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**miart 2021  
STARRY WORLDS: THE POETIC MAP OF MILAN**

*The stars had only one task,  
they taught me how to read.  
They taught me I had a language in heaven  
and another language on earth.*

Mahmud Darwish (1941-2008),  
"Poetic regualtions", translated from the Arabic by Jeffrey Sacks,  
from "Why did you leave the horse alone?", 1995

*Milan, 16 September 2021 - **Starry Worlds** is a brand new project created by **miart** for the **Milan Art Week** and focuses in paying special attention to the **poetic word interpreted as a universal language**, to promote the blossoming of new methods of communication among the people that participate in the fair and the Milan Art Week.*

This project started to take shape right from its selected title, specifically chosen for the twenty-fifth edition of miart, **Dismantling the silence** - from the poetry collection by the same name created by the American poet of Serbian origins **Charles Simić**, fifty years after publication. Other quotes then followed to accompany the progressive unveiling and communication of the contents of the fair: from **Blossoming of trust**, an expression taken from a poem by **Moira Egan**, to **Dwell in possibility**, a verse borrowed from **Emily Dickinson**.

The interest in poetic fragments expanded further through a series of initiatives aim at giving value to new exchanges between past and present, history and experimentation, including **And flowers / words** - a title once again taken from the writings of **Charles Simić** - a series of conversations on poetry that were held weekly on miart's digital channels and that saw the participation of several celebrities from the Italian art and culture world: from **Chiara Costa** to **Luca Lo Pinto**, **Lorenzo Giusti**, **Moira Egan**, **Sergio Ricciardone**, **Emanuele Trevi**, **Cristiana Perrella**, **Massimiliano Gioni**, **Mariangela Gualtieri** all the way to **Luca Cerizza**.

The latest of these initiatives is **Starry Worlds**, a new proposal inspired by the poem *For Memory* (1981) by the American poet and intellectual **Adrienne Rich** (1929-2012) - and in particular by the verses:

*freedom is daily, prose-bound, routine  
remembering. **Putting together, inch by inch  
the starry worlds.** From all the lost collections.*

Driven by the wish to "put together, inch by inch, the starry worlds", miart invited many Milan-based participants by asking the **artists involved in the September exhibitions** to **share verses, quotes and fragments of poems** that are significant or influential for



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their work. Starting from Monday 13 September, this anthology-constellation will be presented through miart digital for what will be to all effects a **poetic map of the city of Milan**.

The **artists** involved in the project are: **Maurizio Cattelan** fot Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, **Simon Fujiwara** fot Fondazione Prada, **Alessandro Pessoli** for Chiostrri di Sant'Eustorgio, **Nairy Baghramian** for Fondazione Furla, **Zehra Dogan** for PAC Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, **Adrian Paci** for ArtLine, **Elisabetta Benassi** for Fondazione Adolfo Pini, **Simone Fattal** for Fondazione ICA, **Corrado Levi** for Triennale Milano, **Vincenzo Agnetti** for Archivio Vincenzo Agnetti and **Tõnu Kõrvits** for MiTo Settembre Musica.

**Maurizio Cattelan**, protagonist of *Breath Ghost Blind* at **Pirelli HangarBicocca** who wished to share poems by the Kurdish-Syrian poet **Golan Haji** (1977) and that embodies the spirit of his exhibition. The artist has also chosen an excerpt from Haji for the exhibition catalogue: a passage in prose where she offers a new interpretation of the figure of the beggar and that of the dog - key to her new project - juxtaposing two fundamental figures in ancient literature: the Arab poet and scholar Al-Maarri and the Greek poet Homer.

**Simon Fujiwara**, participating in **Fondazione Prada** with the exhibition *Who the Bær*, has also offered a comparison yet less traditional in this case. In fact, according to the artist, the two main sources of linguistic inspiration for his work are **William Shakespeare** and **Winnie the Pooh**, both of whom he strongly claims to be authors of poetry.

