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**MUSEI DI NERVI**

**Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Genova**

**LAURA ZENI. PASSWOR(L)D**

*curated by Fortunato D’Amico and Maria Flora Giubilei*

**13 November 2016 - 12 February 2017**

*press release, 22.09.16*

From 13 November to 12 February the **Modern Art Gallery of Genoa**, which is one of the four **Museums of Nervi**,hosts the solo exhibition “LAURA ZENI. PASSWOR(L)D” curated by Fortunato D’Amico and Maria Flora Giubilei. **Laura Zeni** **creates a connection with the collections of the museum**, she highlights analogies and differences between contemporaneity and a recent past, thanks to a rich group of **installations, paintings, collages and drawings** among which several **never seen before works** stand out. They are devised *ad hoc* according to the space of their display.

The title of the exhibition, *PASSWOR(L)D*, plays with the ambiguity of meanings that removing the letter “L” from it generates. Fortunato D’Amico says: “The present is a passage between the old and the new world, a historical time of transition and uneasiness where the way forward is not clearly foreseeable. The Modern Art Gallery of Genoa Nervi is a place where the works by the Masters from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reveal life moments, both good and bad, that represent the great time transition that in two centuries transformed the farming society into an industrial one”.

Of great importance are the ***site specific* large installations** by Laura Zeni spread on all the three floors of the Museum. A great example is the large iron wheel of 2 metres in size, which is placed on the ground floor, in the room with the bow window facing the park, towards the sea horizon, that is a hint to a journey, to an open-mindedness towards the outside world. This work is symbolically juxtaposed to *Change your Wor(l)d*, the installation in blue cotton threads on which is laid the fragmented cut-out of a man - made by using a plexiglas mirror - as to call to mind a condition of isolation and breakdown. This piece is placed below the painted sea that touches the Italian coasts in the large oil on canvas by the Dutch painter Petrus Theodor Tetar Van Elven, *Veduta fantastica dei principali monumenti d’Italia/Fantastic view of the main monuments of Italy*, - a prefiguration in 1858 of the Unification of Italy.

A hint to the **relationship between the inner and the outer world** can be found in room 4 of the museum, dedicated to landscapes and genre-painting, where – as in the artist’s view – man and nature coexist in an apparent harmonious dimension. Here a multitude of pieces of paper, clippings of faces and landscapes cover the pillars that divide the spaces, and recompose again under the old vaults in a paper assemblage that looks like clouds.

A playful interpretation of the landscape is offered by *Jumping*, a reinterpretation by the artist of “cielo e terra/sky and earth” – i.e. the game of the “campana” or “pampano”, the hopscotch game, well known in the pre-TV pre-digital childhood – a path made up of marked squares drawn on the ground where the visitor is invited to interact with it.

Before getting up to the piano nobile of the villa, in the twentieth century rooms, in a close connection with the section of the portraits and self-portraits from the GAM collections, there are the “heads” made by the artist using a continuous line. These are typical elements of her artistic

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way of expression, which is focused on the person and his/her inner world, and are meant as a container for thoughts, tales and moods. Speaking of which the impressive human profile painted on canvas in black hues, named *Nowhere Man*, strikes a chord; just as the several drawings on paper in bright colours and the works from the series *Ritratti interiori/Inner portraits*.

On the piano nobile of the Gallery, *La cura/The cure* is a very important piece: it is devised to be placed next to the beautiful terracotta sculpture by Arturo Martini, made at the height of the twentieth century, in 1932, and called *La convalescente/The convalescent*. Martini’s work portrays a lifesize image of his daughter Maria (the well-known Nena) worn-out by disease, with a book in her hands, at whose feet Laura Zeni places several open volumes, on which she draws frail figures of women. In the following room, which is dedicated to the interpreters of the futurist avant-guarde, from Depero to Fillia, there is the canvas *Geometrie femminili/Female geometries*, a thick composition of intertwined cutouts; it recalls the idea of motion and relates to the other futurist works on display.

A homage to the several works in ultramarine blue, in balance between symbolism and divisionism, by the painter Rubaldo Merello from Liguria is provided by the drooping bundle of blue threads named *Dal cielo al mare/From the sky to the sea:* a sort of rain that can be walked through, while admiring the collection of works of the museum.

