

Arcadia and Apocalypse

Italian landscape in 150 years of art, photography, video and installations

The PALP Palazzo Pretorio di Pontedera presents the exhibition *Arcadia and Apocalypse. Italian Landscape in 150 years of art, photography, video and installations* until April 26. Devised and curated by Daniela Fonti and Filippo Bacci di Capaci and promoted by the Fondazione per la Cultura Pontedera, the Comune di Pontedera and the Fondazione Pisa, the exhibit explores the way landscape has been perceived and depicted artistically from 1850 up to the present day, highlighting the main changes in terms of aesthetics and pictorial codes while raising awareness on current environmental degradation. Through a narrative that embraces paintings, sculptures, decorative arts, photography and the new media, *Arcadia and Apocalypse* revolves around the theme creative thinking on landscape, a pictorial genre inherited from the 18th century as a mirroring of nature in art, which, in contrast with mythological and historical painting, shakes off stereotypes stressing the capacity of landscape to regenerate its meanings and pictorial codes and reflect on the radical transformation of Italian artistic culture and society as a whole. The exhibition is structured in seven wide-ranging chapters, which using painting, photography, videos, films and installations, encourage viewers to immerse in the feelings and reflec-



tions that with the passing of years have inspired artists and photographers in their process of interpretation and "reconstruction" of nature. The first section of the exhibit itinerary, called *An authentic feeling for nature*, showcases Italian painting of the second half of the 19th century. Works on display are by painters such as Giovanni Fattori, Odoardo Borrani, Cristiano Banti, Giovanni Boldini, Angelo Morbelli, Plinio Nomellini, Vittore Grubicy de Dragon, Gustavo Bonaventura, Stefano Bricarelli, Filippo Rocci, and photographers such as Giacomo Caneva and Robert Macpherson.

The season of Futurism features works by Giacomo Balla, Leonardo Dudreville, Gerardo Dottori, Enrico Pedrotti, and Fortunato Depero. Presenting works made by Giulio Aristide Sartorio and Duilio Cambellotti, the section called *The age of transformation: the invention of the city* shows how during the Fascist period Italian art was dominated by the rigid geometry of Rationalism. The next section, *From the 1920s to the War*, reflects a period in which landscape was crucial in Italian art, as testified by the works of Antonio Donghi, Ottone Rosai and Giorgio Morandi.

The decade that ended with the outbreak of war began with a premonition of destruction, passed off as a demand for revolution (the demolitions occasioned by the great urban plans), to which artists like Mario Mafai and Afro Basaldella responded with despair and anguish. The 1960s were dominated were characterized by Post-Informalism and Abstractionism. The landscape was essentially an internalised reference to personal experience (Tancredi, Giulio Turcato, Mario Giacomelli and Mimmo Jodice); nevertheless, it was in the direction of Pop Art and of the nascent Conceptualist style