**Alessandro Pessoli**, brought forth the *Testa Cristiana* project to the **Chiostrri di Sant'Eustorgio** and offered the last verses of *The Wast Land* by **T.S. Eliot**, where the poet's technique is well exemplified. In Pessoli's words, Eliot "*has a way of composing that is very similar to mine: building on splinters and ruins, the juxtaposition of distant but significant times and origins. I believe this is the truth of art, its continuous reconnection of human experience across time and cultures.*"

**Nairy Baghramian** - who for the third edition of the **Furla Series** by **Fondazione Furla** brings her *Misfits* to **GAM - Galleria d'Arte Moderna**; then **Zehra Dogan**, at **PAC - Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea**, with *The Time of the Butterflies*; and yet again **Adrian Paci**, whose project *Rudere* inaugurates the new season of **Artline** in the Citylife park - have each offered a poem that means a lot to each of them: respectively, *Autobiographia Literaria* by American **Frank O'Hara**; *Letters of a man locked in solitary confinement Ankara* by Turkish writer **Nazim Hikmet**; and *The Child*, by the Albanian poet **Ledia Dushi**.

**Elisabetta Benassi**, at the **Fondazione Adolfo Pini** with "*Lady and Gentlemen*", instead wanted to offer a key figure in the art world as an example, highlighting even more the link between visual language and poetic language, choosing the emblematic title of a work by **Mario Merz**.

**Simone Fattal** for **Fondazione ICA** chose to draw his inspiration from a mythological character, Lino, a lyre player and music master to Hercules and Orpheus, citing a fragment of thirteen verses taken from **Giovanni Stobeo's** *On The Nature of the World*.



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The exhibition *Allusioni Iperformali* by **Carlo Mollino** at the **Triennale Milano** was contextualised by the artist, architect and writer **Corrado Levi**, who offered a very poetic phrase detailed by Mollino himself at the Faculty in Turin. "*This phrase has been a life statement*," Levi said about it, "*it has accompanied me in my long militancy in gay self-consciousness groups, where I learned to be receptive and never to impose myself as an authority. It has been a beacon in the way I teach architecture, letting all students express themselves.*"

**Vincenzo Agnetti**, Milan-based poet-artist par excellence could not be missing from this anthology and participates with a new iteration of his *La macchina drogata* at the **Archivio Vincenzo Agnetti**. With the cooperation of his daughter Germana Agnetti, the opening lines of one of his best collections, *Machiavelli 30* were chosen as a tribute.

Finally, the synergy and time coincidence between miart and **MiTo Settembre Musica** led to the decision to also include a concert - *La luce, il mattino* at the Teatro Dal Verme on 19 September - where Estonian composer **Tõnu Kõrvits** will perform a powerful cycle for choir and strings on texts by **Cesare Pavese**. To pay homage to Pavese, Pavese's poem *In the morning you always come back* was chosen as the title of the concert.

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**POETIC CONTRIBUTION:**

**Adrian Paci x ArtLine:**

Ledia Dushi (1978), "The Child", translated from the Albanian by Robert Elsie, 1999

*The child  
Stood alone  
In the meadow  
Hidden  
Behind the homes,  
Half-asleep,  
With brown eyes  
Like the bark  
Of a dead tree...*

*His face  
Leaning  
Between his shoulders.*

**Maurizio Cattelan x Pirelli HangarBicocca:**

Golan Haji (1977), "Mr. Nobody Listening to His Own Story at The Court of King Alcinous", in Golan Haji, Stephen Watts, "A Tree Whose Name I Don't Know", 2017

*The eye is a slave of what it sees.*



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*Your fear blinded you,  
my blindness set me free.*

**Nairy Baghramian x Fondazione Furla (GAM):**

Frank O'Hara (1926–1966), "Autobiographia Literaria", from "The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara", 1995

