

# Hi Woman!

## La notizia del futuro

22 artiste internazionali dialogano con le opere del Pretorio



MUSEO  
DI PALAZZO  
PRETORIO  
PRATO

11 DICEMBRE  
2021  
27 FEBBRAIO  
2022

EXHIBITION

## HI WOMAN!

### *La notizia del futuro*

22 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN ARTISTS DIALOGUE WITH THE WORKS OF PALAZZO PRETORIO. THE EXHIBITION IS PROMOTED BY THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRATO - PALAZZO PRETORIO MUSEUM CURATED BY FRANCESCO BONAMI

**PRATO, PALAZZO PRETORIO MUSEUM - 11 DECEMBER 2021 - 27 FEBRUARY 2022**

From 11 December **Palazzo Pretorio** is bringing to Prato **22 international women artists** for the exhibition **Hi Woman! La notizia del futuro** curated by Francesco Bonami and promoted by the Municipality of Prato - Palazzo Pretorio Museum.

*"With this exhibition the Palazzo Pretorio Museum once again examines the **subject of dialogue** between the many possible contemporary dialogues, between past and present" says **Rita Iacopino**, director of the Palazzo Pretorio Museum.*

*"We want to continue to offer our visitors an opportunity for reflection and new insights into our heritage", says **Simone Mangani**, councillor for cultural policy at the Municipality of Prato.*

Thus Palazzo Pretorio, with its exceptional collection, welcomes 22 contemporary women artists, each with their own 'annunciation' to reveal to visitors: Huma Bhabha, Irma Blank, Koo Donghee, Marlene Dumas, Isa Genzken, Jessie Homer French, Roni Horn, Jutta Koether, Andrew LaMar Hopkins, Maria Lassnig, Babette Mangolte, Lucy McKenzie, Aleksandra Mir, Susan Philipsz, Paola Pivi, Maja Ruznic, Jenny Saville, Fiona Tan, Genesis Tramine, Andra Ursuta, Marianne Vitale, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

22 women, not to comply with the usual political correctness, but to underline **the centrality of the female subject in ancient and contemporary narrative**.

22 women artists who simultaneously take the role of the Angel and the Virgin, who at the same time are **bearers and recipients** of an abstract, symbolic and profoundly real **revolution**.

*"Hi Woman! La notizia del futuro is the pop transformation of the Angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary, projected into the modern world. This is not a lack of respect. In fact Jesus himself in the Gospel never called his mother Mother, Mum or Mary, but "Woman". There is no better-known theme in the history of the art than the Annunciation. The Angel who brings news to the Virgin about the future to come through Jesus. Over and above the subject's religious connotation, the theme of the Annunciation has always been intrinsically linked to art", explains Francesco Bonami, exhibition curator.*

Through **painting, sculpture, video and sound** the 22 women artists will invade the museum, **putting themselves in dialogue with works of the permanent collection**, sometimes in harmony, sometimes creating powerful and stimulating short circuits for the public. **Annunciation** is a word containing multiple meanings that touch the reality of our sociality and communication and at the same time refer to one of the cornerstones of Western culture.

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The artists on display 'announce' different messages, distant mysteries and nearby realities, each with a powerful and meaningful work capable of sustaining comparison and dialogue with the old masters.

**The work of art is the Angel and the spectator, the Madonna**, ready to abandon herself to bewilderment, wonder and fear of the news she will receive.

A work of art always brings news, and a message.

