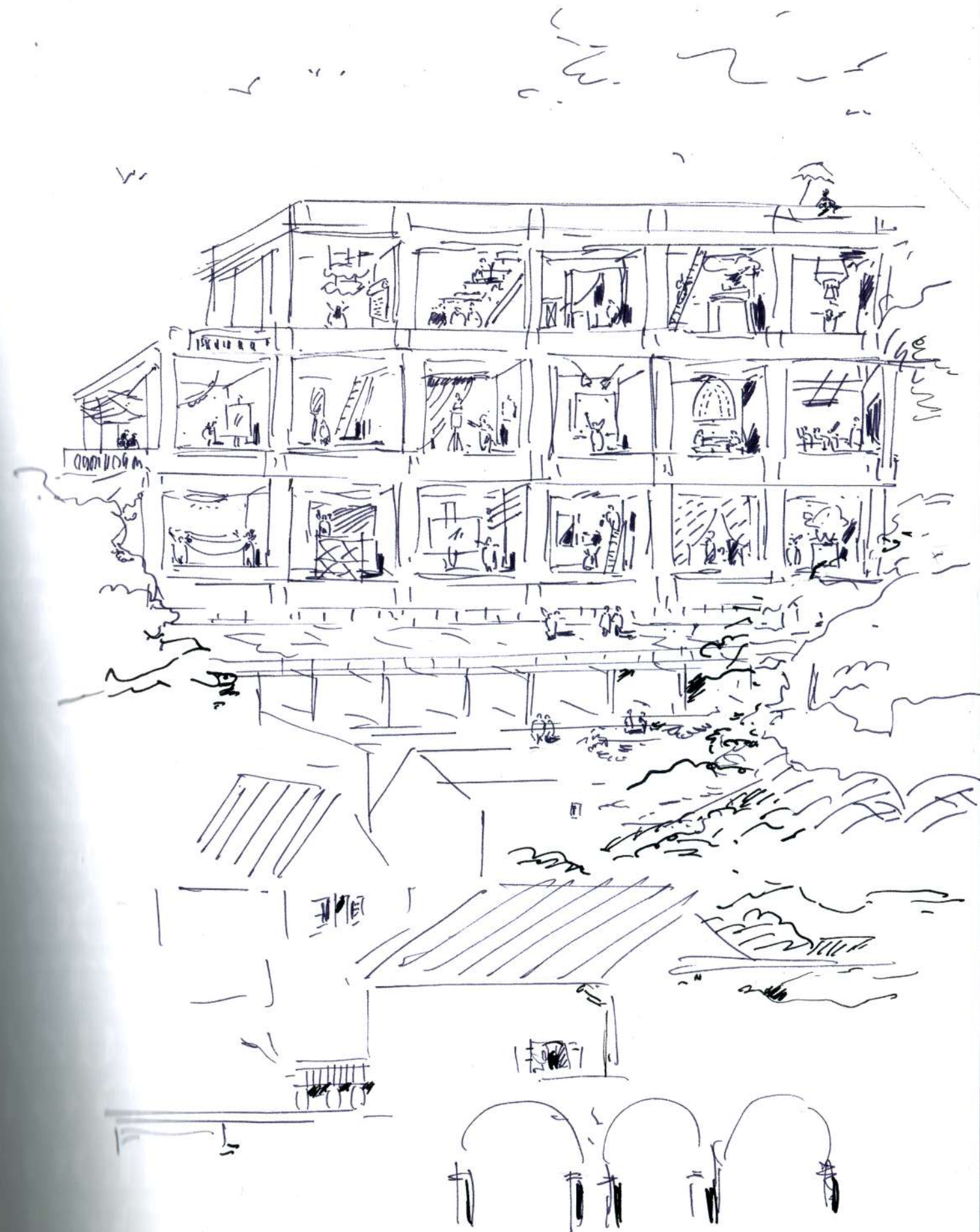


#CAPlaces

# CASA DEGLI ARTISTI

A HISTORY OF  
CONTEMPORARY ART,  
ARCHITECTURE  
AND CULTURE.



*Casa degli Artisti*  
Ugo La Pietra  
2021



Patrik Tuttofuoco, Forever, NFT artwork, 2022  
Photo: Niccolò Quaresima



Eleonora Roaro, "Garibaldi 99"  
Installation view of the exhibition "I luoghi che siamo", 2021  
Photo: Susanna Ravelli

«The coexistence of arts and crafts has always characterised these spaces, imbuing the building with narratives and, over time, symbolic value for the city.»

