



FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

AUGUST 24 - OCTOBER 27

FONDAZIONE PROGETTI BEVERLY PEPPER

PRESENTS

MARK DI SUVERO

SPACETIME

This exhibition of the work of one of the most important sculptors of the abstract expressionist generation, a key figure in environmental and public art, includes the installation of *Neruda's Gate* in Todi's Piazza del Popolo.

The exhibition ends in the Sala delle Pietre in Palazzo del Popolo where large paintings and small sculptures will be on display until October 6.

Curated by Marco Tonelli

From August 24 to October 27, 2024, Todi pays tribute to Mark di Suvero, one of the most important sculptors linked to the abstract expressionist generation and an international point of reference for environmental art.

The initiative, curated by Marco Tonelli and promoted by the Beverly Pepper Projects Foundation in collaboration with the Municipality of Todi, takes place as part of the fourth edition of the Festival of the Arts. It is the first solo exhibition in Italy of the American artist of Italian origin, since 1995.

With this initiative, Todi reaffirms its calling to explore the most innovative languages on the international art scene through artists who have chosen Todi as a privileged place to work or present their works, and who have led it to apply for Italian Capital of Contemporary Art 2026.

The exhibition will open on Piazza del Popolo with the large sculpture *Neruda's Gate* (2005), dedicated to the Chilean poet who died a few days after Augusto Pinochet's coup d'état in

September 1973. A huge 8-meter portal, it is painted red, the colour of many of di Suvero's steel sculptures. The slightly inclined structure is crossed by a long steel girder to create a dynamic effect that emphasizes the expressive and dramatic power of the work.

At the end of the exhibition, thanks to a loan for use contract, *Neruda's Gate* will be installed in the Bailey Bridge Park in Todi, at the foot of the hill on which the Umbrian town sits, in an industrial area where school complex will soon be built. This location was chosen because it aptly reflects the poetics of Mark di Suvero. A staunch supporter of the social function of art, throughout his career di Suvero has preferred not only to work in industrial areas but also on the outskirts of cities or wherever his work might find a younger audience.

Neruda's Gate is one of several tributes to famous personalities that di Suvero has created over the course of his long career, including scientists and mathematicians such as Galileo, Kepler and Lobotchevsky, composers such as Schubert, Scarlatti and Mozart, and other poets such as Baudelaire, Rilke, Marianna Moore, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Yeats.

The sculpture also underlines the political commitment that di Suvero has often made explicit in his works. These, although abstract and geometric, are not unrelated to an emotional and existential involvement in the circumstances of reality and historical events.

The exhibition's title, *Spacetime*, highlights the artist's interest in the concepts of matter and antimatter, relativity, four-dimensional space, gravity and quantum physics. **The large paintings in the Sala delle Pietre of the Palazzo del Popolo**, which come from his personal collection and his studio in New York, were created between 2014 and 2022 in acrylic and phosphorescent paints. **They will remain on display until October 6, 2024.** These paintings are playful and participatory - the public can illuminate them with small torches, that the poutiness of Mark di Suvero has developed since the 1960s, as well as the meaning of "drawing in space" that art historian Rosalind Krauss has given to so many twentieth-century iron sculptures.

Along the route you will encounter three **Puzzle Pieces**, the most recent sculptures by the American artist, in titanium and aluminum, obtained from the composition of various independent metal parts and which offer infinite combinatorial possibilities. Here as well, visitors will be able to interact directly with the works, freely assembling the various pieces to create new sculptures.

Mark di Suvero is the author of the poster of the 38th edition of the Todi Festival, one of the most important Italian and Umbrian cultural events, ranging from theatre to music to visual arts, inaugurated in conjunction with the Festival of the Arts under the artistic direction of Eugenio Guarducci.

"We are waiting for Mark di Suvero's installation in Piazza del Popolo" - **says Antonino Ruggiano, mayor of Todi** - "with the same trepidation as children on Christmas Eve! After Beverly Pepper, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Fabrizio Plessi and Ugo La Pietra, names which have honored the city in recent years with their presence at the Festival of Arts, a presence which has enriched the long list of artists who for over half a century have lived and worked in Todi, affirming it as a capital of contemporary art. Thanks to Suvero's fame and reputation, the city once again triumphs on the

international stage with an ambitious itinerary to accompany its candidacy as Italian Capital of Contemporary Art 2026.”

