

## ROBERTO MATTA 1911-2002

Ca' Pesaro - Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna  
25.10.2024 – 23.03.2025

Exhibition and catalogue curated by

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*Every individual, every human life, is a bet with a self, with himself or herself, with the world*  
Roberto Matta, Verbal morphologies, 1986

### **Roberto Matta 1911-2002 at Ca' Pesaro - Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna**

is the first institutional exhibition in Italy dedicated to the Chilean artist; it aims to portray his eclectic personality and the expression of a wide range of ideas and modes of knowledge: scientific, cultural and philosophical. A citizen of the world, visionary, multifaceted artist, painter and draughtsman, architect and sculptor, as well as a militant figure, **Roberto Sebastián Antonio Matta Echaurren** (Santiago de Chile, 1911 - Civitavecchia, 2002) is certainly one of the most important artists of the twentieth century and, at the same time, among the least celebrated and represented figures in Italian museum collections.

The exhibition at Ca' Pesaro is thus one of the **projects of in-depth study, research and rediscovery of twentieth-century artists** undertaken by the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Venezia, starting with the masterpieces held in its collection - in this case *Alba sulla terra* – Dawn on Earth – of 1952.

The exhibition also **recalls and renews his historical connection with Venice**. Matta arrived in the lagoon city for the first time in 1948 as one of the artists of the Peggy Guggenheim collection hosted in the epoch-making exhibition at the Greek Pavilion. Again in Venice **in 1953**, it was on the occasion of the 'Matta 1949-1953' exhibition at the Museo Correr organised by Galleria del Cavallino and under the aegis of Carlo Cardazzo that **a work by Matta entered an Italian public collection for the first time**: displayed in the exhibition in the Sala Napoleonica, *Alba sulla terra* was purchased by Venice City for Ca' Pesaro

The 'official' protagonist of Surrealism, whose centenary will be celebrated in 2024, Matta developed his own particular visual language; his universe is surprising, complex, articulated, not ascribable to a single language. **Irrationality, the unconscious, psychic automatism and deforming matter**, the legacy of the surreal, are combined with the fundamental experience in Paris as a collaborator of Le Corbusier. At the same time, the **geometric, architectural and constructive component** in the exaggerated perspective and the **trespassing into the fourth dimension**, which characterise his mature production, preserve the echo of his love for poetry and his youthful closeness to Breton and friends. The exhibition intends to celebrate the brilliant and highly influential Chilean-born artist and his multifaceted creativity, expressed in the production of paintings, drawings, sculptures, architectural projects and design objects.

Moreover, while constantly transgressing the borderline between abstraction and figuration, he **exerted a fundamental influence on the American abstract expressionists** of the 1940s. Above all, Matta's work immediately presents itself as a participant in the world of science fiction, as a forerunner of an aesthetic in which the atmospheres of video games mix with those of street art.

**The exhibition opens with a monumental work** over 10 metres long, dating from the **1970s**: *Coigutum* (1972), which expresses the nature of a tireless experimenter in space. We enter Matta's world with a work that combines Surrealist imagery with architectural construction and the non-Euclidean breakthrough of space. The artist

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Museo di Palazzo Mocenigo
Casa di Carlo Goldoni
Ca' Pesaro Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna
Palazzo Fortuny
Museo di Storia Naturale
Museo del Vetro
Museo del Merletto

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**immediately presents himself as a participant in the world of science fiction** and as the forerunner of an aesthetic, which he liked to define 'from Leonardo da Vinci to NASA', in which the **sidereal atmospheres of video games and those of street art combine**.



The exhibition then unfolds in line with a **strict but not rigid chronology**. In this way the different facets of Matta emerge, amid a series of monumental paintings and sculptures – a forest of animal totems, mythological figures, towering seats, archetypes with Mediterranean and pre-Columbian echoes – that invade the entrance, the courtyard and the museum's hallway. Alongside them are **contemporary design objects**, such as the *Malitte* seating system: a modular composition of five blocks, now produced by Paradisoterrestre and available to the public at the exhibition. And there are **glass sculptures** and objects, the offspring of the extraordinary Venetian experience of the Fucina degli Angeli.

Last but not least, there is the **militant Roberto Matta**: art and politics merge in the post-war period, on the wave of atrocities and in the memory of Federico García Lorca, to whom he was deeply attached, killed by the Francoists. He lived the first season of the Cuban revolution with intensity, when European and Latin American artists gathered on the island, full of hopes for a 'tropical socialism'. Among the most significant works exhibited at Ca' Pesaro are the intense *La Question*, 1958, which recalls the issue of the Algerian War, the monumental *La Chasse aux adolescents*, a large canvas that evokes the French May revolution of 1968, which is dramatically topical today, and the intense *El Burundu Burunda ha muerto* of 1975, which deals with the theme of the Colombian civil war of the 1950s.

His **sensitivity to ecological issues** was also prophetic, expressed in his subjects and down to the practical application of his installations, made without frames, using recycled bases; today we would say, conceived with **a view to sustainability**. The exhibition layout of Ca' Pesaro, realised with the Design Differente group, has also been developed in like manner.

#### **Press information**

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