Casa degli Artisti, located at 89a Corso Garibaldi and quietly and elegantly set back from the strip of shops on one of the liveliest streets in the Brera-Garibaldi district, is once again inhabited by art, music and beauty. As of 1 February 2020, Casa degli Artisti has reopened its spaces and ateliers to the city under the care of a group of non-profit organizations - Zona K, Atelier Spazio Xpo, Centro Itard Lombardia, NIC-Nuove Imprese Culturali and That's Contemporary - to which the Municipality of Milan has assigned, via public tender, the running of the building and the cultural initiatives and artist residences that it was originally designed for. The building was commissioned between 1909 and 1911 from engineer and architect Luigi Ghò (1857-1937) by the Bogani Brothers, entrepreneurs who wanted it to be a building dedicated to art and especially painters as made clear by the original name: Casa dei Pittori.

The architecture favours the northern exposure with large windows on the first and second floors, where, at the beginning of the last century, artists were able to take full advantage of the diffuse and prolonged natural lighting, which still gives the space a special atmosphere today.

In the 1930s, the building was expropriated by the Municipality of Milan as part of an urban redevelopment plan for the neighbourhood that included the demolition of the Casa dei Pittori, a project that fell through with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Designed to open up onto a garden with large terraces and an elongated canopy towards what was probably intended as the main access, the Casa dei Pittori provided studio space for the painters and sculptors who gravitated around the nearby Academy and Pinacoteca di Brera, as well as other artisans.

Despite serious damage to the surrounding neighbourhood, the Casa dei Pittori survived the war mostly unscathed and once again became an active centre of cultural life in the Brera-Garibaldi area during the post-war period. Jenny Cattaneo, 95 years old, talks about working in a studio with a terrace on the first floor of the building as a fashion designer in the 1950s: «I remember the sculptor Brogini, who worked on the ground floor. Casa degli Artisti was like a hangar below». Jenny explains how the larger lower floor was reserved for the sculptors in an interview with Mariavera Chiari, designer and board member at Casa degli Artisti. The coexistence of arts and crafts has always characterised these spaces, imbuing the building with narratives and, over time, symbolic value for the city.

Until the 1970s and '80s, the social fabric of the neighbourhood was working-class, home to workers who had settled there in the late nineteenth century, with the construction of the first factories along the Martesana.

A beautiful piece of work by Eleonora Roaro, among the first artist residents at the Casa, describes the impact and strong connection with the social fabric that the neighbouring Garibaldi cinema, later renamed as Paris from sixties to nineties and Multisala Brera until 2000, had in the neighbourhood.

A cinema showing third-run films with affordable tickets,

RELAZIONE  
ZAPPA  
RENDIMENTI  
INSOLUCIANZE  
ELLAVITA  
LENZO  
LENZO  
SACCO  
MONIA  
ONDANZA  
DAL  
CIA  
DINE  
NATURALE  
A

“CASA DEGLI ARTISTI IS HUB FOR ARTIST RESIDENCES, PRODUCTION AND ENJOYMENT, WHICH PLACES THE WORK AND RESEARCH OF ARTISTS IN THE FIELDS OF VISUAL, PERFORMANCE, SOUND, APPLIED ARTS, LITERATURE AND THOUGHT AT THE HEART OF ITS ACTIVITY. A PLACE WITH AN INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INTERNATIONAL VOCATION, WITH OPEN EYES LOOKING OUT OVER THE CITY, THE PUBLIC SPHERE AND URBAN SPACE IN ORDER TO CONNECT ART AND SOCIETY AND MAINTAIN ITS FUNCTION AS A PUBLIC ASSET.”

Gina X Casa delle Artiste, degli Artisti, 2020

which was among the first to distribute packaged Motta snacks, was a sign of a rapidly growing city supported by an innovative industrial drive.

The presence of a homogeneous and cohesive social fabric initially slowed gentrification and animated cultural centres such as the Casa with music, dance and poetry initiatives.

In 1978, the upper floors of the Casa degli Artisti became the site of a project commissioned by two key artists on the national and international art scene, Luciano Fabro and Hidetoshi Nagasawa, as well as well-known art critic and historian Jole De Sanna.

