

VNH GALLERY  
108 RUE VIEILLE DU TEMPLE

GALLERIA CONTINUA  
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Press Kit

MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO  
RESPECT

ART, EDUCATION & POLITICS

VNH Gallery & GALLERIA CONTINUA  
20 October- 23 December 2016

*"Nothing evil has ever been done in the name of art. Art is the science closest to the human being. Art allows people to overcome and to understand their mistakes, and to strive for a better life."*

**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

## RESPECT

From 20 October to 23 December 2016, VNH Gallery & GALLERIA CONTINUA present **RESPECT**, an exhibition by Michelangelo Pistoletto.

Organized thematically in three sections representing the three primary areas of the artist's investigation — Art, Education and Politics — the exhibition presents a selection of Pistoletto's historical creations in parallel with recent or unpublished works, some of which have been produced specifically for this occasion.

These new works will be activated during an *in situ* performance by the artist on 20 October at 6 pm, during the opening of the 2016 FIAC's Gallery Night. Prior to this performance, a conversation (beginning at 4:30 pm) led by curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist and including Simone Fattal, Mehdi Meklat, Badrouine Said Abdallah and Abdellah Taïa (Bondy Blog), will explore the theme of "RESPECT".

At the gallery's entrance, visitors will be greeted by the word "RESPECT", written hundreds of times in diverse languages and forming a large "Third Paradise" symbol — the emblematic figure in Pistoletto's work, connecting our modern world to the bygone days of Eden.

For the artist, the center of the "Third Paradise" contains a space for a possible future — a generative matrix for a new humanity, a counterbalance to the global tension between nature and artifice, able to unite the world in a single desire for redemption.

The exhibition subsequently develops across a scenography combining historical works and new creations. Three emblematic works of Pistoletto's early investigations - ***Il presente - Autoritratto in camicia*** (1961), ***Uomo sul sofà*** (1958), ***Autoritratto su fondo argento*** (1960) - illustrate the artist's seminal experiments of the early 1960s, performed with the desire to "see something happen." On these bases, Pistoletto began to use mirrors in his artistic practice. The mirror has gradually become his favorite material, appearing in a number of his most recent works: ***Buco Nero*** (2010), ***Black & White*** (2012), ***Louvre (Ragazza)*** (2013), and ***Color and light*** (2016).

For Pistoletto, these mirrors are at once a reflection of tangible realities stemming from personal contemplations and vectors to the unexplored and the new. They become creators of infinity, representing all that exists without limitations. In each mirror the artist freezes the memory of a lived moment, lost in the parade of moments. Broken during the performance, the mirrors on the gallery walls reveal, one last time, inscriptions of the exhibition title, while symbolically multiplying spectators' fields of reflection.

Embodying the artist's thoughts on the human condition, these broken mirrors also recall the political investigations that Pistoletto carries out in the *Cittadellarte*, the foundation that he created in his hometown of Biella, near Milan. Here he studies diverse human activities with the goal of producing responsible changes by means of art. Two works in the exhibition, ***The Conferenza*** (1975) and ***Raggi di persone*** (1975) - specifically illustrate the political dimension present in Pistoletto's creative process. The first offers a timeless statement on the political systems that impede and deprive individuals of the space necessary for their flourishing. The second bears witness, conversely, to a democratic attitude "*that expresses itself through the will of each individual to understand and to be understood.*"

## MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO - BIOGRAPHY

Michelangelo Pistoletto was born in Biella (Piedmont, Italy) in 1933.

In 1947 he became an apprentice in the studio of his father, a restorer of paintings.

He continued in this role until 1958, while simultaneously attending an advertising graphics school run by Armando Testa. His artistic activities date to this period, in particular his painting, which found an outlet in a number of self-portraits, initially on canvas prepared with metal primer, and later on surfaces such as steel or glossy mirror.

In 1959 he participated in the Biennale di San Marino. In the following year he exhibited at the Galleria Galantayar in Turin.

