

## FONDAZIONE LA RAIA – ARTE CULTURA E TERRITORIO |

**Fondazione La Raia-arte cultura territorio** was founded in June 2013 with the aim of promoting in Italy and abroad critical reflections on the landscape, in all its most typical features: geographical, social, productive, agricultural, aesthetic and cultural ones. In the last ten years we held several meetings, open to the public, dedicated to the landscape theme and ten works that international artists created inside the property, open all year long and free of charge. Each work was inaugurated and shown during events open to the local communities, their institutions and schools, in the presence of the artists. The Foundation develops themes that are consistent with the path that **biodynamic farm La Raia** has undertaken in the last twenty years thanks to the Rossi Cairo family: working in harmony with the environment, respecting the nature's cycles, promoting the work of the men and women who live in this place and act in it. The wine cellar was built in rammed earth, cultivations follow the biodynamic principles and the commitment to protect and enhance biodiversity is continuous. The farm has woods, vineyards, cultivated fields and lawns, lakes, gardens, an orchard and several hedges where small animals take shelter.

Fondazione La Raia was founded by **Giorgio Rossi Cairo**, entrepreneur, also founder of the **Value Partners Group** and owner of the **biodynamic farm La Raia**, and **Irene Crocco**, gallerist and contemporary art expert and promoter. **Ilaria Bonacossa** is the artistic director and currently director of **Palazzo Ducale, Genova**.

In the last ten years several artists collaborated with Fondazione La Raia: Remo Salvadori, Koo Jeong-A, Adrien Missika, Francesco Jodice, Cosimo Veneziano, Michael Beutler, Tami Izko, Teresa Giannico e Riccardo Previdi. Scholars Elio Franzini, Paolo D'Angelo, Adriana Veríssimo Serrão, Francesco Zanot, Gilles Clément, the artist collective COLOCO, Stefanie Hessler, Franco Farinelli, Renato Cottalasso, Matilde Marzotto Caotorta, Frank Bohem.

Since 2013 Fondazione La Raia has commissioned and produced **twelve site-specific works** and organized meetings open to the public, dedicated to the landscape theme.

### The works

The Foundation inaugurated its activities in 2013 with project **Nel paesaggio**, conceived and curated by Irene Crocco: artists, philosophers, garden designers, agronomists, photographers and architects were invited to experience the vineyards, the fields and the woods at **La Raia**, and offer new ways to know the Gavi's magnificent landscape through their works.

Project **Nel Paesaggio** was launched with three site specific works by artist Remo Salvadori and the issue of *Dialogo tra Remo Salvadori ed Elio Franzini (A dialogue between Remo Salvadori and Elio Franzini)* – published by Corraini – about the relationship between art, human beings and nature, analysed through the opinion exchanges between artist Salvadori and philosopher Franzini. One of the three works, **Sabato piantare il cipresso (Planting a cypress on Saturday)**, was created in the vineyards and is made of marble, lead, water and a variety of medical herbs

that recall the Saturnian dimension. **Nel Momento (In The Moment)**, the second work, is composed of sixteen elements hung on a wall of the manor house. The third work, **Continuo infinito presente (Continuous infinite present)**, the large steel ring, was created on the inauguration day.

**OUSSSER** was created in 2014: it's a permanent work (a wall painting) by Koo Jeong-A, an Anglo-Korean artist who creates settings and whose main goal is "putting a soul in the space". The work comes alive at sunset. The project was curated by Frank Boehm. Close to the work's presentation, book **OUSSSER** by Koo Jeong-A was published: it's an extract from the artist's stamp collection whose value is purely personal and doesn't depend on external standards. Curated by Frank Boehm and published by A+M Bookstore Edizioni, **OUSSSER** was a 150-copy limited edition.

**BALES 2014/2017** is the permanent work by **Michael Beutler**, a German artist famous for his big sculptural installations created with simple and cheap materials linked to craftsmanship. The project was conceived for the Kunstareal Park in Munich: the park was transformed into a farming field where a baling press gathered the industrial bright fluo straw that had been scattered by the artist on the well-groomed lawns of the park, and created round multicoloured bales. The work enhances the extraneous character of a rural landscape inside modern cities. The uniqueness of each round bale seems to prove that the interaction between human beings and machines doesn't necessarily hinder creative ability. Reinstalled on the Gavi hills **BALES 2014/2017** was further transformed, focusing on the complex relationship between nature and artificiality, industrial work and a personal, manual care for nature.

