

Anri Sala

September 15th – November 4th 2023

Alfonso Artiaco is pleased to announce
Anri Sala's fourth solo show at the gallery.

Opening on September 14th at 7 pm, in the presence of the artist.

Anri Sala presents a new series of frescoes made in the city of Naples. The choice of this ancient technique brings with it a complexity linked to the rhythms of execution. This is why the artist has marked his production with the days of his work, "*giornate*". Each day corresponds to the beginning and end of a part of the work, since the base of *intonaco* (plaster) can be painted only when wet. Once it has dried up it can't be retouched. However, the safety of the project is compounded by the uncertainty of the outcome. As Giorgio Vasari explains in his work *Le Vite* the additional predictive ability must be kept in mind: "(...) *because the colours on a soft wall, show something in a way, which is no longer the same when the wall has dried up*". In Anri Sala's works, additionally to this process, marble fragments are grafted on the flat surface of the fresco. The artist has spent entire days with marble workers, discussing the right choice, the working process and the final result. Cipollino, Radica and Tartaruga are the marbles that emerge to look like parts of the lost work. The liquid glazes of the fresco come in contact with marble, metamorphic rock formed over millennia. The mineral pigment of the colours blends with the mineral texture of the stone.

In the first series of slightly abstract works, *Surface to Air*, clouds float and melt with the marble shapes, sometimes sinuous and sometimes more angular. Again a contrast of nature: the clouds that change hastily their landscape are surrounded by immutable marbles. Like magma, suspended in its transitory nature, or like the sea moments before the waves break, these works seem to capture a moment torn from its inevitable change. Their real nature recalls a distant time whose surface is only the index of the many layers that have allowed its development.

The figure appears in the second series, *Legenda Aurea Inversa*, in which the artist draws inspiration from that Piero della Francesca created for the Bacci Chapel in the Basilica of San Francesco in Arezzo, Tuscany. The Renaissance painter reports some episodes taken from the *Legenda Aurea*, a medieval collection of stories of lives of saints by Jacobus de Voragine. Sala captures the details: the line of the subject wisely follows the veins of marble, but the bright colours of the Renaissance are transformed. A photographic gesture falls on the representation. The tones are reversed, what is positive becomes negative, what is dark becomes bright. The rosy faces acquire shades of blue and green, as well as the hands that look bruised, perhaps stretched in an effort. Modernity is reflected in the Quattrocento through a similar gesture, a consequence of the development of photography. The work becomes a metatemporal window: time contains multiplicity and therefore the synthesis of itself.

The works *Fragmentarium I (Morning)* and *Fragmentarium II (Afternoon, Afternoon Slightly After/Radica)* display fragments of frescoes on custom-made trestles. They contribute to an archaeological journey, assembling pieces of *intonaco* that emerged from the structural fissures formed following the completion of a *giornata*. They are like unearthed artefacts and remnants found at an excavation site. These 'shattered days' serve as preserved vestiges that capture the evolving narrative of creation.

The fresco is often associated with an immovable work because it is made on the wall. The works in question, on the other hand, resemble detached frescoes, except for the support in panels of aerolam, composite aluminium, which gives them a brilliant touch contrasting the porosity of the plaster. The regular breath of the frescoes in the quiet rooms of the gallery is pervaded by the arrival of a sound. An ancient breath of air moves indomitably. It carries the echo of the bodies that Vesuvius did not spare from Pompeii. The air passes through the voids of their casts in an incessant "circular breath". The sound of the *aulos*, a wind instrument used at the time, allows you to hear the passage of air. Anri Sala transforms an archaeological space into a present time: "(...) *he sculpts the space of sound*". The melody has now taken on a new form in a place, the gallery, acquiring an even different time because slow and patient: that of the fresco.

Anri Sala would like to express his gratitude to the following people for their specific and crucial involvement in this exhibition: Gianmarco Biele, Erika De Gennaro, Alessandra Falcone and Domenico Russo.

Anri Sala was born in Tirana in 1974.
He lives and works in Berlin.

Anri Sala's body of works encompasses video installations, sculptures, photographs, drawings, books, performances and scores. His transformative, time-based works are constructed through multiple relationships between image, architecture and sound, utilizing these as elements to fold, capsize and question experience. His works investigate ruptures in language, syntax, and music inviting creative dislocations, which generate new interpretations of history, supplanting old fictions and narratives with new, less-explicit and less-duplicitous ones. Sala brings out from the reality details that, poetically transfigured, reveal unusual aspects of the present. Very often, adopting the point of view of minor characters, his videos tell the great themes of existence transforming small narratives into universal stories. Over time, sound and music have become increasingly important in his works and exhibitions, where they mix and reproduce themselves all around the space, like components of an unusual orchestra, offering the visitor an all-round sensory experience. During the last year the artist has started to work with the fresco's technique. It challenges the artistic production because of its method that constrict in working on the wet lime just one day until it dries without the possibility to rework it.

Anri Sala has realized solo shows at international institutions and museums such as the Winsing Art Place (Taipei, Taiwan), Bourse de Commerce - Fondation Pinault (Paris, France), GAMeC (Bergamo, Italy), Kunsthau Bregenz (Bregenz, Austria), MUDAM (Luxembourg), Castello di Rivoli (Turin, Italy), Fundación Botín (Santander, Spain), the Garage (Moscow, Russia), Instituto Moreira Salles (Sao Paulo, Brazil), Museo Tamayo (Mexico City, Mexico), The New Museum (New York, United States), Instituto Moreira Salles (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), Teshima Seawall House, Benesse Art Site Naoshima (Teshima Island, Japan), Haus der Kunst (Munich, Germany), the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris, France), The Serpentine Gallery (London, United Kingdom) among other. He has taken part in many group exhibitions and biennials, including the 12th Havana Biennial (2015), the Sharjah Biennial 11 (2013), representing France at the 55th Venice Biennale, Italy (2013), the 9th Gwangju Biennale (2012), documenta (13) (2012), the 29th São Paulo Biennial (2010), the 2nd Moscow International Biennale of Contemporary Art (2007), and the 4th Berlin Biennial (2006). Sala has received many awards during his career. He won the Vincent Award (2014), the 10th Benesse Prize (2013), the Absolut Art Award (2011) and the Young Artist Prize at the Venice Biennale (2001). His work is present in many art collections like Pinault Collection, Tate Collection, National Museum of Osaka, The Margulies Collection, MoMA, Art Institute of Chicago, Jardín Botánico Culiacán, Kunsthau Zürich and others.