping photographic film of the pictures, the artist re-establishes the recognizable shape of the ancient Albanian landscape. But nevertheless, with this action, he evokes brutal removal of the past with which dictatorship by Enver Hoxha used to behave on official documents of regime, erasing men, places and uncomfortable testimonies away from the only possible narrative.

Political and social investigation, in the middle of Ergys Vela's work (Shkoder, 1989), delves into recent history of Albania through a research carried out in the archives of his own city and intended to showing forms of ambiguity and contradiction of today's society.

A work divided between photography, movie and art installation, always declined on the border between truth and simulation, reality and fiction, also highlighting dystopian relationships between great promises of renewal at the time of the communist regime and deceptions by current democracy.

Vela is one of the artists of the new Albanian generation, born immediately after the fall of the dictatorship: this perspective strengthens audacity of the language and courage to testify an unsustainable political and cultural heritage.



The seven watercolours created by Bosiljka Bakočević during the artistic residency in Brindisi (Puglia) are the summary of her appointments in the morning with the city, painted near the port trying not to miss the effects of light on the houses or on the calm surface of the sea. The chromatic elements, the air and all the suggestions of the Mediterranean city are transformed into painting, combining like the mosaic tiles of the Francesco Ribezzo Archaeological Museum that deeply influenced the artist during her stay in Puglia, also reminding her homeland and the Roman mosaics in the ancient city of Risan (Bay of Kotor, Montenegro).

When you look at the works of Bosiljka Bakočević you have the feeling of being immersed in a fairy tale. As Henri Matisse said, art is that serene and pure place where we abandon everything that disturbs us or makes us depressed: art as "a good armchair which provides relaxation from physical fatigue". This thought is perfectly interpreted by the Montenegrin artist who finds her muse in nature and in her native places. Bosiljka wanders through the quiet streets of the villages in the picturesque Bay of Kotor like an impressionist artist, her watercolours are made *en plain air*. The observation of nature is transformed into brushstrokes that summarize the sensitivity and spontaneity of the artist with a few touches: a mix of light, colour, and atmosphere pours onto the paper, showing us the divine around us, also hidden in a simple blade of grass.



Ervin Dauti, *The Dance*, 2020
87 x 102 cm, oil on canvas

The work created during the artistic residency of the Monet project is the result of an in-depth study of its own land and cultural context. Ervin Dauti was inspired by traditional Albanian dance, so we see female body sections in a movement as harmonic as surreal in their two-dimensionality. The parts of the body seem almost glued on the canvas, stand out on the red background, whose expressive value communicates power and vitality, to recount the strength of women between new and old perspectives.

Ervin Dauti is a young artist from Vlora (Albania), currently lives in Tirana where he works as MYP Coordinator, Visual Arts and Design Teacher at the World Academy of Tirana. In his artistic career he has mastered different techniques from painting to photography, experimenting with various surfaces and content, but the leitmotif of all his works is represented by a great precision of execution. The landscape painting is certainly the one with which the artist has mostly expressed himself, especially realising views of the Albanian territory. In these artworks nature mixes with architecture, but the main character is the interplay of light and shadow, focusing on the contrasts that are created. In other artworks Dauti studies elements of nature such as roses, realizing works of extreme realism and accuracy characterized, like his landscapes, by the vividness of colours.



Antonio Finelli, *Untitled*, 2020
58 x 76 cm, pencil on paper

The residency of the MONET project for Antonio Finelli took place virtually. The exchange with Albania was in any case rich, but if the artist had been able to walk the Albanian streets, he would certainly have told us the history of the place through the traits of the people who belong to those places. The human being is the primary resource of a territory for the artist, so he gives us an artwork that carries on his investigation of the body, he does it almost by engraving the textured paper giving three-dimensionality to the map of life hidden among the curves, the lines and the veins that draw the skin.

Antonio Finelli, young artist from Molise, makes of the yarns of human skin the matrix of his art. His research is obsessive and accurate, dedicated to finding every little detail told by the human epidermis. With pencil on paper - the artist's favourite technique - he meticulously outlines every stroke that can serve as a testimony of time, a sculptor of faces and bodies itself. It seems like the subjects are getting sucked into a blinding light, the light of the white paper that envelops the bodies, often showing us only certain details. These are precisely the ones that interest Finelli, who focusing his work on the outermost layer of the body, the human skin, which is the geographical map that collects all the emotions, gets to know the story of individuals by eternalizing it.



Esmerilda Herovi, *Traditional family (Swallows)*, 2019
420 cm × 110 cm, installation, mixed technique (acrylic on canvas, wire mesh)

During the artistic residency of the Monet project in Podgorica (Montenegro), Esmerilda Herovi chose to create an artwork about the family. The artist recounted the moment when the swallows, after wintering, return to Europe for spring. The work that is exhibited hanging from a tree, is composed of a long canvas made with brushstrokes of spring colours, whose movement seems to follow the trajectory of the swallows in the sky, the wire mesh instead represents swallows' nests, a metaphor for the house and the family.

