

## PRESS RELEASE

### “Enrico Marinelli Contemporary Art Award”

5 finalists chosen among 45 candidates:

**Francesco Arena, Marco Bagnoli, Sakshi Gupta,  
Mikayel Ohanjayan and Barthélémy Toguo**

The **Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore** and the **Guild of the Dome Association** announce the “Enrico Marinelli Contemporary Art Award”, an award intended to commemorate a great man, Enrico Marinelli, founder of the Guild of the Dome Association.

The Award, made possible also thanks to the contribution of **Eurovita Assicurazioni S.p.A.**, will give the winner the opportunity to create an original sculpture for the **Museo dell’Opera del Duomo di Firenze**.

The artwork must be produced in Tuscany with the help of the local artisans and will be exhibited in the museum for six months.

The Coordinator in Chief of the Enrico Marinelli Award is the international renowned curator **Adelina von Fürstenberg**.

The jury, composed by art experts and directors of important artistic institutions, convened in Florence in the past days. They examined the 45 dossiers of artists that come from the five continents and that were suggested by 10 art critics and contemporary art curators.

The five finalists are the following: **Francesco Arena** (Italy), **Marco Bagnoli** (Italy), **Sakshi Gupta** (India), **Mikayel Ohanjayan** (Armenia) and **Barthélémy Toguo** (Cameroon).

The evaluation criteria kept in consideration the ability to be inspired by the context, along with the capacity to create an original artwork that possesses a continuity between past and present and with the help of local artisans. The artists will have to work with the same techniques of the great artists of the past, the ones that created the masterpieces that are now part of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore’s collection.

The finalists will be in Florence from April 9th to April 14th for a walk-through. They shall create a sculpture linked to the theme of “Hope”.

Monsignor Timothy Verdon, the director of the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo and a member of the organizational committee, described “Hope” as following: *“Spes was a theological virtue, meaning Hope in God and in his salvation. Today although it still maintains a religious connotation, it also relates to people and common situations, and their potential to change. It can refer to problems of our times such as immigration, peace, human prosperity.”*

Within the first week on June, the selected artists will have to submit to the jury a 3D rendering of their project, along with a detailed description of the work.

Only one project will be chosen and the winner will be invited for a summer residency in Tuscany where he/she is going to realize the sculpture.

The finished artwork will be presented to the public in October 2018 and will be exhibited temporarily in the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo of Florence.

### **JURY OF THE “ENRICO MARINELLI CONTEMPORARY ART AWARD”**

**Micol Forti**, director of the Collection of Contemporary Art of the Vatican Museum; **David Stuart Elliott**, vice director and senior curator for the RMCA di Guangzhou; **Antonio Natali**, member of the council of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore; **Christian Oxenius**, writer and guest curator of the Kunsthalle di Osnabrück; **Denys Zacharopoulos**, artistic director of the Municipal Gallery, Museum and Art Collection of the City of Athens.

### **MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE FIVE FINALISTS**

#### **Francesco Arena**

Francesco Arena's metaphysical attitude is his strongest quality and this has made him suitable for the Award. One of his outstanding traits has been an ability to maintain a coherent poetic and artistic language throughout the years. Francesco Arena is one of the most interesting representative of the new generation of Italians' artists that will be involved in this first edition of the Enrico Marinelli Award.

#### **Marco Bagnoli**

Marco Bagnoli's broad experience as artist has allowed him to confront a wide range of different ideas and concepts in his work with a consistently poetic approach. He finds inspiration in his knowledge of mathematics, mysticism and philosophy. His deep spirituality makes him an excellent candidate for the Enrico Marinelli Award as well as for the specific context of the Opera del Duomo Museum.

#### **Sakshi Gupta**

Sakshi Gupta's work utilizes a great variety of different expressions and media in objects that brings together different traditions, while also maintaining an individualized profile of distance. It expresses a strongly handmade quality as her vision grows organically from a minute particle towards a grander concept and design. This aspect of her work is significant within *Hope*, the theme of the contest. Her capacity to repeat and move from small gestures to create an *arc-en-ciel*, may work well within the architectural and museological context of the Opera del Duomo.

#### **Mikayel Ohanjanyan**

Mikayel Ohanjanyan works with the rich history and myths of Armenia, his home country. At first sight, the aesthetic of his work is formal, its balance suspended in what seems to be perfect equilibrium. But this belies an underlying tension, both physical and philosophical. The beauty of his work masks subtle “problematic” elements that may even provoke us. The collision of aesthetic and philosophical ideas within Ohanjanyan's work, therefore, enters into a fascinating dialogue with the theme of *Hope*.

#### **Barthélémy Toguo**

Barthélémy Toguo works with a great variety of media as well as with different cultural traditions. We may see influences from Africa as well as inevitable aspects of Western culture, mostly due to colonialism. Toguo is well aware of contemporary issues and is not afraid of confronting what he finds ugly. He refers to the effects of immigration, epidemics, political conflict and personal tragedies, but in doing so he never slumps into despair and maintains a hopeful sense of balance. His social engagement towards Africa, along with his solid bond with the theme of *Hope*, make him a strong candidate for the Enrico Marinelli Award.

**READ MORE:**

**ENRICO MARINELLI**

Enrico Marinelli had a special gift: he was an enthusiastic person whatever he was up to. Businessman, entrepreneur, husband and father, he lately devoted his life to the idea that humankind has much more to share than many know.

He truly believed that each of us can really make the difference and that we all need to see beyond. He most of anything wanted to improve Florence's image to the eye of anybody in the world, by sharing its art as the universal value for mankind.

His love and passion for art and cultural values led him to create The Guild of the Dome to which he dedicated his last years.

**OPERA DI SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE**

The Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore was founded by the Florentine Republic in 1296 with the participation of the city's ecclesiastical authorities to oversee construction of the new cathedral and its bell tower.

Once the church was consecrated on 25 March 1436 and its architectural structure was complete, the Opera's primary task became the conservation and embellishment of this complex of monuments. The baptistry of San Giovanni came under its jurisdiction in 1777 and the Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, set up to house works of art which had been removed from the cathedral and baptistry over the centuries, joined it in 1891.

Today the Opera, in its capacity as a "*fabbriceria*", is subject to the Concordat Laws of 1929 and 1984. It is run by a Board of Directors comprising seven members appointed by Interior Ministry decree with a three-year mandate, who elect one of their number to the post of chairman.

In 1998 the Opera was legally recognized as not-for-profit organization pursuing, as part of its institutional aims, *the protection, promotion and enhancement of the religious, civic, cultural and historical functions of the monuments in its care.*

**GUILD OF THE DOME ASSOCIATION**

The Guild of the Dome Association was founded in 2012 by Enrico Marinelli. The members are entrepreneurs from all the around the world. Although they possess different education, culture and faith, they all share the same desire to support the universal artistic, social and ethics values that are a core point to the monumental complex of the Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral of Florence. The Guild of the Dome Association wishes to operate with the same intent that used to animate the ancient Guilds of Florence, that financed the construction of the complex centuries ago.

**For further information:**

**Ambra Nepi**

**Responsible for the Press Office of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore**

email: [ufficiostampa@operaduomo.firenze.it](mailto:ufficiostampa@operaduomo.firenze.it)

Phone: +39 366 7762363

Phone: +39 348 6543173