

NUCRÉ I Rassegna d'arte contemporanea
un progetto dedicato a Rubina Ciraci

Quasi Maturi
a cura di Elena Forin

Alejandro Almanza Pereda, Gianfranco Baruchello, Alik Cavaliere, Giuseppe De Mattia, Angelo Filomeno, Achille Funi, Piero Gilardi, Ingela Ihrman, Glenda León, Eleonora Mariani, Giorgio Morandi, Marc Quinn, Isabella Ponte, Man Ray, Shima-buku, Sissi, Daniel Spoerri, Giuseppe Urso, Andreas Zampella

25 Luglio—23 Agosto 2026
Sala Consiliare, Castello Ducale
Trullo Rubina, C.da Menzella
Ristorante Cibus

Ceglie Messapica (BR) Puglia

The V edition of Nuclei I Rassegna d'arte contemporanea, entitled ***Quasi Maturi*** and **curated by Elena Forin**, pays tribute to nature and its fruits. Growth, ripening, natural and cosmic cycles, attachment and decay are just some of the experiences the exhibition evokes on an emotional journey. How does one achieve an ideal state of growth? And how do time, collective values and economic dynamics affect a product's appeal?

Nowadays, aesthetic perfection often takes priority on overall quality. *Quasi Maturi* (Almost Ripe) chooses fruit, crops and food as metaphors to explore broader themes, seeking within the vagueness and imperfection of the term “almost” that variable through which aspects often overlooked, secondary or hidden, yet also urgent and crucial to defining our times, come to the fore.

The exhibition, which features Italian and international artists from different generations, draws inspiration, as always, from the territory of Ceglie Messapica. Consider the wonderful vegetable gardens, once an integral part of many houses in the village; and the Norman castle itself, surrounded at the rear by a large, lush garden—now private—which, visible from the main floor, forms a setting of extraordinary beauty characterised by a variety of plant species. The town's reach, however, extends far beyond the historic centre alone, which still maintains a close connection with the world of farming in the neighbouring countryside. The bond between Ceglie Messapica and its countryside is rooted in the history of the families who have always lived there and who, despite the changes of time, continue to move between one setting and another.

To evoke this journey, *Quasi Maturi* takes place across three venues, leading the public **from the Castello Ducale to the restaurant Cibus** in the historic centre, and on to **Trullo Rubina in Contrada Menzella**, in the heart of the countryside.

The artists involved explore the theme not only in its organic and existential sense of growth, but also in terms of the ecosystem and market built around this element. In an exhibition path that moves between city and countryside, the fruit thus becomes the subject of analysis relating to its economic and existential dimensions, encompassing environmental, social, cultural and collective dynamics.

At **Trullo Rubina**, in a region where farming follows ancient methods, which today are able to harmonise with the principles of innovation, the exhibition presents works designed to engage with the traditional genre of still life, exploring the value of the land, organic time, development and collective culture. The works on display are by **Alejandro Almanza Pereda, Gianfranco Baruchello, Giuseppe De Mattia, Angelo Filomeno, Achille Funi, Eleonora Mariani, Giorgio Morandi, Isabella Ponte, Man Ray, Sissi, Daniel Spoerri, Giuseppe Urso and Andreas Zampella.**

The **Sala Consiliare of Ceglie's Castle**, with the large social hub that the civic centre attracts, offers the opportunity to focus more closely on the tension between fruit, time, traditional knowledge and global market demand, highlighting the tension between authenticity, quality and visual appeal. The works of **Gianfranco Baruchello, Alik Cavaliere, Giuseppe De Mattia, Ingela Ihrmann, Glenda León, Piero Gilardi, Eleonora Mariani, Shimabuku, Sissi and Andreas Zampella** will be exhibited here.

Just a few steps from the Castle, the **restaurant Cibus**, promoter of the dissident cuisine of the traditional Apulian region, hosts a work by the English artist **Marc Quinn**. With his composition, Quinn draws attention not only to the value of beauty, but also to the frozen and accelerated processes to which raw ingredients are subjected: an invitation to reflect on the aesthetic experience and its authenticity, in keeping with the chef's philosophy.

Through a system of cross-references between the three venues and diverse artistic languages ranging from sculpture to video, from painting to installation, from drawing to photography, *Quasi Maturi* entrusts its intense narrative to established figures such as **Gianfranco Baruchello, Piero Gilardi, Giorgio Morandi, Alik Cavaliere and Man Ray**; to some refined examples of international artistic exploration such as **Shimabuku, Ingela Ihrmann, Glenda León, Alejandro Al-maza Pereda, Daniel Spoerri and Marc Quinn**; to the pictorial experimentation of **Eleonora Mariani, Andreas Zampella and Isabella Ponte**; to the sculptural and anthropological work of Sissi; and to the installation universe of **Giuseppe De Mattia and Angelo Filomeno**, to the essential volumes and anthropomorphic figures in **Giuseppe Urso's** paintings.

As usual, the exhibition will be accompanied by a bilingual catalogue featuring texts by Elena Forin, Rita Urso and Remo Urso.

The exhibition is made possible thanks to the support of the Municipality of Ceglie Messapica and BCC San Marzano, which has been working towards the sustainable and inclusive development of the territory for 70 years. It is also sponsored by the Museo Pino Pascali of Polignano a Mare.

NUCRÉ, born in 2022 from an idea of Rita Urso and Arechi Invernizzi (Artopia Gallery, Milan), is a project aimed at creating a dialogue between contemporary art and the Apulian territory, developing a series of reflections on the places, landscapes, cultural and anthropological heritage of this region. The project, consisting of two exhibitions and a residency, is developed in two characteristic locations in the municipality of Ceglie Messapica, the Castello Ducale and the Trullo Rubina. The event is supported by Regione Puglia, Fondazione Museo Pino Pascali and Comune di Ceglie Messapica. NUCRÉ, is a word composed of the dialectal terms "nu" + "cré" and represents a recurring vernacular formula of the territory with which it generally indicates "a tomorrow", an allusion and suggestion used in the form of hope, promise, destiny.

Artopia Gallery opened in February 2001 with Marzia Migliora's exhibition *In punta di piedi*, curated by Emanuela De Cecco. The gallery promotes emerging and mid-career Italian and international artists with an extensive program of exhibitions, mostly site-specific and curatorial projects. The intent is to offer a critical and innovative reading of the contemporary through the experimentation of multiple languages and practices that include film, digital media, performance and design. In the fall of 2023, the gallery changed locations, moving to the courtyard of the same building that has housed it for more than two decades. The new space, a former late 19th-century workshop in the heart of Milan, was designed by Studio Martinelli Venezia. Since summer 2022, Artopia has been organizing the festival NUCRÉ, sponsored by the Region of Puglia: a set of contemporary art events aimed at enhancing the cultural and anthropological heritage of the Apulian territory.