



## PRESS RELEASE

### FROM CLAY TO ALGORITHMS. Art and technology.

#### From the Intesa Sanpaolo and Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Collections

Exhibition curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Marcella Beccaria with overall coordination by Gianfranco Brunelli  
Gallerie d'Italia - Piazza Scala, Milan  
31 May - 8 September 2019

- An exhibition focusing on the relationship between technology, subjectivity and art which collates masterpieces from two major museums, Intesa Sanpaolo Gallerie d'Italia and Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea.
- A journey through time from a contemporary standpoint, from the present day to antiquity and vice versa, offering up interconnections between artists and artwork from different time periods and cultures.

*Milan, 30 May* - the exhibition **FROM CLAY TO ALGORITHMS. Art and Technology.** is open to the public from **31 May to 8 September 2019** at the **Gallerie d'Italia - Piazza Scala**, Intesa Sanpaolo's museum complex in Milan. **From the Intesa Sanpaolo and Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Collections**, organised in collaboration with **Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea** and curated by **Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev** and **Marcella Beccaria** and coordinated by **Gianfranco Brunelli**.

Featuring **71 major works**, with **43 from the** art collections of **Intesa Sanpaolo**, **22** from those of **Castello di Rivoli**, and including works loaned to Castello di Rivoli by the **CRT Foundation for Modern and Contemporary Art** and by the **Cerruti Foundation**, and with **3 works from the Fondazione Carisbo collections** and **3 from the Fondazione Cariparo collections**, the exhibition examines the relationship that artists from different time periods have had with technology, with its appeal, with its utopias or with its demons, anticipating or reflecting on radical social and cultural changes.

The relationship between human subjectivity, art and technology is rooted in archaic concepts defined by the Greek terms téchne, i.e. art in the sense of know-how, ability or craft, and logos, i.e. words, discourse and reason.

Since the dawn of time, humans have created technology as a means to create useful tools for society, such as utensils, machines or equipment for transporting, communicating or for warfare: from the first stone used by humans to the use of fire and iron and the discovery of clay, to the

wheel, the mirror, paper and printing, electricity, the telephone and the Internet and, finally, to the combined use of genetics, nanotechnology, digital technology, robotics and artificial intelligence.

**Greek pottery** provides the perfect starting point for the exhibition, clearly showing the collaboration between the expertise of the potter and the painter: the *Attican hydria with red figures* (470-460 BC) by the **Painter of Leningrad**, a masterpiece from Intesa Sanpaolo's collection of Attican and Magna Grecian pottery (the historical Caputi collection housed at Gallerie d'Italia - Palazzo Leoni Montanari in Vicenza), wonderfully depicts ceramic painters at work while being crowned by Athena, goddess of *techné*, and by two winged victories.

With regards to European painting, from the mid-fifteenth century, there have been numerous examples of depictions related to technology, gradually developed in the production of everyday items such as utensils, dishes and mirrors, and including expertise applied to architecture. Some examples on display can be found in the works *Supper at Emmaus* (ca. 1590) by **Leandro Bassano** where a large part of the work is dedicated to a meticulous depiction of the kitchen, and in the *Costruzione del tempio di Gerusalemme da parte del re Salomone* ("Construction of the Temple of Jerusalem by King Solomon") (ca. 1754) by **Francesco De Mura**, in which the focus on the building techniques widespread in the painter's time is evident.

Continuing through history, while the start of the twentieth century was characterised by widespread enthusiasm for the machine, such as that of **Giacomo Balla and Umberto Boccioni** - featured in the exhibition with their paintings *Ricerca astratta* ("Abstract Research") and *Workshops in Porta Romana*, two of the key works from **Intesa Sanpaolo's Twentieth Century Collections** - the decades following saw the development of artistic personalities which reflect bitterly on the sense of destruction of humankind transformed into a mannequin-machine, as in the case of the metaphysical painting by **Giorgio de Chirico**.

