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The Project Room is Back – at the Pomodoro Foundation’s Artistic Observatory

Welcome to the return of the Project Room of the Arnaldo Pomodoro Foundation in Milan. “Rosa in mano”, a collective show by Nevine Mahmoud, Margherita Raso and Derek MF Di Fabio, is an investigation into the body.

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The Arnaldo Pomodoro Foundation in Milan will once again be introducing ‘**Project Room 2021**’. This time, the exhibition entitled “Rosa in mano”, *a rose in hand*, will be a group show investigating body dynamics and their contemporary representation. Three young international artists, Nevine Mahmoud, Margherita Raso and Derek MF Di Fabio, have been selected by the curator Eva Fabbri to reflect onto the role of structure and matter for this second round of the show.

What one notices at first when visiting the space of the exhibition is the idea that behind each piece and its physical expression is something much more profound: a story and individual path that precedes the creation of the work itself.

This is the case of the works of **Nevine Mahmoud** (London, 1988, lives and works in Los Angeles). In her sophisticated objects, she consciously includes nuances of kitsch and heterogeneous materials which intertwine together to give the material a sense of immediate sexuality. Structures such as organs, and more specifically those who hold sensuous connotations, are renewed into unexpected forms from their initial state as sculpted marbles. They are later blown into glass, to depict a male-female dichotomy whereby the distinction between the violent nature of sculpting using the chisel is directly opposed to the ethereal contribution of the air that shapes the initially formless matter.

The creation of **Margherita Raso** (Lecco, 1991, lives and works between Basel and Milan)’s works are also dependent on the result of two methods that intertwine between the use of mechanics and manual processes. Her pieces are always inextricably linked with the spaces and architectures that host them, in an interdependent relationship that cannot be ignored. Hanging like tapestries, or modulated around pre-existing structural elements, the artist’s works radically transform the perception of the exhibition

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spaces, giving them an organic feel, which clashes against the usual vertical-horizontal spatial coordinates of the rooms. Because of the fabric full of textile bas-reliefs (abstract or vaguely figurative), which appear as a free graphic exercise, the environments are infused by a vibration and kinetic energy that emanate from the 'anarchic' resistance of that soft and irregular material contrasted with the rigidity of the places they occupy.

Each of the works exhibited by the two artists for Project Room are also at the center of a workshop conducted by the artist **Derek MF Di Fabio** at the Vigevano Prison which he started two years ago. There, the forms created by Mahmoud and Raso were used as a starting point for a dialogue and writing workshop with a group of inmates who were then confronted with both literary and theoretical pieces. The result of the workshop is a free audio track that can be downloaded from the Foundation's website, which serves as an audio guide of the exhibition. This in itself is the work that **Derek MF Di Fabio** (Milan, 1987, lives and works between Perdaxius and Berlin) presents for Project Room, which exposes his own radical-relational approach that often takes the form of collaboration and art at once. The final output is that of an object of 'secondary importance', whose value and meaning is found in the poetic and political result of the situations and connections it creates. All together, it shapes social interaction as an artistic gesture and provided a mnemonic experience to the audience.