**Palazzo delle Api (Bees' Palace)** was created in 2018: it's a permanent site-specific work by **Adrien Missika**, a response to the biodynamic farm's activities and to the Gavi landscape. Developing the research that he began some years before, the artist created a series of bee hotels made of natural recycled materials: they were designed as shelters for various species of nomadic pollinator insects, to test their adaptability to the animal kingdom. These refuges are commonly used by gardeners and farmers to encourage insects to perform their vital activity of pollination, and are mainly used to offer a safe place for hibernation in winter, for example for ladybugs, or as nesting places for solitary bees, bumblebees and certain types of wasps. With the aim of housing as many different species of pollinator insects as possible, Missika created a sculpture which is a reversed pyramid made of Luserna stone, a local gray granite, with over 2300 holes of various diameters cut into the stone blocks. The social aspect of the work is the ecological need to protect bees, very much endangered although indispensable for the environmental ecosystem, for the reproduction of plants and for the survival of humankind.

In 2019 Fondazione La Raia, in collaboration with the Piedmont Museum Centre and Forte di Gavi, promoted and organized **Il Corsaro Nero e la vendetta del Gavi (The Black Corsair and the revenge of Gavi)** by **Francesco Jodice**: an exhibition, a performance, an installation. Jodice took pictures of the architecture, landscapes, monuments and wine cellars, going through the dialect stories and the protagonists of the history of Gavi and Novi Ligure. In his searches he came to know the work done by Angelo Francesco Lavagnino, an important classical composer who made Gavi his chosen land. Here, from the end of the fifties to the seventies, he worked on

hundreds of new musical scores for movie *Othello* by Orson Welles and several Italian B-movies. The nine works exhibited at Forte di Gavi - low reliefs obtained from the unexpected fusion of the artist's pictures with the posters of movies whose musical scores Lavagnino composed - are the result of the union of two worlds: reality and fantasy. When the exhibition dedicated to *Il Corsaro Nero e la vendetta del Gavi* at Forte di Gavi ended in September 2019, one of the works was taken to La Raia, where it is still exposed. The work also encompasses a soundtrack. This last work was created from the documentation of the musical performance played in the vineyards, on the inauguration day, by the musical band "Romualdo Marengo" from Novi Ligure. Lavagnino's music was transcribed by the Niccolò Paganini Conservatory in Genoa.

**BIOMEGA Multiverso** is the exhibition by **Cosimo Veneziano** at Tenuta Cucco, the organic farm owned by the Rossi Cairo family at Serralunga d'Alba. The exhibition is included in project BIOMEGA that began in 2018 with the support of Compagnia di San Paolo, within tender ORA! Produzioni di Cultura Contemporanea. In the last year the artist, in collaboration with the Neuroscience Department of University IULM in Milan, has carried out a transdisciplinary project on the use of biotechnologies in the food farming sector, to help the comprehension of consumers' purchasing procedures, that are the subject of study of neuromarketing. Starting from these surveys Cosimo Veneziano created an installation composed of silk-screen printings and embroideries on fabric, in dialogue with an original marble borer, an *Ostrinia nubilalis* butterfly whose caterpillar is a parasite that destroys corn. One of the project's main aims is stimulating visitors to reflect on how aesthetics and the implementation of neuroscience research can affect their choices as consumers.

**Oak Barrel Baroque** Four years after *BALES 2014/2017*, Michael Beutler returned to La Raia and created a new work for Fondazione La Raia – arte cultura territorio: *Oak Barrel Baroque*. Inspired by the architecture of Palladio and the churches in Italian town squares, the work was created with wooden beams and old barrel staves. Beutler further developed his research on handcrafted products made of natural materials like recycled paper and wood, now used for different purposes. He changed the shape of the building where people live and work, capturing their atmospheres while changing their characteristics, aims and functions. The structure of *Oak Barrel Baroque* recalls the history of rural architecture and creates a place that is at the same time a refuge, a church and a theater. This is why it was inaugurated with performance *Care Selve. Florilegio*, a show that encourages to rediscover the spirituality of nature.