Esmerilda Herovi (1986) is an artist and painting teacher in an high school in Shkodra, Albania. In her art she prefers the use of mixed techniques, combining different materials and artisanal methods. What inspires her artworks is always an emotional factor, painting acts as a channel through which she lays bare her emotions, it becomes a sort of medicine for the spirit. Using recycled plastic materials, metal nets, gauze, sand, but also the spatula or simply her own fingers, the artist responds to the joys, desires, or turmoil of life on the pictorial surface without filtering her emotions. Her favourite subjects include still-life and portraits in which flowers play an important role with their explosive colour palette, but also dreamlike visions and themes related to tradition.



Cristina Mangini, *Water lilies*, 2020
3 x 3 m, Installazione site-specific - 40 forme in terracotta smaltata

The artwork *Ninfee* by Cristina Mangini, created during the artistic residency in Molise, was born from the chance encounter in a market with an object that becomes a Surrealist objet trouvé, but instead of being exposed itself, it turns into the mould of the artwork. After studying the Molisian territory, the artist discovers this kitchenware linked to the “ferratella” tradition. This tool, used as a rosette-shaped mould, leads the artist to realize 40 forms of terracotta: as circular majolicas that stand out on the dark floor, they float like real water lilies.

Cristina Mangini (1988), young and talented Apulian artist, ranges with her art from painting to site-specific installation. Her work is extremely precise, as may be seen from the meticulous technique and seriality with which she produces her artworks, studying thoroughly and doing research to saturate the subject she chooses to address. Among her most famous pictorial cycles we find the series *Around*, in which the object suspended in the void of the paper takes the leading role, almost like a Proustian Madeline that makes the viewer take a journey into their past. The series dedicated to Nature instead is based on a contrasting relationship between container and content, almost wanting to be an ecological warning. Finally, *Spazio Prossemico* is a cycle of ongoing works born during the COVID-19 pandemic, a somewhat melancholic reflection on social distancing.



Valeria Vallone, *Reflection*, 2019

80 cm diameter, mixed technique on two circular canvases mounted on plywood (acrylic, stucco, chalk, watercolour)

The artwork created for the Monet project is part of an artistic journey that Valeria Vallone continues to deepen even today. The artistic residency occurred in her land, Molise, has allowed her to use the place she belongs to tell the fragility of those landscapes. The work consists of two circular canvases exposed respectively one on the wall and the other on the floor. In the first one, the landscape represented is the mountain, which has always been present in the works of the Molisian artist, while in the second the mountain has indefinite contours, it is its reflection in a waterhole, a metaphor for the vulnerability of these uncontaminated places.

Valeria Vallone, born in 1993, lives and works in Isernia. Her art stems from the attachment to her own land, especially the mountains that surround it. Her artworks, despite having as their subject mountainous landscapes, are not to be ascribed to a painting that faithfully reproduces reality as if it were a photograph. These are mainly spiritual paintings, where the panorama conceals human silhouettes that the viewer with an attentive eye can find. The predominant chromatic note in her artworks is undoubtedly the blue with all its nuances; the consistency of her painting, instead, is strongly material, spatulated, sometimes scratched, often combined with a more liquid painting. In her works Vallone carries out an analysis on the spirituality of the individual, in search of the deepest ego, and she does so through her beloved mountains.



Ivana Volpe, *Erosione / Un minuto di mare*, 2019
31,5 x 25 x 5,8 cm - 12 x 9 x 3,5 cm, carved Lecce stone silver container and Lecce stone powder

The work "Erosione / Un minuto di mare" is a reflection on the erosive action of the sea. Often attracted by the precariousness of things, Volpe has been fascinated by the balance with which the city of Polignano a Mare stands on the cliff. The sound of the sea crashing against the city is recorded by the artist, then with the help of a digital application the sound is transformed into a graphic sign. The support on which the artist creates this sound map of the city is a block of Lecce stone, engraved just as the sea sculpts the cliff, next to it is exposed the dust that was created by the incision.

Ivana Volpe was born in Campobasso in 1988. She is a very talented artist, with many international experiences and numerous awards. What emerges from observing her artistic production is a great maturity, the artworks she creates are very evocative. Among the fundamental themes in her art there is certainly the reflection on the ephemeral, she investigates impermanent phenomena through her works that often involve interaction with the viewer. She also works with sound, developing sound maps that allow its graphic transposition. Volpe uses art to make universal and eternal something extraordinary that would otherwise have no voice: she does it with the chorus of a traditional Lithuanian song, with the almost musical writing of her aunt with Down's syndrome, or through the spontaneous sign of a child.

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