Again, the blue comes back in the gorgeous painting by the English painter William Scott, *Blue still life*, which was bought by the Genovese Gallery at the Biennial of Venice of 1958, and is on display on the mezzanine floor of the museum. Laura Zeni enhances this international presence in the layout of the permanent collections by making an installation that presents the public with an example of the artist’s work as a *designer*.

Short biography

Laura Zeni is a versatile artist who loves to experiment with the art and design languages. After graduating from Brera Academy she exhibited in several venues in Italy and abroad. In the latest years she has held personal exhibitions at *Superstudio Più* (Milan), *Spazio Tadini* (Milan), *Palazzo Comunale/Town Hall Palace* (Cremona), *Triennale di Milano* (Milan), *Eataly Smeraldo* (Milan), *DAI Studio* (Rome), *ArtMoorHouse* (London), *Fiat Chrysler Motor Village* (London), *Chiostri dell’Umanitaria* (Milan) and *Jannelli&Volpi* (Milan). She has taken part in various collective exhibitions and artistic events as the *International Festival Art Expo Spoleto*, the *Biennale Italia-Cina* (Turin) and the ones at the *Fortezza del Priamàr* (Savona), the *Central Archives of the State* (Rome) and Onishi Project (New York). She lives and works in Milan. [www.laurazeni.it](http://www.laurazeni.it)

Musei Di Nervi

The cultural centre of the Musei di Nervi, of which Maria Flora Giubilei is the director, consists of four museums, opened to the public between 1946 and 2005, which preserve a rich heritage of visual and decorative art from Italy and abroad from the sixteenth to the twentieth-century.

The house-museum of **Villa Luxoro** - surrounded by a wonderful park positioned on the Genovese gulf - with antique pieces of furniture, night clocks and ceramics it is well known for the collection of eighteenth-century figurines of the Genovese and Naples nativity. The **Frugone Collections** preserved at Villa Grimaldi Fassio host an exceptional series of the most important works by artists from the nineteenth-century and the Belle Epoque (from Fattori to Signorini, from Fontanesi to Favretto, from Boldini to De Nittis, to Segantini) purchased by the brothers Lazzaro G.B. and Luigi Frugone and donated to the city of Genoa between 1935 and 1953.

The **Gallery of Modern Art of Genoa**, located in the sixteenth-century Villa Saluzzo Serra, includes almost 400 works among paintings and sculptures which date back from the early 19th Century to today: from Barabino to D’Andrade, to Cabianca and Monteverde, from Nomellini to Depero, Messina, Martini, De Pisis, Casorati, Guttuso, Mafai, Cagli and Zao Wou Ki. The **Wolfsoniana**, at the moment managed by the Fondazione per la cultura – Palazzo Ducale di

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Genova, which has a scientific independent direction and an international reference in the Wolfsonian-FIU Museum of Miami (Florida, USA), is the first Italian museum of decorative arts of the 19th and 20th Century, especially focused on the themes of propaganda and on important paintings and sculptures. Among the silverware, ceramics and glassware there is on display the beautiful furniture completely refurbished that goes from Esotism, Liberty, Art Déco, Futurism and the Twentieth Century. [www.museidigenova.it](http://www.museidigenova.it/) - [www.wolfsoniana.it](http://www.wolfsoniana.it/)

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**Exhibition details**

**Title** LAURA ZENI. PASSWOR(L)D

**Curated by** Fortunato D’Amico and Maria Flora Giubilei

**Venue MUSEI DI NERVI - Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Genova**

**Villa Saluzzo Serra,** Via Capolungo 3, Genoa - Nervi

**Dates** 13 November 2016 - 12 February 2017

**Winter opening hours** Tuesday-Sunday 11am-5pm

Monday closed

**Entrance fee** €6 full price; €5 reduced

**Info and bookings:** biglietteriagam@comune.genova.it- Ph. +39 010 3726025

[www.museidigenova.it](http://www.museidigenova.it) - [www.facebook.com/GAM.Galleria.Arte.Moderna.Genova](http://www.facebook.com/GAM.Galleria.Arte.Moderna.Genova)

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