In the early 1960s, Pistoletto began producing figurative works and self-portraits painted on metallic monochrome background. Afterwards, he combined painting and photography using collage techniques on reflective backgrounds. Eventually he turned to the printing of photo-realistic scenes on polished steel plates, making a fine finish using screen printing that almost completely melts the reflection of the observer.

Subsequently, the Galerie Ileana Sonnabend put Pistoletto in contact with an international public.

In 1965/1966, Pistoletto produced the series *Oggetti in meno* ("Minus Objects"), representing his first sculptural work.

In 1966, Pistoletto created his first exhibition in the United States, at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

In 1967 he joined the *Arte Povera* group. That year his work won the first prize at the São Paulo Biennial. In the same year he began to focus on performance, video art, and theater. He founded an action art group called "Zoo Party" that staged several performances between 1968 and 1970. These performances, which took place in the studio, in public buildings or on the streets of Turin and other major cities, sought to demonstrate the oneness of art and everyday life.

In 2013, he received the Praemium Imperiale for painting.

Alongside the exhibition "RESPECT", Michelangelo Pistoletto is currently the subject of a retrospective at Blenheim Palace (Woodstock, UK) that runs until 31 December 2016.



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Respect*, 2016

MIPI1000



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*La Conferenza*, 1975

Photograph on aluminum 21  
elements

30 x 40 cm (11.81 x 15.75  
inches)

MIPI1001



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Raggi di Persone*, 1975

Photograph on aluminium 20  
elements

40 x 50 cm (15.75 x 19.69  
inches) Each

MIPI1002



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Esperimento*, 1959

Silver, acrylic, rope, wood and  
canvas

74 x 60 cm (29.13 x 23.62  
inches)

MIPI1003



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Figura Oro*, 1959-60

Mixed medias

100 x 100 cm (39.37 x 39.37  
inches)

MIPI1004



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Linoleum*, 1960

Oil, acrylic and silver on canvas  
100 x 100 cm (39.37 x 39.37  
inches)

MIPI1005



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

MIPI1006



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Uomo di Schiena*, 1961

Oil, acrylic & aluminium on  
canvas

MIPI1007



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*All in One*, 2007

Mirror, wood

200 x 280 cm (78.74 x 110.24  
inches) + 15 x 20 cm

MIPI1008



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Freccia*, 1980

mirror and wood

230 x 130 x 90 cm (90.55 x  
51.18 x 35.43 inches)

MIPI1009



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Louvre (Ragazza)*, 2013

Silkscreen on polished & stainless  
steel mirror

250 x 150 cm (98.43 x 59.06  
inches)

MIPI1010



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Persona di Schiena*, 1962

Painted fabric on polished and stainless steel mirror

125 x 66 cm (49.21 x 25.98 inches)

MIPI1011



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Black and Light*, 2012

black and silver mirror, golden wood

180 x 115 x 6 cm (70.87 x 45.28 x 2.36 inches)

MIPI1012



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*L'alto in Basso, il Basso in Alto*, 1977

Chair, wood, mirror, iron, wire

350 cm (137.8 inches)

MIPI1013



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Two Less One Colored*, 2015

Mirror, golden wood

180 x 120 cm (70.87 x 47.24 inches) each

MIPI1014



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Two Less One Colored*, 2014

Glass and golden wood

180 x 120 cm (70.87 x 47.24 inches) each

MIPI1015



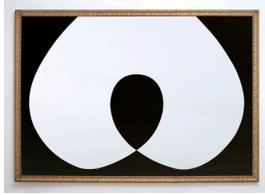
**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Love Difference*, 2002

Aerlex paint on polished steel

102 x 183 x 2.1 cm (40.16 x 72.05 x .83 inches)

MIPI1016



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Buco Nero*, 2010

Silver and black mirror, gilded wood

173 x 250 cm (68.11 x 98.43 inches)

MIPI1017



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Color and Light*, 2016

7+1 mirrors, colored juta, gilded frame

180 x 120 cm (70.87 x 47.24 inches) each

MIPI1018



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*The Mirror of judgement - Buddhism*