**Inventory** is the new site-specific project by Tami Izko for the tenth anniversary, in 2023, of Fondazione La Raia – arte cultura territorio. A small cave along the entry road to the wine cellar becomes the right place to store each single piece, the pixels of the multi-coloured landscape of this biodynamic estate in the Gavi, with its unique biodiversity. An inventory is a list of things that we collect and choose, the book where we mark what we find. An exercise that not only helps to put things in order but encourages to look more carefully. That is what Tami Izko chose to do: find, discover and tell the visitor that she experienced La Raia's landscape and lingered in front of a small cave on the entry road, envisaging it as the chamber of wonders of her personal selection of this territory, in the inventory of the surrounding space. The work is composed of thirty-two little coloured glazed, porcelain and gres sculptures, some of them floating on the small lake pond that becomes a fountain, both natural and sculptural. These works recall elements taken from La

Raia's vegetable kingdom and reinterpreted: vine trunks, lake reeds, pinecones, walnut shells, acorns, bunches of grape, shells and shrubs, and elements belonging to the farm's work and people: shoe soles, plastic cables, workwear.

**MOODCLOCK** by Riccardo Previdi is a site-specific installation that engages in a playful and poetic dialogue with the medieval architecture of Serralunga d'Alba, home to the Tenuta Cucco winery owned by the Rossi Cairo family. Consisting of four coloured panels mounted on the seventeenth-century bell tower of the Church of San Sebastiano nel Borgo, the piece depicts various moods through stylised faces, reminiscent of icons. This evokes the original purpose of clocks and sundials, which was to mark time; here, however, this function is replaced by emotions. A fifth face, which is upside down and positioned on a Tenuta Cucco window, is titled ZEITGEIST. This expands the visual and conceptual scope of the installation, establishing a visual and symbolic connection between the village, the castle, and the winery. Drawing inspiration from medieval heraldry and crafted with materials and colours reminiscent of local window shutters, MOODCLOCK brings the architectural space to life, offering a subjective interpretation of time that is more closely aligned with human experience than technical measurement. It was inaugurated on 7 June 2025.

### Public meetings and publications

Project ***Nel Paesaggio*** also included a meeting-conference held by philosophers Paolo D'Angelo, Director of the Faculty of Aesthetics at Università di Roma Tre in Rome, and Adriana Veríssimo Serrão, Coordinator of the European research project "Architecture and landscape" at University of Lisbon, about the representation of landscapes in the world of art.

***What we want: il paesaggio come desiderio collettivo (landscape as a common desire)*** was a conference-dialogue on landscape, photography and society between photographer Francesco Jodice and photography critic and historian Francesco Zanot. This was the first of the six meetings of *The Book Tour*, the traveling project by Jodice and Zanot, held in six institutions dedicated to contemporary art.

***Paesaggi in Movimento Passo 1: coreografia e cartografia (Landscapes in movement Step 1: coreography and cartography)*** was a project of residence, artistic creation and experience shared with the spectators. The workshop held by the group of young French landscape designers COLOCO in cooperation with Gilles Clément, one of the most renowned landscape designers and theorists, and actor and dancer Leonardo Delogu, was a study and exploration experience, an invitation to travel along La Raia's natural space to experience lived, danced or drawn landscapes.

***Paesaggi in Movimento Passo 2: brainstorming (Landscapes in movement Step 2: brainstorming)***: a collective discussion coordinated by COLOCO and Matilde Marzotto Caotorta, with Gilles Clément. They presented to the audience the first part of the project through images and videos, opinion exchanges, reflections and experiences. Gilles Clément suggested five key points to face the complex theme of landscape nowadays: water, how to approach the landscape,

the landscape designer's political role, the comparison with society and the study of the vegetable kingdom's dynamics and reactions, in order to act on it in the best way.

**Seascapes/Paesaggi marini:** a conversation between the German writer and curator **Stefanie Hessler** and the teacher and geographer **Franco Farinelli**. The meeting aimed at analysing the seascapes' preservation and transformation, their history and the way they have been described, with an eye to the oceans' current conditions and human interference in their ecosystem.

The Fondazione issued the book "**Alla scoperta della biodiversità**" ("Discovering biodiversity") by Renato Cottalasso, dedicated to La Raia's multi-year experience in organic and biodynamic agriculture. A tale embellished with more than 200 pictures, about the new animal and vegetable inhabitants that have made the farm a unique ecosystem over the years.

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