

# Musei delle Lacrime

Apr 17 — Nov 24, 2024 | Museo Correr, Venice, Italy

Fondazione Civici Musei di Venezia and Venice International Foundation present *Musei delle Lacrime* (Museums of Tears), a project conceived by Francesco Vezzoli (Brescia, 1971), engaging in site with the rooms of the Museo Correr in Venice from April 17 to November 24, 2024.

The exhibition, curated by Donatien Grau, builds on Francesco Vezzoli's ongoing enquiry in experiencing heritage in radical and fundamental ways. Nearly thirty years ago, the artist began embroidering tears onto images of masterpieces, thereby creating his own museum, and confronting the ideology of the museum as an assertion of power. In the Museo Correr, the quintessential modern display of heritage art, he brings it all into a new vision with works spanning over twenty years of art-making, from already historical pieces to nearly a dozen newly-created, especially conceived.

The exhibition marks a new chapter in the vision of the Venice International Foundation, stemming from the initiative of its President, Luca Bombassei. As an architect who collects contemporary art, Bombassei embraces the historical mission of the Foundation: the safeguarding and protection of Venetian artistic heritage. He envisions contemporary art as vital to the mission of the Venice International Foundation. For the first time in the organisation's history, VIF has invited a contemporary artist to reimagine a venerated space in Venice.

Luca Bombassei, President of the Venice International Foundation, explains: "It is with great enthusiasm that we have entrusted Francesco Vezzoli with the commission for a contemporary art project capable of harmoniously interacting with the iconic spaces of then Museo Correr. By focusing the spotlight on the precious treasures that the museum holds, the intervention reinforces the commitment of the Venice International Foundation to promote artistic innovation and enhance the cultural heritage of Venice, a fundamental goal of the foundation since the very beginning of its work."

Francesco Vezzoli explains: "The extraordinary opportunity presented to me by the Venice International Foundation is a challenge that I am profoundly happy to embrace. Immersing oneself in the rooms of the Museo Correr with its masterpieces embedded in the framework designed by Carlo Scarpa, is a true journey into the history of Venice – a history in which modern and heritage do not have to contradict one another, but can actually enrich together our perception of life in ground-breaking ways, in which issues of taste and context can be questioned anew. *Musei delle Lacrime* is conceived as an investigation into the tears lost in the history of art. From Roman frescos to 20th century avant-garde – both present in Venetian art history - the human body has been represented and studied in every possible way. After some extensive research, I realized that you can find all kinds of activities and expressions of feelings, apart from the act of crying. Tears are remarkably absent from the visual universe of art, they are a sign of weakness, which we do not want the public image of art to be. Art can be intimate, like my gesture of embroidery, it can change our lives. That is what museums show, and I am thrilled to continue this journey in Venice, at Museo Correr."

For Mariacristina Gribaudo, President of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia, "the dialogue that has emerged from Vezzoli's talk on the extraordinary heritage of the Correr, in particular with the masterpieces of the Quadreria by Cosmè Tura, Jacopo, Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, Antonello da Messina, Vittore Carpaccio, to name but a few, who were themselves guests of honour in Carlo Scarpa's design, tells us, once again, about the extraordinary life of museums and their ability to be places that always speak the language of the contemporary and topical, in every age. And that for this reason they must be part of the daily life of everyone, of all citizens, of all ages."

## THE EXHIBITION

Musei della Lacrime draws on Francesco Vezzoli's contribution to art history: expanding, questioning, challenging the ways heritage is brought to us and the way our contemporary era draws from it looking into the ideological premises of every setting, to address the commonality of human experiences.

The exhibition project, conceived at the invitation of Venice International Foundation, finds its roots in the site of Museo Correr itself, architect and designer Carlo Scarpa's masterpiece of modernist display designed to host 13th to 17th century paintings and sculptures. Scarpa invented new ways of theatricalizing paintings and thereby created a modern shrine for Venetian heritage. Addressing this ambivalence of modern and historical, Francesco Vezzoli fits into the exhibition display of Museo Correr in dialogue with Scarpa's approach and paying homage to Venice's double history of embodiment of heritage as well as of modern recreation; as such, he connects the museum's collection by creating parallels with other Carlo Scarpa exhibition designs. The exhibition's installation elements are designed by Filippo Bisagni.

Francesco Vezzoli embroiders his paintings on his own, as a private, intimate experience, turning upside down the categories of masculine and feminine. In this exhibition, he brings it into conversation with an art history defined by rules of masculinity – from the canon to the display – and opens up to a different experience of heritage and of our time.