Post-war optimism for the conquest of new physical and imaginary dimensions - as reflected in *Ambiente Spaziale* ("Space Environment"), 1967 (reconstruction 1981) by **Lucio Fontana**, gifted by Teresita Fontana to Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea - for science and its applications, can be seen in **Spatialism and Kinetic Art and Arte Programmata (Italian Kinetic Art)** in which electricity and movement generate the work of art, as demonstrated by the works of the leading figures of **Gruppo T, Arte Programmata and Kinetic Art** such as Gianni Colombo, Enzo Mari and Bruno Munari.

Artists from the *Arte Povera* movement, on the other hand, proposed the erasure of the distinction between natural and artificial energy, as seen in the neon Fibonacci sequence in the work *Senza titolo* ("Una somma reale è una somma di gente") ("Untitled (A real sum is a sum of people)") (1972) by **Mario Merz** and in the motor and in the refrigerating structure in *Untitled* (*Homage to Fontana*) (1989) by **Pierpaolo Calzolari**.

From the end of the 1970s, the **spread of low-cost electronic technology** has enabled artists to use video and film; its intent is to immerse visitors into works that reflect on a world increasingly driven by image, in which the relationship built between the electronic eye and the human eye is paramount.

In the following decades, the **digital revolution**, the **development of augmented reality** and **artificial intelligence** led to the conception of additional artistic languages, through which artists conveyed multiple interpretations of the world.

From critical awareness to pessimism and the prophetic anticipation of **future scenarios beneficial to society**, the latest generation of artists reflect on the implications of a possible **transhuman**, the result of a self-determined evolution guided by human intelligence and not just by natural selection. With works by artists such as **Dan Graham** and **Janet Cardiff**, the exhibition then leads the visitor to pieces from the latest generation of artists.

Intentionally created by experimenting with digital techniques, at the same time of a poor quality and extremely advanced, the video installation *Hisser* (2015) by **Ed Atkins** confronts viewers with a gloomy figure, a worrying example of existential loneliness that digital interconnectedness can cause. In *What the Heart Wants* (2016) the artist **Cécile B. Evans** asks what being human could mean in a future world that is completely digitised and where reality and virtual reality coincide. The exhibition then leads the visitor to works from other artists such as **Grazia Toderi, Hito Steyerl, Roberto Cuoghi** and **Cally Spooner**, from the Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Collections, showing the multiple viewpoints of contemporary artists with regards to new technologies and their impact on humankind.

According to **Giovanni Bazoli**, President Emeritus of Intesa Sanpaolo: *"We founded Gallerie d'Italia with the aim of sharing the beauty of the buildings and collections of art belonging to Intesa Sanpaolo with the public. Thanks to the temporary exhibitions and by adopting an approach of mutual promotion, our galleries have also become a place where people can discover and admire the masterpieces from the major national and international museums. The exhibition "From clay to algorithms" is testament to this, featuring over 70 works from the bank's art collections and those of the renowned Castello di Rivoli, from the famous Attican Kalpis of the fifth century BC to the sound installation of Cally Spooner from 2017. The project is the result of the collaboration between two key institutions, united by their commitment to preserving and promoting traditional values, while exploring current topics and art."*

According to **Fiorenzo Alfieri**, Chairman of Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea: *"I am particularly pleased to present the exhibition "From clay to algorithms. Art and technology. From the Intesa Sanpaolo and Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Collections, that is intentionally aimed at all ages. It is an original, visionary and creative journey through the history of art and the relationship that the imaginary of artists has had with technology, its developments and, at times, its mistakes."*

The exhibition will be accompanied by an academic catalogue published by Skira Editore, Milan. The catalogue will feature an essay by the two curators, a visual essay and comprehensive sections on all of the works in the exhibition.

PRESS MATERIALS AND PICTURES AT: <https://bit.ly/2VCxeWV>

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**KEY INFORMATION**

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**Opening hours**

Tuesday to Sunday 9.30am - 7.30pm (last entry at 6.30pm)  
Thursday 9.30am - 10.30pm (last entry at 9.30pm)  
Monday: closed

**Special openings**

Sunday 2 June (Italian Republic Day)  
and Thursday 15 August: from 9.30am to 7.30pm - free entry

**Tickets**

Full-price 10.00 euro; reduced 8.00 euro  
Free entry every first Sunday of the month.