**Text by Francesca Testoni**

The city of Como has selected the artists participating in the JCE through the well-established art competition known as Co.Co.Co. Como Contemporary Contest, in which two hundred artists from all over Italy took part.

Although young, the artists chosen for this biennial are excellent examples of the figure of the contemporary artist, with their sensitivity and attention to phenomena in the outside world ensuring they are producing deeply meaningful work.

Today more than ever, artists have a duty to reflect on and shine a light on current issues, to express their own point of view and encourage the spectator to consider what it is to be truly human in the contemporary world. Artists are thus no longer just making art for art’s sake but producing aesthetically valuable work that is also, and above all, a form of social commitment.

In *Fleets of Dreams*, Giulia Berra interprets the topical question of migration, drifting boats that are full of dreams and hopes. The light and delicate materials employed invite the spectator to get close and touch. They also hold up a mirror to the fragility of the hopes and visions of the migrants who would sail in these idealised boats.

Juri Ceccotti ponders the precariousness of employment in the installation *CV*, in which the artist fills in the required information in a straightforward manner, with no retouching or sexing up of the data. Apparently ironic, the work masks a reflection on the condition of the modern man, forced to wear a mask of appearance rather than showing his authentic and honest self. Contemporary precariousness is also the subject of a work by Giovanni Longo, whose fragile skeletons are those of symbolic, ancestral or prehistoric animals. They are carefully constructed out of eroded wood weathered by nature, and can be seen as projections of our human weaknesses. The search for the material, which the artist finds in the beds of rivers or at the seaside, is itself an integral part of the work. It involves a slow walk in the natural world, with inspiration often arising from a random stumbling upon an object in which the artist can already see the finished work.

Federico Scarchilli also explores the essence of the human being in society with his photograph entitled *15 minutes*. It is dominated by silence and stillness in a world that is governed by speed and unbridled consumerism. Scarchilli suggests we should stop, reflect on who we are, and seek out our inner essence. A raking light directs our attention to trace a narrative that each of us can re-invent as our own story.

Being an artist also means having excellent design skills and technique: Tania Brassesco and Lazlo Passi Norberto create fascinating photographs at the boundaries between reality and unreality. The scenes are meticulously constructed in the studio. *Under the Surface* magnetically captures our gaze and directs it towards the poetry and elegance it exudes, as in a waking dream; a scene from a film of which each of us can become the director.

In his *ArchitAMORfosi*, Matteo Galvano works with Biro on paper with excellence and technical mastery, to create imaginary structures that are formed from the merging of easily recognisable buildings. The Turning Torso, emblematic of the city of Malmö, merges with the Tower of Pisa, to create new architecture with a postmodern feel.

For her part, Giulia Fumagalli has a conceptual approach and examines chromatisms. Her work comes from her observation and study of optical phenomena. In addition to being a visual experience, her work inhabits the space with minimalist simplicity.

We are given the opportunity to make comparisons between all the artists chosen to represent each European partner country of the JCE.