

PLEASE COME BACK **THE WORLD AS PRISON?**

26 artists and **50 works** recount prison as a metaphor for the contemporary world and the contemporary world as a metaphor for prison: technological, hyperconnected, shared and ever more closely controlled.

AES+F, Jananne Al-Ani, Gianfranco Baruchello, Elisabetta Benassi, Rossella Biscotti, Mohamed Bourouissa, Chen Chieh-Jen, Simon Denny, Ră di Martino, Harun Farocki, Omer Fast, Claire Fontaine, Carlos Garaicoa, Dora García, Jenny Holzer, Gülsün Karamustafa, Rem Koolhaas, H.H. Lim, Lin Yilin, Jill Magid, Trevor Paglen, Berna Reale, Shen Ruijun, Mikhael Subotzky, Superstudio and Zhang Yue

#PleaseComeBack

9 February – 21 May 2017

www.fondazionemaxxi.it

"War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength".
(George Orwell, 1984)

Rome 8 February 2017. Now that global communication also means global control, that the sharing born out of the Internet and social networks has dismantled our privacy, the word *prison* takes on very new meanings: with the exhibition **PLEASE COME BACK. The world as prison?** curated by **Hou Hanru** and **Luigia Lonardelli** at MAXXI from **9 February to 21 May 2017**, **26 artists** through **50 works** will be shedding light on the problems relating to the control typical of contemporary society.

The exponential development of digital technologies, the advent of the social networks, the use of Big Data, have progressively and inexorably changed our society which is witnessing the collapse of the philosophies of social and urban sharing and the establishment of new regimes that in the name of security are stripping us, with our consent, of every intimate and personal space.

PLEASE COME BACK starts out from these considerations and seeks an answer to the question: *what would we like back in our lives from the paradise lost of the modern age?*

Hung in MAXXI's Gallery 5, the exhibition takes its title from the work of the same name by the collective **Claire Fontaine**, born out of the artists' thinking about the society at large as a space of imprisonment and our uncanny position in it. On this basis, **PLEASE COME BACK** takes as its investigative focus the **condition of contemporary society under the control of the power system**, explored in both its physical dimension and in its metaphorical meaning. The exhibition is composed of **three sections: Behind the walls, Outside the walls** and **Beyond the walls**.

The first section – **Behind the walls** – features artists who have had direct experience of prison, because they have been detained, they have made it the subject of their work or because they grew up in environments characterised by the looming presence of prison.

They include **Berna Reale** with a video telling the story of the light of the Olympic torch within Brazilian prisons, **Harun Farocki** who uses films from the surveillance cameras of the Corcoran maximum security prison in California and **Gianfranco Baruchello** with his interviews with prisoners in the Rebibbia Civitavecchia jails.

In **Outside the walls** we find the works of those artists who have reflected on the prisons we cannot see, on the surveillance regimes capable of transforming the contemporary cities into true "open prisons". Among them are **Superstudio** which with their *Continuous Monument* had prophetically imagined a model of global

urbanization alternative to nature, **Mikhael Subotzky**, who is presenting video materials supplied by the Johannesburg police; **Lin Yilin** who with his performance reproduces an example of privation of liberty to test the reactions of the citizens of a Chinese city Haikou or in Paris and **Rä Di Martino** who transforms Bolzano into the backdrop for a scene with mock tanks.

In the third section – **Beyond the walls** – the protagonist is the theme of *surveillance* as a “dominant organizational practice”, an all-pervasive phenomenon throughout our following 11 September 2001. Among the works presented in this area, the practice of “war on terror” becomes the protagonist in **Jenny Holzer’s** investigation, **Simon Denny’s** project is inspired by the Snowden revelations, **Jananne Al-Ani** reproduces the perspective of the drones exploring various Middle Eastern sites, while in his visionary work **Zhang Yue** prefigures future wars or a plan for the destruction of the United States.

PLEASE COME BACK. The world as prison? In presenting these artist’s visions of the complex weave of themes characterising thinking on current society, we are faced with **a critical overview** of this last, highlighting the alarm while proposing as a solution a return to the fundamental values of the individual.

The exhibition is accompanied by a series of **collateral events** relating to the key issues: a **FILM SEASON** tracing the history of the post-modern world through **four films**: *Pezzi* by Luca Ferrari (2012), *L’ora d’amore* by Andrea Appetito and Christian Carmosino (2008), *Milleunanotte* by Marco Santarelli (2012) and *Citizenfour* by Laura Poitras (2014), recounting how over the years we have become ever more closely controlled due to new global communications.

The **workshop by the artist Claudia Losi** entitled **UNA VOLTA... ALL’IMPROVISO** conceived within a prison in order to try to involve, sensitively and non-rhetorically, the imaginations and complex affections of those obliged to remain distant.

And then there is **BEYOND THE WALL**, a **workshop by the MAXXI Education Department** bringing pupils from a secondary school class in order to initiate reflection on physical and virtual prisons and the restriction of freedom.

To all this is added **STORYTELLING** a story hour hosted in the museum (**29 April 2017 from 4.00 to 7.00 PM**) in which the actor and radio presenter **Matteo Caccia** interprets the testimony of listeners to the Rai Radio2 programme *Pascal* invited to consider the effects of the first global anthropological mutation to affect our civilization.

The press kit and images of the exhibition can be downloaded from the Reserved Area of the Fondazione MAXXI’s website at <http://www.fondazionemaxxi.it/area-riservata/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

MAXXI – National Museum of XXI Century Arts

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opening hours: 11.00 AM – 7.00 PM (Tues, Weds, Thurs, Fri, Sun) | 11.00 AM – 10.00 PM (Saturday) | closed Mondays

Admittance free for students of art and architecture from Tuesday to Friday

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