

Fondazione Antonio Ratti

# Antonio's Dream: A Journey Through Art and Textile

10 October 2021 – 31 January 2022

Villa Olmo Villa del Grumello Villa Sucota  
Kilometer of Knowledge  
Como

Curated by  
Lorenzo Benedetti, Annie Ratti and Maddalena Terragni

An exhibition tracing the work, life and passions of the Como-based entrepreneur Antonio Ratti: art, culture and entrepreneurship return to the territory, reactivating and enhancing a public location of great interest for the city

*Knowledge of the past generates new ideas  
and creates new forms of beauty*  
— Antonio Ratti

In Como from October 10th 2021 until January 31st 2022, the Antonio Ratti Foundation presents the exhibition *Antonio's dream: a journey through art and textile*, curated by Lorenzo Benedetti, Annie Ratti and Maddalena Terragni. An exhibition project which reunites the vision and history of Antonio Ratti from his place of origin, to the city where his idea of business culture developed, leaving a precious legacy which is still very much alive.

Intertwining ancient textile research, contemporary works of art and archival materials, the exhibition traces the life, work and vision of the industrialist and patron Antonio Ratti, one of the great entrepreneurs who, together with his company Ratti SpA, reinvigorated industrial Italy.

The third exhibition dedicated to Antonio Ratti – after the one at Palazzo Te in Mantua in 2017, and at the Baths of Diocletian in Rome in 2018 – *Antonio's dream: a journey through art and textile*, further deepens the vision and history of the entrepreneur, expanding the project and communicating directly with the places where he lived and worked all his life.

The journey through the exhibition is divided between public and private spaces of great interest and the

headquarters of the Foundation, created by Ratti in 1985, where his textile collection is still kept today. Works created specifically for the occasion help to create a cohesive visual relationship between artistic research, ancient fabrics, the story of Antonio Ratti and the interior and exterior spaces of the exhibition. His idea comes alive again: that experience and knowledge, art and experimentation are fundamental tools to understand one's time and generate new ideas.

The exhibition is hosted in the halls of Villa Olmo and Villa Sucota, in their parks and in other places in the city, creating a network between focal points of the cultural fabric of Como.

The heart of the exhibition is Villa Olmo, a short walk from the city centre. Thanks to the staging designed by the architect Philippe Rahm and the graphic design of Wolfe Hall, archival materials and ancient fabrics interact with the contemporary works of art in the neoclassical rooms of the villa. Artists who have collaborated with the Foundation over the years, such as John Armleder, Luigi Ontani, Giulio Paolini, Walid Raad, Yvonne Rainer, Julia Brown, Vincent Ceraudo, Zishi Han and Moira Ricci, have created works designed specifically for these spaces, capable of communicating the vision and legacy of Antonio Ratti. A documentary made by Domenico Palma, screening inside the Villa, reveals Antonio Ratti through the words and memories of those who collaborated with him, and shared his dreams and visions. Hence a vivid and intense portrait of the Como visionary is composed.

The exhibition extends into the gardens of the Villa and into the Kilometer of Knowledge with the works of Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Liliana Moro, Giulio Paolini and R  di Martino.

The journey through the exhibition ends at Villa Sucota, the final stage of the show and headquarters of the Antonio Ratti Foundation. The park of the Villa, which already houses permanent works by Gerry Bibby, Jimmie Durham, Liliana Moro, Matt Mullican and Richard Nonas, will be enriched by installations by artists who over the years have participated in the Artists' Research Laboratory, including Invernomuto, Daniel Jablonski and Oscar Santillan.

Inside the Villa, other sections of Antonio Ratti's textile archive are introduced: around the large tables, there are works by artists who have collaborated with the institution for years, from Jimmie Durham to Giuseppe Gabellone, to Mario Garcia Torres and Melanie Gilligan, and again Joan Jonas, Christina Mackie, Walid Raad and finally Karl Holmqvist, who is also part of the exhibition's opening programme of performances.

The exhibition extends to the city, with Alfredo Jaar's installation on the facade of the Casa del Fascio for the

opening of the exhibition, and a work by Hans Haacke installed on the facade of the Teatro Sociale and at former San Francesco Church (Cultural Space Antonio Ratti).

The exhibition is an opportunity not only to tell the life and story of a visionary entrepreneur, but also to further the idea he sought and supported of the dissemination and sharing of cultural values.

#### Artists

John Armleder, Julia Brown, Vincent Ceraudo, R  Di Martino, Jimmie Durham, Gaia Franchetti, Giuseppe Gabellone, Melanie Gilligan, Hans Haacke, Zishi Han, Karl Holmqvist, Invernomuto, Alfredo Jaar, Daniel Jablonski, Joan Jonas, Ilya e Emilia Kabakov, Christina Mackie, Liliana Moro, Luigi Ontani, Domenico Palma, Giulio Paolini, Diego Perrone, Walid Raad, Yvonne Rainer, Moira Ricci, Oscar Santillan, Mario Garcia Torres, Oriol Vilanova.

## Antonio Ratti

Antonio Ratti, entrepreneur and art patron from Como, creator of the homonymous company and foundation, based his business on research and innovation with constant attention to the social context and the quality of the working environment. In his work, cultural and artistic activities have always been an essential element towards the creation of a high-quality product. Antonio Ratti's vision unfolds from the idea that textiles are, in fact, a cultural product. In the pioneering complex designed by Tito Spini in 1958 for Ratti S.p.A., the Palazzina dei Servizi Sociali was used as a canteen during the day, while in the evening, it would host concerts, theatrical performances, courses, and debates open to the workers. The need to find inspiration for the creation of new textile designs led Antonio Ratti to collect antique textiles from all over the world. In 1985, his prestigious textile collection

became the heart of the cultural foundation that still bears his name today. Here, in addition to the study and conservation of the textile archive and collection, the CSAV – Artists' Research Laboratory program is held every year, where young artists from all over the world have the opportunity to deepen their practices meeting the great masters of the contemporary art scene. Over the years, Fondazione Antonio Ratti has become a reference point for research, an idea incubator, and a place open to exchange and experimentation.



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