

fondazioneberengo

RADICAL



MARCELLA VANZO

TO WAKE UP THE LIVING, TO WAKE UP THE DEAD

CURATED BY MATTEO BERGAMINI

OPENING FRIDAY MARCH 8 2019, from 6 p.m.

FONDAZIONE BERENGO – PALAZZO CAVALLI FRANCHETTI

SAN MARCO, 2847, VENEZIA

For the second show from the "RADICAL" series conceived by Penzo+Fiore at Fondazione Berengo, upon invitation of Matteo Bergamini, **Marcella Vanzo** will present in Venice her new project titled "**To wake up the living, to wake up the dead**" on the Redipuglia War Memorial. Nothing to do with an historical re-enactment but rather a celebration of life, although not completely estranged from the idea of sacrilege. Through a detailed survey made of one video,

photographs and installations, the artist brings back to life the bodies of the 100,000 soldiers buried at Redipuglia, one of the largest war memorials in the world, located along the extreme North Eastern strip of Italy where the first World War front used to be and trench warfare was merciless.

To wake up the living, to wake up the dead is a video work made of gravestones, marbles, names and ranks, i.e. the remains of the Third Army headed by Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy, the Duke of Aosta, a site where a slow, inquisitive, in-depth cinematic exploration is carried out.

The video is a silent observation and an accurate analysis on the features of this memorial, built by Mussolini between 1935 and 1938, with its rationalist architecture reproducing a military deployment. The word "PRESENTE" [Present] is engraved hundreds of times along the stone steps as if to call the dead back to life. Soldiers used to remember their fallen fellows by a final roll calling ceremony and answering on their behalf.

A distressing calm endlessly hovers above the graves until a storm breaks in. A heavy metal drummer beats on his instrument performing a relentless solo, his notes loaded with a strong subversive charge evocative of carnage. Yet, nothing is fatal. This is a fierce hymn to life, identity and passion. It is a wake-up call to stand against history that slaughtered her sons and daughters. It is a must for the living: never again! This work is a tribute to the dead and music becomes the metaphor of the youth murdered to serve the "motherland".

Yet, once at Palazzo Franchetti, visitors are ushered to "**To wake up the living, to wake up the dead**" by "**I Nomi**" [The names] and "**Sente**" [The pre-sents]. **Vanzo** goes back again to controversial images which become her artistic matter: photographs portraying the fallen soldiers' first names written on their graves. There are thousands of them - too many - to the point that they fall on the ground and on top of each other.

Each name makes history come to the surface again and it feels as if this beautiful Venetian Palazzo, located in one of the most prestigious venues in the world, is turned into a mass grave.

Although these thoughts might be frightful enough, the artist continues with her action: visitors are asked to come closer and delve into the pictures taking with them one with a name they like. It might be the name of a dead boy, the same name of one's son, a comrade or a close friend. An uninhibited tribute to as well as an act against superstition and on account of total separation between life and death.

Between **I Nomi** and the video with the drumming solo, visitors find **Sente**: a photo-edit of the word "PRESENTE". Instead of spelling out a roll call, a sinister echo, **Sente** gives us a warning signal, which calls for everyone's utmost attention.

A radical project against what always and only seems to be the unavoidable fate of history.

MARCELLA VANZO

TO WAKE UP THE LIVING, TO WAKE UP THE DEAD

CURATED BY MATTEO BERGAMINI

Opening Friday March 8th, at 6 p.m.

FONDAZIONE BERENGO – PALAZZO CAVALLI FRANCHETTI
SAN MARCO, 2847, 30124 VENEZIA

From March 8th until April 13th

Thursday to Saturday, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

or by appointment.

For more information:

www.fondazioneberengo.org

comunicazione@berengo.com

t +39 041739453

info@penzofiore.it

t +39 3496674240

We thank Photosì for its kind collaboration

