



**THE BEATRICE TRUSSARDI FOUNDATION  
LAUNCHES THIS SUMMER  
WITH INSTALLATION BY PAWEŁ ALTHAMER  
IN VAL FEX, THE ENGADIN, SWITZERLAND**

**11 JULY – 29 AUGUST 2021**

Italian cultural entrepreneur Beatrice Trussardi is delighted to announce the launch of the Beatrice Trussardi Foundation, the next chapter in her mission to create arresting encounters with contemporary art in unexpected locations.

Building on her achievements, as President of Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, in producing and presenting site-specific art installations in hidden and disused sites across Milan via a ‘nomadic museum’ format, Beatrice Trussardi sets out to expand this unique model on an international level, offering a programme of ground-breaking interventions in exceptional settings worldwide, alongside pioneering research and study projects.

Placed under the artistic direction of Massimiliano Gioni, the Foundation will invite artists with a particular sensitivity to their contexts, who engage with their environments and find novel ways to surprise, entice and interact with audiences. Faithful to the long-term vision of Beatrice Trussardi, the Foundation will facilitate discoveries, encourage participation, and spark vital conversations. Pressing issues such as climate change, identity and gender inequalities, human rights, innovation, and talent empowerment will all sit at the core of its programme and research.

For its inaugural exhibition, the Beatrice Trussardi Foundation has invited Polish artist Paweł Althamer to present an installation in a mountain hut 2000 metres above sea level in Val Fex, the centre of one of the most fascinating hiking routes in the Engadin. A quintessential example of the confrontation between age-old traditions and modernisation in rural Europe, the alpine valley of the Engadin is the point of departure for a reflection on the region’s recent transformations—both

environmental and social. Over the centuries, the Engadin's geographical position as one of the highest inhabited valleys in Europe and its distinct geological formations have made it a place beloved by artists and intellectuals.

In this modest 17<sup>th</sup> century hut, only accessible by foot or horse-drawn carriage, Paweł Althamer has created one of his 'tableaux' in which he combines memories of sacred art with vernacular influences from various cultures. At the heart of this installation is the figure of Saint Francis, casting off a cardinal robe in a symbolic gesture, evoking a return to nature and asceticism.

Sculpted using papier-mâché and organic materials such as hay and pigments made with berries, the hyper-realistic figure was largely executed on site and it is presented in the space of the hut as part of a diorama that includes stones, flowers, soil, and wood found on the banks of the nearby stream. The diaphanous skin of Saint Francis is decorated with preserved insects, a stuffed bird, and tattoos written in Latin and in Romansh, the language spoken in the valleys of Engadin—"I am not of this world", reads the tattoo on the figure's head. Althamer's peculiar form of religious theatre combines reality and fiction to create an evocative atmosphere that transforms the hut into a rustic chapel.

The installation also features the effigy of a Madonna with child, adorned with gold leaf and sculpted from a log, suggestive of an unusual combination of animist fetish and Gothic sculpture. In the lower level of the stable Althamer has placed a small sculpture of a new-born child sleeping on a pile of hay hidden in a brightly painted wooden box, normally used to store the animals' feed. This nativity scene is set among the goats and new-born kids that inhabit the stable and freely roam the installation, often playing with and nibbling on elements of the diorama.

Finally—as a stealth intervention—Althamer has initiated a collaborative project in the form of a book which he has circulated among the employees of the local hotels and the support staff working in the tourist industry, asking them to annotate their definitions of paradise. The book composes a candid collective portrait of the people who work to preserve the illusion of a paradisaical holiday destination, amplifying Althamer's reflection on spirituality in everyday life.

This installation is rooted in the tradition of a 'visionary Switzerland', as described by curator Harald Szeemann, which in the Engadin inspired an unusual combination of spiritualism and materialism as seen in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, Giovanni Segantini, Lou Salomé and Alberto Giacometti, each profoundly influencing the way we imagine and experience nature.

A research programme, coordinated by Giuliano da Empoli, will accompany the development of Fondazione Beatrice Trussardi, examining how these artistic interventions resonate against the backdrop of the physical, social and cultural landscape in which they are conceived.

The exhibition runs from 11 July to 29 August 2021.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **BEATRICE TRUSSARDI**

A cultural entrepreneur with a varied background in institutional leadership and corporate fashion management, Beatrice Trussardi has always nurtured a passion for art and design and for the development of talent, combined with a commitment to raising awareness of the pressing issues of our time: from respect for human rights to gender equality, and from climate change to migration.