Mirror, wooden sculpture

185 x 50 x 50 cm (72.83 x 19.69 x 19.69 inches)

MIPI1019



**Michelangelo Pistoletto**

*Le Respect*, 2016

mirror, colored wood, gilded frame

250 x 150 cm (98.43 x 59.06 inches)

MIPI1020

## LOVE DIFFERENCE

**A Discussion led by curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist with Simone Fattal, Mehdi Meklat, Badroudine Said Abdallah and Abdallah Taïa (Bondy Blog) focusing on the theme of “RESPECT” - 20 October 2016 beginning at 4:30 pm.**

The Love Difference project was born in April 2002 in the Politics Office at *Cittadellarte*, set up by Michelangelo Pistoletto alongside the thirteen other offices — including the Economics, Education, and Ecology Offices — that comprise this citadel of art, open to the world.



Its first incarnation took the form of a large table with a mirrored surface whose curves recall the shape of the Mediterranean, surrounded by different chairs gathered from countries bordering the sea.

As an artistic and cultural project born from the desire to respect and to revive traditions, Love Difference is committed to promoting political dialogue among Mediterranean countries that historically have been in conflict with each other, with the goal of finding lasting solutions and agreements for the future.

For more than ten years, the Love Difference project has continuously multiplied its actions, activities and workshops, with the aim of creating a unity that respects existing diversities: a Mediterranean identity in which each country is present in all its uniqueness.

*"Love Difference is a name, a slogan, a program. The movement joins the universality of art with the idea of transnational politics, focusing on the area around the Mediterranean—a region that mirrors the global problems of society. On the one hand, differences between ethnic groups, religions and cultures are the cause of terrible conflicts today. At the same time, a dramatic situation has been created by the supremacy of certain powers, producing uniformity and the leveling of defenses... 'Uniformity' and 'Difference' are two opposing terms that represent the principal confrontational tension of contemporary reality, on a global scale. A policy that encourages one to 'love differences' is thus vital to opening new horizons in the broader social realm."*

-M. Pistoletto

Presented at the 2003 Venice Biennale, Pistoletto envisions this project as a preliminary step in the creation of a Mediterranean Cultural Parliament.

For more information the on activities and workshops relating to "Love Difference" visit [www.lovedifference.org](http://www.lovedifference.org).



## Hans-Ulrich Obrist

Born in 1968 in Zürich, Switzerland.

Art curator, critic and historian of art. He currently lives in London, England.

He is artistic director at the Serpentine Galleries, London. Obrist is the author of *The Interview Project*, an extensive ongoing project of interviews. He is also co-editor of the *Cahiers d'art* revue.

When he was 23, he organized an exhibition of contemporary art in his kitchen. In 1993, he founded the Museum Robert Walser and began to run the Migrateurs program at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris where he served as a curator for contemporary art. In 1996, he co-curated *Manifesta 1*, the first edition of the roving European biennial of contemporary art. In the November 2009 issue of *ArtReview* magazine, Obrist was ranked number one in the publication's annual list of the art world's one-hundred most powerful people and that same year he was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Obrist first gained art world attention in 1991, when as a student in Politics and Economics in St. Gallen, Switzerland, he mounted an exhibition in the kitchen of his apartment entitled "The Kitchen Show" It featured work by Christian Boltanski and Peter Fischli & David Weiss. Obrist is an advocate and archivist for artists, and has said "I really do think artists are the most important people on the planet, and if what I do is a utility and helps them, then that makes me happy. I want to be helpful." Obrist is known for his lively pace and emphasis on inclusion in all cultural activities.

While maintaining official curatorial positions, he is also the co-founder of the Brutally Early Club, a discussion group open to all that meets at Starbucks in London, Berlin, New York and Paris at 6:30 a.m., and is a contributing editor of *032c* magazine, *Abitare Magazine*, *Artforum* and *Paradis Magazine*. Hans Ulrich Obrist has lectured internationally at academic and art institutions including European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, University of East Anglia, Southbank Centre, Institute of Historical Research, and Architectural Association. He lives and works in London.