Their presence and the debate around which art could take residence in the ateliers saw the original name of Casa dei Pittori replaced by Casa degli Artisti, giving the venue a brand-new identity. Fabro, Nagasawa and De Sanna opened their ateliers to young artists who, after leaving the Brera Art Academy, therefore had access to non-institutional apprenticeships and a place where the conceptual and technical issues of contemporary art, driven by innovative movements both in Italy and internationally, were shaped in the presence of undisputed masters.

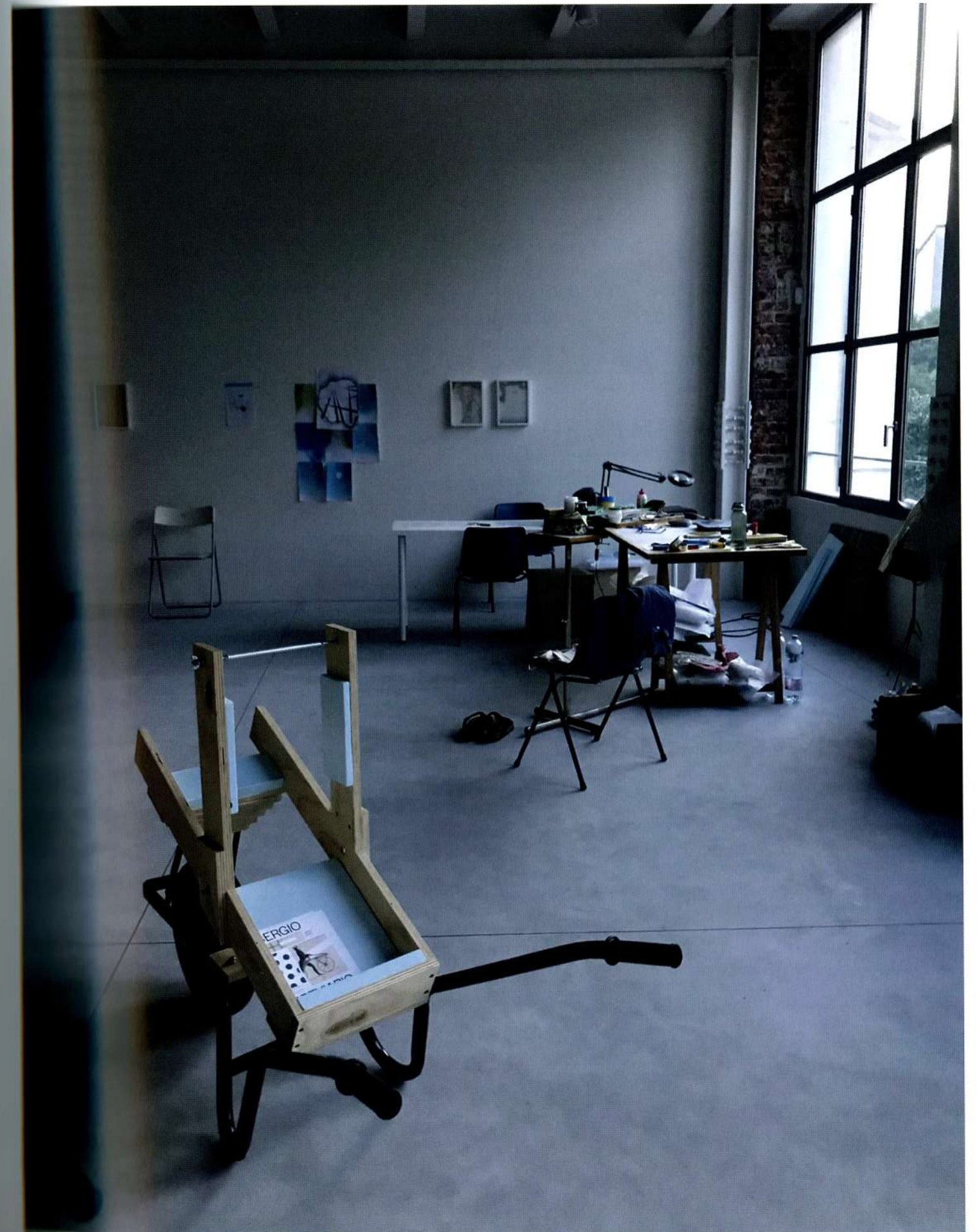
L. Fabro defined Casa degli Artisti as<sup>1</sup> «A unique non-institutional case that transmigrates from one generation to another, appropriately reinventing itself each time while maintaining a coherent basic philosophy: that of being a starting point for creative movements, of reviving artistic culture and of bringing ideas and people out into the open».

