

Mimmo Paladino

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MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to present an exhibition dedicated to Mimmo Paladino, a master of images and visions. His work moves between memory and invention, intertwining the archaic with the contemporary. "Before the brushstroke, there must be thought. Then comes the brushstroke, the accident, the thing that happens unexpectedly and changes the work. But it always begins with a logic." This principle guides his practice - an ongoing dialogue between rule and intuition, between form and metamorphosis.

Born in Paduli in 1948, Paladino eludes any singular definition. Painter, sculptor, printmaker, photographer, filmmaker - his practice dissolves boundaries between disciplines. "My culture has always been rooted in a certain Mediterranean spirit, but also in darkness, in folk legends." His works grow from this weave of myth and reality: shadowy figures, archaic echoes, a sense of the sacred laced with folklore.

His visual language is shaped by what he calls an "archaeology of memory": Etruscan, Egyptian, and primitive symbols reawakened through a contemporary gaze. Faces, crosses, hands, branches - his recurring elements - hold both simplicity and complexity, evoking human presence in its most intangible form.

The exhibition unfolds as a sequence of apparitions and meditations, between silences and echoes, mysteries and glimmers of light.

KV622, a large black-and-white canvas, features hands and arms emerging like fragments from an ancient visual script. The title nods to Mozart's famed clarinet concerto, suggesting a resonance between musical structure and the painting's enigmatic order - where clarity and chaos live side by side. Not far off, a female figure in sculpture, seen from behind, plunges her arm into a tangle of metal. Her reflection in the mirror doesn't echo the figure but opens a threshold - a space where meaning multiplies, hovering between the visible and the unseen.

Then the light shifts. Gold rises to the surface. A large geometric composition made of ninety gold-leafed wooden squares culminates in a shrine, crowned with

a head from which a golden branch emerges. The rigidity of geometry melts into Renaissance tradition, conjuring the rigour of Piero della Francesca - yet just as easily slips into the realm of fable, where gold signals a return to the mythic and primordial.

Nearby, a monumental sculpture presents a headless figure wrapped in golden branches and lemons. Here, myth, archetype, and the Mediterranean converge - that land "where the lemon trees bloom," as Goethe once wrote.

The exhibition plays out like a visual score, from monochrome introspection to the blinding shimmer of gold. Paladino moves through time and across media with the ease of someone who refuses to be pinned down by a single style. Painting, sculpture, mosaic, film - each medium speaks its own language, and each language welcomes the unexpected: the accident, the surprise, the idea as it takes shape.

Paladino's return to London carries the weight of both recognition and continuity. In 1999, he was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy, and that same year unveiled his monumental installation *I Dormienti* in the underground vaults of the Roundhouse, accompanied by music by Brian Eno. Since the 1980s, London has embraced his work - and now, Paladino returns with a renewed reflection on painting, and on a practice that continues to evolve: poised between thought and impulse, rigour and instinct, memory and experiment.

Mimmo Paladino

Mimmo Paladino (Paduli, 1948) is one of the leading figures of contemporary Italian art. Since the late 1960s, he has developed a distinctive visual language - personal, expansive, and open to a wide range of media. His early work began with photography and drawing, gradually extending into performance and theatre. Alongside his painting, sculpture, and printmaking, he has collaborated with key figures such as Ettore Sottsass, the Memphis Group, Mario Botta, and Renzo Piano.

His work draws strength from the symbolic landscape of Southern Italy, while embracing a broad, experimental vision. In the 1970s, he stepped beyond the frontiers of the avant-garde, widening the possibilities of expression through an ever-evolving mix of techniques and disciplines. He became a central voice in Transavanguardia, the movement theorised by Achille Bonito Oliva, alongside Sandro Chia, Francesco Clemente, Enzo Cucchi, and Nicola De Maria.

The 1980s marked a period of international recognition, with Paladino participating in major exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale and Documenta. In the decades that followed, he continued to explore new territory, bringing his vision into public space with large-scale installations like *Montagna di sale* in Naples and *Montagna blu* in Solopaca, in the province of Benevento. His work has been presented across the globe - from Beijing to Florence's Forte Belvedere, and in numerous institutions throughout Europe and the United States.

Paladino's works are held in the permanent collections of many of the world's leading museums, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim in New York, Tate in London, Neue Galerie in Berlin, the Australian National Gallery in Canberra, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and the Setagaya Art Museum in Tokyo.