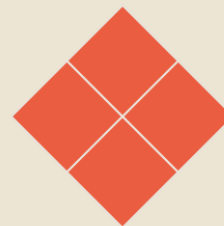


LA VENARIA REALE

PLAY 2022

A YEAR OF AMUSEMENT



Since 2020, Reggia di Venaria has chosen to build its annual event programme around a **central theme**. The 2021 theme was the *landscape*, so the activities of the Consortium revolved around the great debate on the ecological transition. In 2022 the chosen theme was ***play***.

The **Royal Palaces and Residences** have always been **places of leisure and entertainment**, in addition to power. In times when the pandemic demanded everyone to give up or, at least, strongly redefine the **concept of play, a fundamental expression of human sociality**, it seemed appropriate to reflect on this subject. In its 2022 event calendar, La Venaria aims to offer **a journey through the world of amusement**, on top of a look into the Italian society of the last three centuries.

This resulted in a story divided into several chapters that unfold throughout the year.

The programme starts in spring with the exhibitions ***From squares to Courts*** and ***Pictures at play!***

The first, curated by **Silvia Ghisotti** and **Andrea Merlotti**, represents a sort of an *incipit* of the narrative. The exhibition explores the Italian society of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through the events that took place in Piedmont. **At that time, town squares and courtyards were privileged play areas**. A world where artists and players of all kinds intertwined and that, in some cases, could arouse the interest of the courts. Even then, the concept of amusement was closely related to that of shows. The word "game" was used to refer to very diverse performances such as the "games on horseback" to describe the exploits of horsemen. A varied and fantastic world that only an artist of the calibre of **Arturo Brachetti** could express

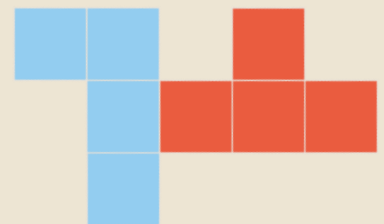
properly through his narration. The collaboration with the National Museum of Cinema in Turin and the Asti Bishop's Seminary Library was essential for realising the exhibition.

Games and shows in the streets and squares of Italy are also the leitmotifs of *Pictures at play!*, the second chapter of our story, curated by **Giangavino Pazzola** and organised together with the CAMERA Foundation – the Italian Centre for Photography. The works of the **greatest Italian photographers of the recent decades** depict the events that have taken place in Italy three centuries later: from absolute sovereigns to our present time through the phase of the economic boom. The story that this exhibition tells intertwines, at least in some parts, with that of the visitors. Town squares and streets of the last sixty years are just some of the spaces that illustrate the **changes that amusing practices underwent in contemporary years**.

The third exhibition of the year – ***Play. Video games, art and more***, curated by **Guido Curto** and **Fabio Viola** – concludes our imaginary story, examining the latter period together with our impending future. Video games are presented as the evolution of a storytelling practice that has its roots in the ancient songs of poets recited around the bonfires of peasants and soldiers and which, over the centuries, has gradually adapted to the changing social contexts and different technical possibilities. Their relationship with art, an expression of this evolution, is one of the leitmotifs of the exhibition. **From the royal squares, the subject and setting of the first two exhibitions, we now reach the virtual square of the "metaverse"**, where physically distant players can coexist, challenge each other and have fun as their ancestors once did.

Conferences, conversations, events and shows will take place alongside the exhibitions until the winter of 2022-2023, before giving way to the theme of the *banquet*, which will characterise the 2023-2024 season.

The Consortium of Royal Savoy Residences



CONSORTIUM OF THE ROYAL SAVOY RESIDENCES

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