

# ELISABETTA DI MAGGIO

curated by Chiara Bertola

Galleria Christian Stein  
Milan, Corso Monforte 23

25 October 2018 – 6 April 2019

For the first time, Galleria Christian Stein is presenting the work of **Elisabetta Di Maggio**, an artist who has for many years been focusing on the concept of time in all its forms, to the point of making it the true subject of her work.

For this artist, the manual gesture is the founding aspect of the work, able to combine the artisan tradition that has been handed down to us over the centuries and which has contributed to making many places unique, with a long production phase that becomes an indispensable and conceptual condition for her.

Another important topic of her research are the communications networks necessary to transmit information. Her works highlight the close connections between the networks, the circuits, the grids, the structures and lattices that belong to different worlds but that are part of our existence, and within which we spend our time and our daily life.

When she speaks of circuits or lattices, she thinks, for example, of the complex structure of the lymphatic vessels of leaves, of the criss-cross of lines on human skin, or of subway railway tracks, or indeed of the complicated shape of a nerve cell.

She takes her subjects from the real world, starting from anthropological, botanical and urban illustrations, but also from embroideries and designs of tapestries drawn from a domestic setting.

All her work therefore assumes the sense of a metaphorical reflection on our existences as being parts of a whole that tends to repeat certain laws of fractal proliferation, from which it is difficult to detach oneself but which at the same time assure us a sense of movement and fruitfulness in the world.

Her working method has always been the same for years: she cuts different materials using sharp surgical scalpels, and as she explains: *"I started with sheets of tissue paper, to arrive at small or large vegetable leaves, soaps, porcelain and other surfaces, including the plaster used for walls. I spend hours dissecting these materials and the results are works that can be linked by a unitary theme: what forms nature adopts in its expansion and organisation."*

In the historic Corso Monforte gallery, **Elisabetta Di Maggio** will be presenting *Greetings from Venice*, an immense site-specific installation initially conceived for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice. It takes the forms of an "imaginary" mosaic floor, inspired by that of the Basilica of San Marco in Venice. A floor that cannot be walked on, that has no solidity but which, like all her works, disturbs, astonishes, gives rise to incredulity while at the same time causing a release of memories.

To forge a link with the patterns of the Basilica floor, the artist has created a mosaic composed of 100,000 stamps, created unsuspected chromatic harmonies. The result is an endless and unimaginable visionary design, which creates a bond between a very ancient skill and a reflection on the concept of contemporary time. The stamps used have all been franked; they have travelled and are now recomposed in another geography, giving rise to a net made of fragments of life and stories conveyed by the letters to which they were attached. The drawings of that floor are not only chromatic compositions: in each tessera there is a microcosm, which together with the others forms a larger cosmos, and then an entire universe.

This work took a great deal of time to make, as well as precision, a fine touch and rigour; a duration that in some way contrasts with how quickly the work could be destroyed: it is in fact composed of a material that apparently seems firm and resistant but which is instead as fragile and perishable as a drawing. To accompany the project, **Di Maggio** has studied and traced decorative patterns and drawings that go to configure the map of a hypothetical geography, a complex plot of itineraries that do not lead anywhere, circuits that do not indicate a direction but which trace the ordered and inexorable flow of time.

Using stamps, she brings to mind the modalities of communication before the Internet, in which a period of waiting was inevitable; she brings out the life that revolved around the “missive” on its journey to its destination.

Away from gigantism and spectacular flourishes, within the extent of the limit of her hands and to the point of exhaustion of all energy, the artist continues to work in a tirelessly in a room, leaving traces and the rhythm of the long hours of the day impressed in her work.

In the gallery, there will be a text by Chiara Bertola on the work of **Elisabetta Di Maggio**.

**Milan, Corso Monforte 23**

Tuesday to Friday: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. / 2 - 7 p.m., Saturday: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. / 3 - 7 p.m.

For further information:

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## **Elisabetta Di Maggio**

### **Lives and works in Venice**

Elisabetta Di Maggio was born in Milan in 1964. She graduated from the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice (1989) and in 1992 won an award for the 77th Collective show organised by the Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa. In 1999 she attended the Advanced Course of Visual Arts at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti in Como with Haim Steinbach.

In 2000 she was awarded a scholarship to participate in the International Studio Program of the MoMA PS1 - Contemporary Art Center in New York and was among the artists selected for the first edition of the Furla Prize for Art, organized by the Fondazione Querini Stampalia of Venice.

She has participated in many personal and collective exhibitions, nationally and internationally: *Women in Italian Design*, curated by Silvana Annicchiarico, Triennale di Milano (2016); "Arte Fiera 40. I grandi maestri dell'arte italiana", curated by Giorgio Verzotti and Claudio Spadoni, Museo MAMbo, Bologna (2016); "Elective Affinities", curated by Viktor Misiano, NCCA Moscow (2015); "Autoritratti" curated by F. Pasini, Museo MAMbo, Bologna (2013); *Terre Vulnerabili*, a growing exhibition 1/4. "Le soluzioni vere vengono dal basso", curated by Chiara Bertola and Andrea Lissoni, Hangar Bicocca, Milan (2010); she participated in the XV QUADRIENNALE d'ARTE of Rome in 2008. *Space for your future*, curated by Y. Hasegawa MOT Museum, Tokyo (2007); *Apocalittici e integrati* curated by P. Colombo Museo MAXXI, Rome (2007); *Il potere delle donne*, curated by F. Cavallucci and C. Borgeous, Galleria Civica di Arte Contemporanea, Trento (2006); *Donna Donne*, curated by A. von Furstemberg, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence (2005), *Towards Uncertainty*, curated by C. Bertola, Bell Gallery, Providence, USA (2004).

Her personal exhibitions include: *Greetings from Venice*, curated by Chiara Bertola, Fondaco dei Tedeschi, Venice (2018), *Natura quasi Trasparente*, curated by Chiara Bertola, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice (2017), *Disnascere*, curated by Angela Vettese, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice (2012); *I change but I cannot die*, Laura Bulian Gallery (2012); Francesco Girondini, Verona (2004); Galleria Viafarini, Milan (2005); *Il tempo è come il luogo*, Galleria Alberto Peola, Turin (2001); *Islands*, curated by Octavio Zaya, Arco-Madrid (2001); Studio Barbieri, Venice (1999).

Her permanent interventions are to be found: in Venice, at the Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa (2004) and at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia (2005); in Milan, at the PAC Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea (2005).