

Press release**STEFANO CHIODI meets STEFANO CERIO**
About the artist's project at the MAXXI Museum in L'Aquila

Friday 26 november 2021 h 18.30
AlbumArte Via Flaminia, 122 - 00196 Rome

Free admission subject to availability
GREEN PASS and health obligations

On Friday 26 November at AlbumArte, an independent non-profit space for contemporary art, at 6.30 p.m., a meeting between Stefano Cerio (Rome 1962, works between Rome and Paris) and Stefano Chiodi, art critic and associate professor of History of Contemporary Art at Roma Tre University, to present for the first time in Rome the Aquila project created by the artist for the MAXXI Museum in L'Aquila (Abruzzo).

"Aquila", one of the projects chosen for the opening of the MAXXI L'Aquila Museum, on view from 28 October, consists of a video and a photographic series depicting inflatable playgrounds, isolated and decontextualised, portrayed in the uncontaminated and highly recognisable natural landscapes of the Abruzzo region in the Campo Felice Plain, Campo Imperatore and Pescasseroli. In a second room of the museum, dedicated to the project, two images are a tribute to Onna, the small village almost entirely destroyed in the 2009 earthquake, where the artist places an inflatable, inspired by the church around which the small community has been gathering since 2010. Cerio's research has always moved poetically towards exploring the relationship between reality and fiction, and his artistic research is oriented towards the representation of absence, emptiness and immobility, in places dedicated to mass entertainment, such as empty funfairs at night, abandoned because no longer in use or in ruins, creating through this short circuit that he puts into practice in his works, a special empty portrait, where absence weighs more than presence.

"The ground is snowy, the horizon closed by a line of dark mountains, low milky clouds hide the sky. On the ground, in the foreground, an indistinct shape, a strange drooping mass in bright colours, red, yellow, blue, swirls in the air. In less than a minute, a large playground attraction appears, an 'inflatable', a rounded, awkward and friendly shape, similar to a double slide or a trampoline, of the kind that is easy to encounter in children's playgrounds, fairs and village festivals. Together with four other inflatables of similar shapes - a chubby castle complete with dragon, a mini football pitch, etc. - the 'slide' is an element of the game. - Together with four other similar inflatables - a chubby castle complete with dragon, a five-a-side football pitch, etc. - the "slide" is an element of the strange landscape evoked by Stefano Cerio's Aquila, a video and a series of photographs taken in Abruzzo in different seasons and in highly evocative places not far from L'Aquila, between the Campo Felice Plain, Campo Imperatore and Pescasseroli.

The scenery is vast, uncontaminated, wild, the objects incongruous, childlike. This is not the first time Cerio has photographed structures intended for mass entertainment - amusement parks, aqua parks, etc. - presented in an unaccustomed, childlike condition. - presented in an unaccustomed condition, at night or at times of closure (Night Games, 2017-18), or in a state of abandonment and

obsolescence that has transformed them into ghostly, disturbing presences (Water Park, 2010-11). There is, however, a performative element, a form of theatrical artificiality, an unexplained tension in Aquila that gives the inflatables a different resonance, more dramatic and strange, that makes one think of certain paintings by Alberto Savinio where coloured toys stand out in surreal landscapes, like unconscious ruins of an interminable childhood. (...)

Taken from the critical text by Stefano Chiodi "**Corpi d'aria. Su Aquila di Stefano Cerio**" (2021)

Stefano Cerio lives and works between Rome and Paris. Since 2001 he has been interested in research photography and video. In 2004 he exhibited his Machine Man project at the Lattuada Studio in Milan. In 2005 the City of Science in Naples dedicated his solo exhibition Codice Multiplo to him. In 2008 he created an installation for the Piedmont region for the exhibition Le Porte del Mediterraneo at Rivoli and exhibited Souvenirs at Changing Role in Rome. In 2009 he held a solo exhibition entitled Sintetico Italiano at the Certosa di Capri. In 2010 he held two exhibitions at the Galerie Italienne in Paris and exhibited at the Madre museum in Naples in the group show O'Vero. In 2011 he showed WinterAquapark at the Fondazione Forma in Milan, the exhibition was accompanied by the volume Aquapark published by Contrasto; in the same year he showed the video Summer Aquapark at the Maxxi in Rome. In 2012 he exhibited the Night Ski series at Studio Trisorio in Naples and in 2013 the Chinese Fun series at Noire Contemporary Art in Turin. In 2014 he exhibited Cruise Ship at Mois de la Photo in Paris. In 2015 Chinese Fun became a book for Hatje Cantz and an exhibition at Fondazione Volume in Rome. In 2017 Hatje Cantz publishes a new book, Night Games, which becomes a solo show at Camera in Turin. In 2018 the Museo Pignatelli in Naples dedicated a major retrospective to him and in 2019 the Italian Cultural Institute in Paris exhibited Constructions instables. In 2021 he created a work for the new headquarters of the Maxxi museum in L'Aquila.

Stefano Chiodi teaches History of Contemporary Art at Roma Tre University. He is a historian, art critic and curator and has published numerous studies and essays on contemporary art; among his books, Genius Loci. Anatomy of an Italian myth (2021), La bellezza difficile (2008), Una sensibile differenza (2006). He has edited book editions and catalogues, including most recently Alexander Nagel, Christopher Wood, Rinascimento anacronico (2021); Marina Ballo Charmet, Con la coda dell'occhio. Scritti sulla fotografia (2017); Alberto Boatto, Ghenos Eros Thanatos e altri scritti sull'arte 1968-2015 (2016). Among his exhibitions: Alberto Boatto. Lo sguardo dal di fuori, maxxi, Rome 2020; Marina Ballo Charmet. Fuori campo, IIC, Madrid 2019; Luca Maria Patella. Ambienti proiettivi animati (with B. Carpi De Resmini), macro, Rome 2015; Marina Ballo Charmet. Sguardo terrestre, macro, Rome 2013; Marcello Maloberti, Blitz; Vettor Pisani (with B. Pietromarchi), macro, Rome 2012; Monica Haller, The Veterans Book Project, Nomas Foundation, Rome 2011; ZimmerFrei, MAMbo, Bologna 2011; Giulia Piscitelli, Fondazione Giuliani, Rome 2011; Olaf Nicolai, Galleria Comunale, Ferrara 2008. He has organised conferences and conducted cultural programmes for Radio3 RAI.

TECHNICAL SHEET

Presentation of the "**Aquila**" project by **Stefano Cerio** created by the artist for the **MAXXI Museum in L'Aquila (Abruzzo)**.

With the participation of **Stefano Chiodi**

DATE AND TIME: Friday 26 November 2021, 6.30 p.m.

LOCATION: AlbumArte, Via Flaminia 122, 00196, Rome

TO PARTICIPATE: Free entrance subject to availability. GREEN PASS and health requirements