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press release

Carola Bonfili **3412 KAFKA**

Curated by **Ilaria Gianni**

Opening: **Wednesday 22 November 2017 | at 6.30pm**
23 November 2017 – 23 February 2018

smART - polo per l'arte
Piazza Crati 6/7, Roma

Rome, november 2017 – smART - polo per l'arte presents *3412 Kafka*, a solo exhibition of works by **Carola Bonfili** curated by **Ilaria Gianni**.

3412 Kafka is just one of many millions of asteroids in our solar system. The artist Carola Bonfili came to hear of it by chance, while she was conducting research some into the work of Franz Kafka. She soon became intrigued by this tiny celestial body, and the position it occupies in our small part of the universe. Her attention thus shifted from the author to the asteroid named after him, and from his life story to the wider universe, seen as a place that puts no limits on the imagination.

The infinity of space, the heavenly bodies that inhabit it and the difficulty of illustrating them are all sources of inspiration for the exhibition *3412 Kafka* that, thanks to a variety of media – sculpture, performance art, educational workshops, videos and virtual reality – opens up a fascinating reflection on the ample potentialities of our imagination.

3412 Kafka is thus not just an exhibition, but a process that is destined to evolve, consisting of several stages that will be presented for the first time in a choral form by smART – polo per l'arte on **November 22nd 2017**

The on-going activities of *3412 Kafka* has already begun with the realization of two workshops for elementary school children, conducted by Carola Bonfili in collaboration with Irene Bianchetti. The first was held in 2015, in a school in the Quarticciolo district in Rome and the second took place in 2017 on the premises of smART.

During these workshops, after a brief lesson on the life cycle of the stars, the children were asked to describe, illustrate and name a planet of their own invention.

These indications were then reworked into various different forms and shapes: in the smART workshop, the children assembled sculptures out of discarded items and trash, while in Quarticciolo the names of the planets were transmitted in Morse code by an automated set of lights on the facades of two adjacent buildings. The children's stories and drawings associated with this event will be shown in a special section of the exhibition.

The concepts of the game and of simulated reality – potentially real but perhaps displaced in time and space – can also be found in an immersive VR video realized with computer graphics, associated with a sound project by Francesco Fonassi.

Carola Bonfili leads the spectator into a world of simulation, into a space within outer space, using the same techniques that are usually associated with video games. Earth is presented as a virtual space, in a dimension that is both familiar and alien, illusory and disturbing.

The last works on display consist of a sculptural landscape suspended between the realms of the real and the utopian, which is the result of a process based on experiences, memories, the rewriting of imaginary references and experimentation upon the various materials that all contribute to make up the artist's cultural roots.

Through a process of construction and deconstruction that is both real and fantastic, *3412 Kafka* makes the creations produced by our imagination more tangible and concrete, by presenting codes, and syntactic and iconographic systems that may appear to be distant and elusive, but that are actually surprisingly familiar.

During the period of the exhibition there will be a discussion of the artist's work with the presence of the curator Ilaria Gianni and a teaching workshop is also planned.

Carola Bonfili (Rome, 1981) lives and works in Rome and Brescia.

Carola Bonfili's work challenges the usual perceptual modalities of our everyday lives. She expresses herself through the use of a broad assortment of artistic media, ranging from photography to video, manual printing and writing, while always paying particular attention to drawing in all its various forms and applications. The element of performance art is often present found in the creative processes that underlie her sculptural works and her environmental installations with immersive characteristic, which tend towards trans-media narrative forms.

After studying the History of Contemporary Art at the La Sapienza University of Rome, Carola continued her education at the Chelsea College of Art and Design in London. The main exhibitions at which she her work has been shown are: *If* at the MACRO in Rome and *D'Apres Giorgio* at the Casa Giorgio De Chirico in Rome, in 2012; *When in Rome* at the Italian Cultural Institute in Los Angeles, in 2011; *Roommates* at the MACRO and *La Danse Macabre* at the Nomas Foundation in Rome, in 2010; and *Fragile Currency* at the Klemm's Gallery in Berlin, in 2009.

Carola has won several awards and prizes including the LUM Prize 2011 (finalist), the Rome Prize 2008-2009 (winner), and the Premio Strozzi at Florence in 2009 (finalist). She was an artist in residence at the American Academy in Rome in 2007 and at the MACRO in 2012. In 2004 she began a regular collaboration with the magazine *Nero*, which led to the publication of a series of monographs on drawings by famous people, entitled *Names of Numbers* starting in 2011.

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