

PRESS RELEASE

Palazzo delle Api, 2018

Adrien Missika

curated by Ilaria Bonacossa

Opening Sunday 27 May 2018, 11 a.m.
Fondazione La Raia, Strada Monterotondo 79, Novi Ligure (AL)

May 2018, Novi Ligure - **Fondazione La Raia – arte cultura territorio** is pleased to present *Palazzo delle Api*, a permanent site-specific work by **Adrien Missika** that is a response to the activities of the biodynamic agricultural complex and the landscape of the Gavi area.

Developing a line of research that began some years ago during a residency in Mexico, the artist has created a series of bee hotels, facilities designed to provide shelter for various species of nomadic pollinator insects, made with natural recycled materials to experiment with their adaptability to the animal kingdom. These refuges built in a variety of forms and sizes, depending on purpose and on the type of insects they are intended to host, are “modernist” structures. Similar structures are commonly used by gardeners and produce farmers to encourage insects to perform their vital activity of pollination. They are mainly deployed to offer a safe place for hibernation in the winter, as in the case of ladybugs, or as nesting places for solitary bees, bumblebees, certain types of wasps and other insects. To attract the insects, special holes are made in different measurements, where each animal – depending on its size – can deposit its eggs. The name solitary bees is applied to all those that do not produce honey and make nests, unlike bees that live in colonies with a queen.

With the aim of housing as many insect pollinators of different species as possible, Missika has created a sculpture with an overturned pyramid form in Luserna stone, a local gray granite, with over 2300 holes of various diameters cut into the stone blocks. The form, dimensions and material used for *Palazzo delle Api* are poised on the borderline between sculpture, architecture and environmental design. On the one hand, the serial array of inhabitable capsules suggests the structure of the buildings of the Japanese Metabolist movement in the

1960s, where form was based on science fiction imagery. On the other, the work addresses the urgent contemporary need to house and integrate populations forced to flee from countries torn by war. In this analogy with an exodus, the social aspect of the work is represented by the ecological necessity of protecting bees, which for some time have been threatened with extinction in spite of the fact that they are indispensable for our environment and its ecosystem, for the reproduction of plants and – as a result – the survival of the human race. The measurements and the material utilized by Adrien Missika are both functional and sculptural in nature, almost reminding us of a commemorative monument, an overturned Aztec pyramid, though every characteristic of the work has a precise role to play in the habitat the artist sets out to create with a socio-ecological objective.

“Adrien Missika is an explorer of real and fantastic worlds, who synthesizes in his works, that are formally “functionalist” but conceptually poetical, articulated processes that are linked to the transformations of the world surrounding us,” **Ilaria Bonacossa**, Art Director at Fondazione La Raia, states. “His project for Fondazione La Raia springs from his search for integration into the landscape achieved through a work that is related to the farm’s activity, especially the production of biodynamic wine and honey. The artist designed a permanent bee and nomad insects’ hive, an upside-down pre-Columbian pyramid inspired to Le Corbusier’s housing units. *Palazzo delle Api* is a utopic sharing space for nomad bees (that naturally nest in walls, trunks or narrow openings) where the stone replaces the wax creating an anti-monument, an unexpected hive where geometry is still the focus but hierarchies, just like the pyramid, are upside-down offering a democratic cohabitation manner. The work, with its welcoming message, seems to ask us about our refuge politics for migrants.”

“*Palazzo delle Api* is the sixth site specific work realized for the Fondazione,” **Giorgio Rossi Cairo**, President of Fondazione La Raia, states. “It will be installed on the lake shore, it will become part of the landscape and will be enriched by the nomadic bees that will build their nest there. The work will be enhanced by the insects’ activity, as time goes by and seasons change, in an ideal harmony that must be sought between man and the environment, artificial and natural. This is the mission that has inspired our farming activity for years and that is passionately developed by the Fondazione through the comparison between different worlds.”

Adrien Missika (Paris, 1981) lives and works in Berlin. He has had solo shows in many museums, including the Belvedere in Vienna, Palais de

Tokyo in Paris, and Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva (2009). His work has been featured in various group shows at important institutions, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Metro Pictures, New York; Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monte Carlo; Le Magasin, Grenoble; Moscow Biennial of Young Art; Seoul Museum of Art, South Korea; Academia di Francia, Villa Medici, Rome; MAXXI, Rome.

Ilaria Bonacossa, curator and critic, after having worked for eight years at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, from 2012 to 2017 was the director of Museo di Villa Croce in Genoa, a municipal institution for contemporary art. Since December 2016 she has been the director of the international fair of contemporary art of Turin, *Artissima*. In 2013 she co-curated the Iceland Pavilion at the Venice Biennale; in 2007 she was a member of the jury for the Leone d'Oro awards at the 52nd Venice Art Biennale, and in 2013 she was a member of the jury of the Inamori Foundation Prize in Kyoto.

***Fondazione La Raia - arte cultura territorio** was founded in June 2013 with the objective of encouraging critical reflection on the landscape in Italy and abroad, through contributions that range through multiple fields of research. The foundation develops artistic, cultural, educational and scientific activities, also with a focus on specific knowledge of the Gavi area. To date, initiatives have included permanent works produced with Remo Salvadori, Koo Jeong A (on public view) and Michael Beutler, a publication with Elio Franzini issued by Corraini, and many public conferences on landscape, featuring the thoughts – among others – of Gilles Clément and the French group Coloco, Paolo D'Angelo, Adriana Verissimo Serrão, Francesco Jodice and Francesco Zanot, Stephanie Hessler. Fondazione La Raia was created by the Rossi Cairo family and is directed by Ilaria Bonacossa. The Board of Advisors is composed of Flavio Albanese, Marco Galateri di Genola, Vicente Todoli, Stefano Baia Curioni and James Bradburne.*

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How to get there

<http://www.la-raia.it/dove-siamo>

Google maps:

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