*When I was a child  
I played by myself in a  
corner of the schoolyard  
all alone.*

*I hated dolls and I  
hated games, animals were  
not friendly and birds  
flew away.*

*If anyone was looking  
for me I hid behind a  
tree and cried out "I am  
an orphan."*

*And here I am, the  
center of all beauty!  
writing these poems!  
Imagine!*

**Zehra Dogan x PAC | Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea:**

Nazim Hikmet (1902-1963), "Today is Sunday", translated from the Turkish by Taner Baybars, 1938

*Today is Sunday.  
Today, for the first time.  
    they took me out into the sun  
    and for the first time in my life  
I looked at the sky  
amazed that it was so far  
and so blue  
and so wide.  
I stood without moving  
and then respectfully sat on the black earth,  
pressed my back against the wall.  
Now, not even a thought of dying,  
not a thought of freedom, of my wife.  
The earth, the sun and me ...  
I am happy.*



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**Simon Fujiwara x Fondazione Prada:**

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Act III, Scene II of "The Tempest", 1612

*Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,  
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,  
The clouds methought would open, and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me; that, when I waked,  
I cried to dream again.*

Winnie the Pooh (A. A. Milne, 1882-1956)

*What's wrong with knowing what you know now and not knowing what you don't know until later?"*

**Simone Fattal x Fondazione ICA:**

Fragment of thirteen lines from Linus, cited by Stobaeus (5th century AD) in "The Orphic Poems" by L.M.West, 1983

*So through discord all things are steered through all.  
From the whole are all things, all things form a whole,  
all things are one, each part of all ,all in one;  
For from a single whole all these things came,  
and from them in due time will one return,  
that's ever one and many...  
Often the same will be again, no end  
will limit them, ever limited...  
For so undying death invests all things,  
all dies that's mortal, but the substrate was  
and is immortal ever, fashioned thus,  
yet with strange images and varied form  
will change and vanish from the sight of all.*

**Alessandro Pessoli x Chiostri di Sant'Eustorgio:**

T.S. Eliot (1888–1965), last verses of "The Waste Land", 1922

*I sat upon the shore  
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me  
Shall I at least set my lands in order?  
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down  
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina  
Quando fiam uti chelidon — O swallow swallow  
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie  
These fragments I have shored against my ruins  
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.*



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**Tõnu Kõrvits x MiTo Settembre Musica (Teatro Dal Verme):**

Cesare Pavese (1908-1950), "In the morning you always come back" from "Verrà la morte e avrà i tuoi occhi", 1950

*Lo spiraglio dell'alba  
respira con la tua bocca  
in fondo alle vie vuote.  
Luce grigia i tuoi occhi,  
dolci gocce dell'alba  
sulle colline scure.  
Il tuo passo e il tuo fiato  
come il vento dell'alba  
sommangono le case.  
La città abbrividisce,  
odorano le pietre  
sei la vita, il risveglio.  
Stella sperduta  
nella luce dell'alba,  
cigolio della brezza,  
tepore, respiro  
è finita la notte.  
Sei la luce e il mattino.*

**Elisabetta Benassi x Fondazione Pini:**

Mario Merz (1925, 2003), artwork title, 1962 - 1978

*Vento preistorico dalle montagne gelate [Prehistoric wind from the frozen mountains]*

**Corrado Levi x Triennale:**

Carlo Mollino (1905 -1973), sentence said to Levi one day at the University in Turin.

*Corrado, ricordati che io sono un vettore non una forza [Corrado, remember that I am a carrier not a force]*

**Vincenzo Agnetti x Archivio Vincenzo Agnetti:**

Vincenzo Agnetti (1926-1981), from "Machiavelli 30", 1978

*Emarginati di tutto il mondo  
unitevi e raccontatevi  
senza parole  
come si fa coi dolori estremi  
seguendo le immagini  
tracciate dai riferimenti  
fra centro e campo*



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