“Being able to exhibit the extraordinary work of Mark di Suvero in a medieval town like Todi” - **says Elisa Veschini, president of the Beverly Pepper Projects Foundation** - “was not an easy undertaking at all. Insiders know well that these projects are usually carried out in big cities or by historic foundations, less so by younger entities like ours, led moreover by two women. However, that which has always guided us, even in past editions of the Festival which saw great masters of contemporary art such as Arnaldo Pomodoro and Fabrizio Plessi leave monumental works to the city, has been the "iron" spirit of Beverly Pepper: a great woman and artist who in her long career never allowed herself to get discouraged by any difficulty.”

“Nothing would have been possible” - continues Veschini - “without the exceptional contribution of the city administration and the foresight of a mayor who loves his city dearly and who is not afraid to invest in contemporary art. We are also deeply grateful to all of Mark di Suvero's staff in New York, with whom we shared a great sense of synergy. For our part, we will demonstrate once again Todi's ability to remain at the center of the global artistic debate.”

“The choice of Mark di Suvero,” **comments Marco Tonelli**, “as artist and testimonial of the Festival of the Arts, is motivated not only by the importance of the sculptor in the history of modern and contemporary art and in particular for the so-called "late industrial" sculpture (of which he is practically the last representative), but also by a link of continuity with the work of the American sculptor Beverly Pepper, who chose Todi and Italy as her second home and place to live and work. In fact, based on an interview with Heidi Landecker in 1998, Beverly Pepper never made a secret of her admiration for Mark di Suvero, whom she placed in an ideal pantheon alongside sculptors such as Brancusi, David Smith and Richard Serra”.

The exhibition emphasizes the connection that developed between Beverly Pepper and Mark di Suvero. The two exhibited together between 1968 and 1995 in numerous group exhibitions held in public museums in the United States (including the Albright Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo and the William College Museum of Art in Williamstown), in prestigious private galleries (such as the John Weber Gallery or the John Berggruen Gallery) or in public spaces dedicated to sculpture, such as the Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island, New York. Not to mention their collective presence in important sculpture collections such as the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington or the Storm King Art Centre in New York. In 1995, Pepper and di Suvero's works were exhibited side by side on the Riva degli Schiavoni on the Grand Canal in Venice on the occasion of the Biennale del Centenario.

During the exhibition, a series of free related events will be available by reservation (tel. 339 1184278), including *Spacetime Tours*, guided visits to the exhibition venues, *I Love Contemporary Art*, Urban Trekking on Contemporary Art in Todi, *Kids Art Day*, workshop activities on contemporary art for children from 4 to 10 years old and their families, with a specialized childcare provider.

A catalogue by Marco Tonelli accompanies the exhibition.

Biographical notes

Mark di Suvero was born on September 18, 1933, in Shanghai to Italian parents (Matilde Millo di Suvero and Vittorio di Suvero). He moved to San Francisco with his family in 1941. In 1954-56 he attended the University of California in Santa Barbara and then in Berkeley and began painting and sculpting. In 1957 he moved to New York, where he discovered Abstract Expressionism, joined the March Gallery artists' cooperative and exhibited works in plaster and wax. In 1959, he began making carvings in wood taken from demolished buildings. The following year he suffered a serious accident while working on a building site to support himself. In 1963, he was one of the founders of the Park Place Gallery. In 1964 he created his first outdoor sculpture and three years later, after learning to use cranes and welding techniques, he created the first large outdoor steel sculpture *Are Years What?* (for Marianne Moore).

In 1971, since he was against the war in Vietnam, he left the United States for Europe. He had a solo exhibition at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, which extended to the city's gardens. In 1975, he was the first living artist to exhibit at the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris. The war in Vietnam ended the same year and so he returned to the United States. The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York dedicated a retrospective to him with works installed in various parts of the city.

In 1977, he created the Athena Foundation, an association to support artists who want to create large sculptures, and the Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City, New York. He has received numerous awards, including the Lifetime Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award from the International Sculpture Centre in 2000 and the Heinz Award in the Arts and Humanities in 2005. He lives and works in New York, Petaluma, California, and Chalon-sur-Saône, France.

Todi, May 2024

MARK DI SUVERO. SPACETIME

Todi, Piazza del Popolo; Sala delle Pietre of Palazzo del Popolo

24 August - 27 October 2024

Todi, Sala delle Pietre - Palazzo del Popolo

24 August - 6 October 2024

FREE ENTRY

Hours:

from 24 August to 1 September, daily, 10.30 - 12.30; 16.00 - 19.30

from 2 September, only Friday Saturday and Sunday, 10.30 - 12.30; 16.00 - 19.30

Information

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