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## EXHIBITION INTRO

FRANCESCO BONAMI

Whether one believes it or not does not matter. The annunciation to Mary by the Angel Gabriel of her pregnancy remains, real or otherwise, a pivotal image of the iconography of a large proportion of the human race. Mary finds herself custodian of the future of the world. The Virgin takes on the responsibility of giving birth to Jesus the Redeemer without, however, being able to share the pleasure of this responsibility. It could be said that her mysterious virginity was also cause for suspicion on the part of those around her and therefore for her a source of guilt. A condition that woman has endured for an infinity of time. Absolute creator, without ever receiving the credit for this, her immense creativity. At the risk of being blasphemous, it is as if Maradona's mother was never able to go to the stadium or had never been able to watch her son's match on television. Gabriel, the Angel, appears and gives her no choice. A lack of choice, which then in the history of human society becomes a condemnation and a tragedy. A tragedy that, from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan, we continue to observe, helpless and inactive. Hi Woman, Gabriel's aggressive greeting to the Madonna, is the title of the exhibition organised at Palazzo Pretorio, a museum that houses some wonderful Annunciations. This exhibition purposely avoids being an exhibition about women, about feminism, or politically correct. It is simply an exhibition with 22 artists who were born as women. They therefore share one single destiny. Their views are all of a different nature, their art all conjugated in different and not necessarily feminine ways. Being an artist is exactly the opposite condition to that of the Madonna. It is a choice, not an imposition. No angel appears and, without ado, says "Hey you, from tomorrow you'll be an artist". Unlike motherhood, being an artist is a condition that has nothing to do with biology or destiny. All artists, of whatever sexual orientation, would like to be able to give birth to their 'redeemer', that is, to their work of art that can change the world. This is what the artists in the exhibition are trying to do. Their works are attempts, embryos, which are part of a process of transformation that accompanies artists throughout their life. The life of an artist, no matter how long, is an eternal pregnancy. At Palazzo Pretorio I did not want to look for dialogue - inevitably unequal on one side or the other - with the works in the museum. I tried to construct, despite knowing that it is a contradiction in terms, the randomness of an encounter. Works that meet by chance and discover - again, by chance - that they have something in common. Not so much from the point of view of aesthetics or content, but of sensitivity. Meetings that don't necessarily turn into relationships. The works in the museum are the inhabitants of a village, rooted in their contexts and their habits. The exhibition works are wayfarers who arrive and leave again. But in this arrival, in this stay and in their departure they find the opportunity to add something to the village and take away something for the journey they will continue on. Art is this continuous exchange. Ancient art that longs to be freed from history, and contemporary art constantly looking for a permanent home and its own history. Hi woman is the greeting of those who arrive and those who welcome. In this greeting is the energy of discovery and the seed of disappointment, the fear of not finding what one is looking for and the fear of having to move on. Which is the constant script of every life. The exhibition, a small exhibition, was conceived as an exercise in the search for a lost intimacy, the same intimacy that Gabriel takes away from Mary forever by throwing her into the centre of the world in exchange for nothing. In the salutation of the Angel is all human history. The man who imposes his decision without the possibility of contradiction, and the woman who is sanctified with the gift of the creation but deprived of her freedom of choice. The works of art on display demonstrate that freedom and creation can cohabit together with the

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freedom of choosing the ways and modes of expressing oneself to the world. Through the body, play, family, death, song, dance, happiness and, unfortunately, also pain.

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**Promoted by**

Municipality of Prato  
Palazzo Pretorio Museum

**Curated by**

Francesco Bonami

**Director of Palazzo Pretorio Museum**

Rita Iacopino

**Location**

Palazzo Pretorio Museum  
Piazza del Comune - Prato

**Date**

11 December 2021 - 27 February 2022

**Opening hours**

10.30 am - 6.30 pm every day  
(except on Tuesdays that are not public holidays)

**Info and reservations**

tel. +39 0574 1837859  
every day 9:30 am - 6:30 pm  
[www.palazzopretorio.prato.it](http://www.palazzopretorio.prato.it)

**Exhibition design**

Francesco Procopio

**Graphics**

Studio RovaiWeber design

**Exhibition press office**

Studio Maddalena Torricelli  
[studio@maddalenatorricelli.com](mailto:studio@maddalenatorricelli.com)  
Tel. +39 02 76280433

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