

PRESS RELEASE

FONDAZIONE LA RAIA IN ITALY'S PIEDMONT REGION REVEALS 'OAK BARREL BAROQUE' BY ARTIST MICHAEL BEUTLER, THE NEW PERMANENT INSTALLATION AT LA RAIA ESTATE, OPENING OCTOBER 2, 2021

For the second time, the German artist, known for his large sculptural installations created with natural materials such as paper or recycled wood, displays his latest project amidst the hills of La Raia



Gavi, Italy (September XX, 2021) - Four years after his project *Bales 2014/2017*, Michael Beutler returns to Gavi to create *Oak Barrel Baroque*, a new project on display for [Fondazione La Raia–arte cultura territorio](#) located at the Locanda La Raia in the Piedmont region of Italy. From the second of October 2021, *Oak Barrel Baroque* will be available for public viewing as part of the foundation's permanent display collection. This is the eighth site-specific installation following past works by Remo Salvadori and Koo Jeung A, commissioned by Fondazione La Raia, and curated by Ilaria Bonacossa.

For almost one decade, Fondazione La Raia has invited artists of different disciplines to take a critical look at the Gavi landscape. The artworks created on the property are permanently placed in La Raia's vineyards and fields, examining the relationship between the land, nature, and art. The Foundation develops, organizes and supports artistic, educational, scientific and research activities, especially the branches of knowledge that focus on the relationship between man and nature, biodynamic farming and Steiner pedagogy, and the history and traditions of the Gavi territory.

Oak Barrel Baroque is Beutler's second project for Fondazione La Raia, and reflects the heritage of rural architecture in the region, and resembles a country chapel, small theater, or a refuge for the people visiting the estate.

Beutler's inspiration came from the landscape of La Raia and the principles of sustainability that are key to the foundation's principles. Beutler explains: "The idea for the creation of the work started with the possibility of using the wood from barrels at the end of their life cycle, to transform them into a living space for use amidst the vineyards. At first I wanted to build something larger, resembling a church, with the apse and a portico in the style of Palladio; then I realized that it was better to scale the size down. I wanted a structure similar to a typical country church in a small Italian town, blending various aspects of the Italy I love, and putting the typical structures and forms of the city into a rural landscape. Those aspects are all gathered here, in a single building."



The installation was built on-site over a one-month period using barrique staves from La Raia Winery that have reached the end of their life cycle. Transforming La Raia into an open-air workshop, each oak stave has been meticulously positioned and interlocked by hand, using an ancient Japanese construction technique that requires no screws or bolts. The result reflects a small votive temple with a frontal pronaos, which simultaneously acts as an antechamber and a stage.

The apse of the small structure is a half barrel over four meters in diameter, resting on stilts in a hollow surrounded by oak trees, which symbolizes the complete life cycle of a plant that has been very important for the production of wine across the centuries. From the front of the structure, which is meant to convey a small church or theater, visitors can shelter themselves from the sun while enjoying the view of La Raia's stunning landscape and vineyards.



“In his new work for Fondazione la Raia, Michel Beutler explores the decontextualization of forms, processes, and the materials themselves, almost as if to encourage us to live in different contexts – urban or natural – in a seamless manner that fosters respect and awareness,” says Ilaria Bonacossa, Artistic Director of Fondazione la Raia.

For more information visit, <https://www.la-raia.it/en/foundation>.

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About Fondazione La Raia - Arte Cultura Territorio:

Fondazione La Raia was founded in June 2013 with the aim of promoting critical reflections on the landscape in Italy and abroad, through contributions in a wide range of fields. The foundation develops artistic, cultural, educational and scientific activities and research, also with the objective of fostering specific knowledge of the Gavi area. Fondazione La Raia, directed by Ilaria Bonacossa, was created by Giorgio Rossi Cairo and Irene Crocco, who formulated the project “Nel Paesaggio” which set the course of research of the foundation with the implementation of an initial series of works and series of public encounters. To date, permanent works have been produced by Remo Salvadori, Koo Jeong A, Michael Beutler and Adrien Missika (open to the public), as well as the exhibition by Francesco Jodice “Il Corsaro Nero e la vendetta del Gavi”

About Michael Beutler (Oldenburg 1976) lives and works in Berlin. His works have been featured in solo shows in many museums, including Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, and the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt. He has taken part in a number of biennials, including Gwangju, South Korea, and the Berlin Biennale. Working across genres, Beutler encourages alternative perceptions, opening up new views, and new approaches to the strategies and methods of making art. His works can be understood as reactions to architectural and social structures. Beutler incorporates industrially manufactured or processed materials, such as paper, metal, wood or plastic, shaping them into large-scale building elements with specially developed tools. He also involves local collaborators in this process.

About La Raia Estate:

A 180-hectare estate comprising a 12-room boutique hotel “Locanda La Raia”, a biodynamic farm, and a winery. The estate's most eye-catching project is the Fondazione La Raia. The contemporary on-site art foundation encourages artists of different disciplines to create unique site-specific works and exhibitions to spotlight the local landscape.

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