**GALLARATE (VA) | MUSEO MA\*GA**

**FROM 16 OCTOBER 2021 TO 9 JANUARY 2022**

***THE WALL BETWEEN US***

***(Be)Longing, Repair and Its Politics Of Affects***

**Van Bo Le Mentzel, Ottonella Mocellin e Nicola Pellegrini, Hương Ngô e Hồng-Ân Trương, Jacqueline Hoàng Nguyễn, Thị Minh Huyền Nguyễn, Minh Đức Phạm, Minh Thắng Phạm, Danh Võ**

**A PROJECT BY** **Ottonella Mocellin and Nicola Pellegrini**

**Curated by Elena Agudio**

**From 16 October 2021 to 9 January 2022, MA\*GA in Gallarate (VA) hosts the exhibition *The wall between us***, the result of a lengthy research process that artists ***Ottonella Mocellin and Nicola Pellegrini*** carried out for years, and in 2020 won the eighth edition of the *Italian Council,* the program for the promotion of contemporary art worldwide by the Directorate General for Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture.

The work stems from a reflection on some of the most intricate legacies of the Cold War and involves communities of the Asian, namely Vietnamese, diaspora in Europe and North America, while interrogating the artists' personal relationship with their stories.

In collaboration with artists, writers and activists, Mocellin and Pellegrini analyse their position as Italian adoptive parents with a daughter and a son born in Vietnam, reflecting on the intersection between belonging, kinship, history, memory, identity-based politics, as well as the links between them and the different movements of memory that mark Berlin, the city in which they live.

That of the Berlin Wall, or rather its spectrum, thus becomes a recurring image that serves as a narrative tool from which their visual story develops.

Hence the title of the video installation, ***The wall between us***, which documents a visual journey through the German capital. A small sailboat moves through city streets, along the path where the wall once stood.

On this boat, Ottonella Mocellin and Nicola Pellegrini and their family spend an average and ordinary day in public spaces, navigating through city traffic in search of an imaginary place where the memories and lives of those who have been divided by history can ideally meet. The video is designed as a letter from the two artists to the biological mothers of their daughter and son.

The exhibition also tells the story of the collaboration developed with SAVVY Contemporary of Berlin, lead partner of the project, and of a series of workshops curated by the Colonial Neighbours archive within SAVVY Contemporary and at the Jindrich Chalupecky Society (FCCA) in Prague. The meetings, led by members of the diasporic communities, question the ideas of narration, memory and family histories, including a reflection on transnational adoption, in a context that is historically charged with a post-socialist and post-colonial heritage.

The exhibition at MA\*GA presents not only the personal journey of the artists, but also the story of an encounter with architects and artists such as **Danh Võ**, **Van Bo Le Mentzel, Jacqueline Hoàng Nguyễn, Hương Ngô and Hồng-Ân Trương, Minh Thang Pham, Minh Duc Pham**, and **Minh Huyeh Nguyen**, with whom Mocellin and Pellegrini converse in the spaces of the exhibition, and analyse some of the reflections developed over the course of the two-year collaboration, opening new paths and trajectories, complicating the narrative fabric.

*"The viewer,"* said curator Elena Agudio, "*is invited to navigate the space between the interjections to confront the question marks and ellipses, to unravel the threads in order to find the principles and ends of an open narrative that is currently in the making. With this suspension of judgement in the form of an exhibition, we are asked to reflect: what is the shape and type of wall that we encounter between us, and in front of ourselves?".*

The exhibition is accompanied by a book published by Archive Books, conceived as a series of letters written by authors Dieu Hao Do; Danh Võ, Jacqueline Hoàng Nguyễn with Hương Ngô and Hồng-Ân Trương; Duc Pham Minh with Thang Pham and Vi Tranova; Isabelle Müller; Linh Tran; Rae Mee-Jin Tilly; Tran Thi Thu Trang and Thi Minh Huyen Nguyen; Trinh Thi Minh Ha; Elena Agudio; Ottonella Mocellin-Nicola Pellegrini to her daughter Rosa Dao and son Tito Vinh Phuc, and to generations to come. The use of letters is intended as a literary expedient to reflect on different aspects of the Vietnamese diaspora to young members of the community who will read them in the near future. The publication is intended as a gift for readers of the future and as a tool to encourage dialogue, looking back and forth through the lens of the present moment.

**Biographical notes**

**Ottonella Mocellin (Milan, 1966) and Nicola Pellegrini (Milan, 1962)** live and work in Berlin.

After studying at the Chelsea School of Art and the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, they represented Italy in 2001-2002 for the PS1 International Studio Program in New York.

Conflict, emotion, dialogue and communication in human relations are all dominant themes in the artistic work of the Italian duo.

They have exhibited at the Biennials of Turin, Valencia, Tel Aviv and Tirana, Manifesta 12, Palermo. Their work, which includes installations, photographs, videos and performances, has been exhibited in multiple venues, including: The American University Museum, Washington, D.C.; MUAR, Moscow; PS1, New York; Atelier D'Artistes, Marseille; SMART, Amsterdam, Kunsthaus, Dresden; ACC Galerie, Weimar; Fondazione del Monte, Bologna; GAM, Bologna; GAM, Turin; Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena; MART, Trento and Rovereto; PAC, Milan; PAN, Naples; Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome; Fondazione Merz, Turin; MACRO, Rome; MAMbo, Bologna; Museo del Patrimonio Municipal de Malaga, Malaga; GNAM Galleria Nazionale d'arte Moderna, Rome; Centro di Cultura Contemporanea a Palazzo Strozzi, Florence.

They are represented by the Lia Rumma Gallery in Milan and Naples.

Gallarate (VA), September 2021

***THE WALL BETWEEN US***

Gallarate (VA), Museo MA\*GA (via E. De Magri 1)

**16 October 2021 - 9 January 2022**

**Opening hours:**

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday: 10:00 - 18:00

Saturday and Sunday: 11:00 - 19:00

Last admission 1 hour before closing.

**Free admission (exhibition only)**

*A Covid-19 green certificate (Green Pass), specific digital certification, or a negative antigen test carried out within the previous 48 hours is required for access the museum.*

*The above certification must be shown together with a valid identity document.*

**Museo MA\*GA**

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