## Abdellah Taïa



Born in 1973 in Morocco.

Moroccan writer and filmmaker, he writes in the French language and has been based in Paris since 1998. He has published eight novels, many of them heavily autobiographical. His books have been translated into Basque, Dutch, English, Italian, Romanian, Spanish, Swedish and Arabic.

Described by Interview Magazine as a “literary transgressor and cultural paragon,” Taïa became the first openly gay Arab writer in 2006, and as of 2014 he remains the only openly homosexual Moroccan writer or filmmaker. His first movie, *Salvation Army*, is widely considered to have given Arab cinema “its first gay protagonist.” Since his coming-out, according to one source, Taïa “has become an iconic figure in his homeland of Morocco and throughout the Arab world, and a beacon of hope in a country where homosexuality is illegal.”

## Simone Fattal



Born in Damascus and grew up in Lebanon.

She first studied philosophy at the Ecole des Lettres of Beirut and then at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1969 she returned to Beirut and started painting. She participated in numerous shows during the ten years when life in Lebanon was still possible. In 1980, fleeing the Civil War, she settled in California and founded the Post-Apollo Press, a publishing house dedicated to innovative and experimental literary work. In 1988, she returned to artistic practice by doing ceramic sculptures after enrolling at the Art Institute of San Francisco. Since 2006, she has produced works in Hans Spinner’s prestigious workshop in Grasse, France. In 2013, she released a movie, *Autoportrait*, which has been shown worldwide in many film festivals.



## Mehdi Meklat et Badrouine Saïd Abdallah

Mehdi Meklat was born in 1992 in Marocco.

Badrouine Saïd Abdallah was born in 1992 in Nairobi (Kenya).

They are journalist, writer, and filmmaker.

Mehdi comes from an Algerian family that settled in France during decolonization. Badrouine is the eldest of seven siblings, and he still shares a room with two of his brothers. His father is an imam in La Courneuve, informally known as “the sixth island of the Comoros” because of its sizable community of immigrants from the East African archipelago.

Met in 2007 they became the **Kids**.

Their world begins where Paris ends, which is the point of their entire intellectual project.

Their columns for the Liberation newspaper’s Bondy Blog, their documentaries and their 2015 novel all reveal the two friends’ overarching intent: showing the world the complicated reality of the Paris suburbs where they were born and raised.

“What we try to do,” Mehdi said recently, “is give voice to those who aren’t heard particularly well — or who are heard badly.”

Most of all, the two reject what they consider the imposition of a singular French identity that effaces all other affiliations. “In the world today,” Mehdi continued, “people are multifaceted, and they have multiple identities. I refuse to have just one identity. ... I am French, and, after that, Algerian, and, after that ...

“An identity isn’t just one thing. It’s many.”

## **VNH GALLERY & GALLERIA CONTINUA**

RESPECT is the second collaboration between VNH Gallery and the GALLERIA CONTINUA. Both venues share a common desire to show a selection of artists from different generations and backgrounds working across various modes of expression: performance, poetry reading, discussion, etc.

RESPECT is presented following exhibitions and projects dedicated to Friedrich Kunath, Kris Martin, Mircea Cantor, Eduardo Basualdo, Pascale-Marthine Tayou, Benoit Maire, Olivier Mosset, and Mai-Thu Perret.

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

### **VNH Gallery**

108 rue Vieille du Temple, 75003 Paris

### **Press opening**

Thursday 20 October, from 6 - 8pm

### **Conversation with Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Mehdi Meklat, Badrouline Said Abdallah, and Abdellah Taïa**

Thursday 20 October, 4:30 pm

### **Performance**

Presented during the opening of Gallery Night of the 2016 FIAC

### **Website**

[www.vnhgallery.com](http://www.vnhgallery.com)

### **Press images**

By request at [info@fouchardfilippi.com](mailto:info@fouchardfilippi.com)

### **MEDIA RELATIONS**

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