Casa degli Artisti became a hub for production of all kinds, exhibitions and lessons, collaborative practices that brought different styles and research together, revealing that their differences were merely superficial. Artists frequented the Casa from generation to generation until 2007, the year of the forced eviction by the municipal administration for the safety of the building. Michele Guido, Gianni Caravaggio, Sergio Breviario and Luca Pozzi were some of the artists at work in the ateliers before the eviction and among the first to be invited to return to Casa degli Artisti with the new opening in 2020, reconnecting that «Line that contains the movements, ideas, fashions and thoughts shared by artists at different times. It never stops... a long taut thread that connects all the dates».<sup>2</sup>

From the past history of Casa degli Artisti emerges a cultural ecosystem of coexistence that has always made space for the arts and their interaction, a legacy that the current management of Casa degli Artisti examined when creating the Cross project, manifesto and guidelines for the resumption of residences and initiatives: «Casa degli Artisti is hub for artist residences, production and enjoyment, which places the work and research of artists in the fields of visual, performance, sound, applied arts, literature and thought at the heart of its activity. A place with an interdisciplinary and international vocation, with open eyes looking out over the city, the public sphere and urban space in order to connect art and society and maintain its function as a public asset.» After renovation of the building, made possible thanks to Municipality 1 between 2015 and 2019, with a project that



Sergio Breviario at work in the Atelier at the second floor, 2021  
Photo: Lorenzo Vatalaro





Atelier of the residency of Ilaria Braconi and Piermario Dorigatti  
Photo: Lorenzo Vatalaro



Atelier of Chiara Francesca Longo  
Video installation about the story of CSOA Garibaldi, 2021

«These, like all other projects in the public space, are special initiatives that cut across disciplines, go out into the city, meet the community and lay visionary foundations for the future.»

redesigned the external facades while respecting certain constraints for the internal spaces, Casa degli Artisti once more became a multifaceted place and mirror of contemporary culture: a 'hybrid space' where the ateliers hosting multidisciplinary artistic productions, musical events and book presentations coexist with the Degustazione Bistrot and corporate initiatives and partnerships, which support the economic management of the building and programming.

The call launched in 2020 with the theme "Work!" marked the start with a curious and respectful nod to the past, a focus on changes in the surrounding city and a desire to trace innovation trajectories. In the last year, a network of territorial partnerships has seen Casa degli Artisti become a catalyst for initiatives developed for the city and in line with Milan's main cultural events.

As we write, Casa degli Artisti is hosting an Open House, called "My Clowder is ready we gather at dawn", for the Spazio Libero programme, the return of the residency curated by Milovan Farronato with the collaboration of curators Irene Sofia Comi and Chiara Spagnol. The works of Sanja Pupovac, Elda Miniero, Paolo Gonzato, Anna Franceschini, Irene Fenara, Andreas Andronikou and the Babau duo currently populate the Casa. Research and work by the artists comes together in the common denominator of "The Cat" as symbolic animal, unexpected intruder, catalyst of everyday objects and relationships, and pet as well as biologically 'alien pest'. The works speak, appear and disappear unexpectedly during the day, intertwining curiosity, wonder and monstrosity in a story with various and distinct voices. Institutional partnerships with companies and territorial networks play an important role in the planning of Casa degli Artisti, especially for projects that emerge from the building and experiment in the public space or focus on research and digital innovation, where interdisciplinary comparison and advanced technological knowledge is fundamental.

The XII Atelier built in a digital environment and which fits into the field of metaverse studies and the production of an NFT artwork by Patrick Tuttofuoco do not exclude the Casa from the debate on advanced technologies, languages, aesthetics and the new market being explored by the art world.

These, like all other projects in the public space, are special initiatives that cut across disciplines, go out into the city, meet the community and lay visionary foundations for the future.

<sup>1</sup> "Quattro Premesse Storiche", Luciano Fabro, 2 June 2003, Casa degli Artisti, History from 1978 to 2003. Diploma Thesis Academic Year 1999-2000. Author Luciana Trombetta Thesis supervisor Luciano Fabro, Edizioni Per l'Arte 19, 2003

<sup>2</sup> "Breve Storia dell'Arte from 1895 to 1980", Sole De Sanna, Edizioni Per l'Arte 2, 1980

