**Introduction by the Curators**

*Arianna Bono, Matilde Cauteruccio, Matilde Dante, Maria Laura Foti, Sara Ravelli, Alessandra Mara Sartori di Borgoricco and Melania Sisinno*

*Elpis* means Hope.

The spirit that ancient mythology says was the last thing remaining in Pandora's box: not as a frail consolation but a strength that resists when all else seems lost. We, as the curators, have long wondered how we could present such an intimate, multifaceted theme in an effort to help it resonate with everyday life without turning it into a humdrum narrative. It was only after in-depth bibliographical research that we found food for thought in *Le Città Invisibili - The Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino (1972): imagining the meeting between Marco Polo and Emperor Kublai Kahn, Calvino narrates Polo's journey as he, on the Emperor's request, talks about the cities he passed through with details, sensations and emotions experienced, moving beyond a merely physical description of these places. Every city has a female name that cannot be traced to real places. The cities Calvino describes are the mirror of the soul: metaphors of desires and fears.

Elpìs seeks to be the same: a hope that has not yet come to fruition but which lives in the glances, dreams and hands of people who, even today, live hope as a radical act.

And just like these *Invisible Cities*, Elpìs has no precise borders: it comes into being between a thought and a concrete gesture. Art is a discreet yet powerful presence: it ignites hope and spreads beauty, sowing the seeds of possibility where it comes into being: the University. This is why we imagined the University as a City, because, just like a living organism, it becomes a venue where art not only finds its place but also flourishes in unexpected forms. It is a fertile ground where creativity is not forgotten on the sidelines: it becomes a shared language, an investigative tool, a transformative force. This tension between abstraction and matter is precisely that art finds its habitat: in fractures, dialogues and possibilities.

Meggiato's sculptures are like Ariadne's thread guiding us towards the creation of our city, the pillars that aspire to the absolute, that support the foundations of today and tomorrow. They intertwine matter and spirit, form and thought: vigilant guardians focusing on the act of becoming.

*Elpìs - where hope is born* - does not intend to be a traditional exhibition but a promise travelling from the past to arrive at the present: hope is the last thing to die and the first thing to be reborn.