President of the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi since 1999, in just a few years, Beatrice Trussardi led the Fondazione to become a unique and globally recognized model for exploring unusual ways in which to feature and experience contemporary art, shifting away from the restrictions of the 'white cube' and removing the traditional boundaries and prejudices that still separate the art of our time from the general public. Thanks to this innovative vision, she has courageously subverted the traditional rules of exhibition spaces, transforming the historic Fondazione Nicola Trussardi into

a truly nomadic museum that, with major exhibitions and international artists, has given new life to forgotten buildings and symbolic spaces in Milan, as well as providing locals and visitors with the chance to rediscover the city through the eyes of important international artists. Over the years, Trussardi has promoted acclaimed installations and exhibitions, creating new connections between Milan and its inhabitants and raising fundamental questions about the urban and social fabric of a contemporary metropolis.

### **PAWEŁ ALTHAMER**

A sculptor, performer, and video maker, Paweł Althamer (b. 1967, Warsaw) bases his artistic practice on a participatory approach to art, rooted in the belief that art can provide a vehicle for change as well as individual and social growth. After training at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw between 1988 and 1993 and graduating in sculpture with Professor Grzegorz Kowalski, in the early 1990s, he began exhibiting his work together with fellow students such as Katarzyna Kozyra, Jacek Markiewicz, Jacek Adamas, and Artur Żmijewski.

He has participated in major international exhibitions and festivals—such as Documenta in 1997, Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana in 2000, and the Venice Art Biennale in 2013—and has held solo exhibitions in museums all over the world, including the New Museum in New York, the Deste Foundation in Athens, the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht, the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin, the Musée National d'Art Moderne—Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, and the Helsinki Art Museum.

### **MASSIMILIANO GIONI**

Massimiliano Gioni is the Edlis Neeson Artistic Director of the New Museum and the director of the Trussardi Foundation in Milan. He has curated numerous international exhibitions and biennials including the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), the 8th Gwangju Biennale (2010), the first New Museum Triennial (co-curated with Lauren Cornell and Laura Hoptman in 2009), the 4th Berlin Biennale (co-curated with Maurizio Cattelan and Ali Subotnick in 2006) and Manifesta 5 (co-curated with Marta Kuzma in 2004). Gioni has organized important solo and group exhibitions at the New Museum and internationally, collaborating with a multitude of institutions and museums including, among others, the Dakis Joannou Collection/Deste Foundation in Athens; the Long Museum in Shanghai; the Museo Jumex in Mexico City; the Phillips Collection in Washington DC; the Tony Salame Collection/Aishti Foundation in Beirut; and the Qatar Museums in Doha.

Since 2003, Trussardi and Gioni have presented a series of solo exhibitions, public art interventions, and other incursions into symbolic places and forgotten spaces in Milan—redesigning the city through the visions of artists such as Allora & Calzadilla, Maurizio Cattelan, Tacita Dean, Jeremy Deller, Agnes Denes, Elmgreen & Dragset, Urs Fischer, Fischli & Weiss, Ragnar Kjartansson, Sarah Lucas, Ibrahim Mahama, Paul McCarthy, Paola Pivi, Pipilotti Rist, Anri Sala, Tino Sehgal, and many others.

### **GIULIANO DA EMPOLI**

Giuliano da Empoli (Paris, 1973) is an Italian and Swiss writer and researcher. He is the founding chairman of Volta, a pro-European think tank based in Milan and a professor at Sciences-Po Paris. Prior to that he was Deputy Mayor for Culture in Florence and a Senior Advisor to the Italian Prime Minister. He also served as an Executive Board member at the Venice Biennale and established Italy's first Design Council in 2007.

At age twenty-two, he published “Un grande futuro dietro di noi,” a book about the problems faced by Italian youth, which sprung a nation-wide debate and led the newspaper La Stampa to designate him “Man of the year”. Since then he has published eleven more books, on subjects ranging from

information overload (“Overdose”, 2002) to the dangers of hyper-specialization (“Contro gli specialisti”, 2013).

His latest book, about national-populist spin doctors, “Les ingénieurs du chaos” (Lattès, 2019) has been translated in twelve languages.

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