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**ANNE AND PATRICK POIRIER**  
**MEET**  
**ANGELA MADESANI**

For this new appointment, Galleria Fumagalli invited curator Angela Madesani to dialogue with French artists Anne and Patrick Poirier about their research and artistic production at the time of the pandemic.

**Anne and Patrick Poirier tell about their new work.**

Below, you will find the link to access a short video, shot and shared by Agneta Mazonyte, of the exhibition *ROMAMOR* held at the French Academy - Villa Medici in Rome in 2019.





Anne & Patrick Poirier, *Inferno/Dante*, 2020. Acrylic on paper, 80x3000 cm. Courtesy the artists

Angela Madesani: «During the days of the lockdown in France and in large part of the world due to the Covid-19 outbreak, Anne and Patrick Poirier began to draw on a long roll of paper. A free reading of Dante's *Hell*, to which Anne has been attached since early youth. As always in your work there is an evident participation in what is happening around you.»

Anne & Patrick Poirier: «As often happened, a series of particular conjunctures have led us to deal with things. Shortly before Christmas, we had ordered two large gongs from Wuhan, China for a project that we would have inaugurated at the Romanesque abbey of Le Thoronet on 19 May. It would be a work called *Anima Mundi*, which takes advantage of the extraordinary acoustics of the place for which it is conceived. The two gongs arrived in France in the days of the outbreak. Closed in the studio like everyone, very worried, we decided to make this work on a long roll of paper that we had bought before. We prepared everything on 16 March and in the morning of the following day, the closing day, we started. And the work was completed, by chance, on the day of the reopening. We can say that it was born of fear as some people close to us got sick. There was something in the air that moved us particularly.»

A.M.: «How does it fit into this particular historical moment?»

A.&P.P.: «Artists and writers have always talked about pandemics. But this time the tragic situation has involved the whole world. We thought that for the first time humanity has received a clear message about its demise. End of humanity, which is not the end of the world. The world – nature in other words – could be very happy without human being. Also in this work we have dealt with the issues of pollution, destruction, catastrophe. It is the search for the world after death. What happens next? All human beings ask themselves this question. It is a subject that coincides with our work. Through it we seek answers to archetypal questions. Mythology, religions, science – especially today – focus on these topics.»

A.M.: «Hence, the *Divine Comedy*, the *Hell*.»

A.&P.P.: «At home we had two editions, one featuring illustrations by Gustave Doré and one, which we purchased at a book stand fifteen years ago, with Sandro Botticelli's drawings. The time had come to make a work on that topic.»

A.M.: «The references to ancient art are countless, as well as to medieval bestiaries, Victor Hugo, Luca Signorelli in Orvieto, Giulio Romano, William Blake, Heinrich Füssli, maybe de Chirico.»



A.&P.P.: «We have put together many stimuli, imitating nobody, and the process has started, also looking at some religious and folk art objects that we have collected over the years.»



Anne & Patrick Poirier, *Inferno/Dante*, 2020. Acrylic on paper, 80x3000 cm. Courtesy the artists

A.M.: «The work also includes short written parts.»

A.&P.P.: «Some sentences are ours, others come from *The Death of Virgil* by Hermann Broch, some excerpts from Dante's *Hell*.»

A.M.: «A *bande dessinée*, a long comic strip, 80 cm high and 30 meters long where there is no continuity.»

A.&P.P.: «It is a great landscape that you should explore. We first did, among our visual and cultural memories. It's like a montage. There is not only one point of view, there are many. There are differences in scale, which do not necessarily correspond to actual dimensions. We did not respect the order of Dante's circles. Some are in their original place, some are not. It is a free reading.»

A.M.: «There is no perspective view. Patrick worked in the morning. Anne in the afternoon. Then together again at the end of the day. First you used black and red ink available in your studio, then, waiting for a refill, you prepared red ink according to a recipe by Giorgio de Chirico, which you had found 40 years ago. How did you work?»

A.&P.P.: «Each of us could resume the other's drawings when he deemed it necessary. It is a 4-handed work. It is the result of a profound dialogue between us. But it is also a kind of diary, in fact we wrote the dates to mark the flowing of time.»

A.M.: «The thirty-fourth canto of the *Hell* takes place in the ninth circle, in the Cocytus ice. Dante and Virgil meet Lucifer, the beginning of all evil. How does your work end?»

A.&P.P.: «We added the Angelus Novus. He is an angel crying over this heap of ruins that he sees as he flies upside down on humanity, led by the wind. Besides, Lucifer was the most beautiful angel that God created.»

A.M.: «And thence you came forth to see again the stars.»



... C'EST A CELA QUE DOIT RESSEMBLER  
L'ANGE DE L'HISTOIRE ...

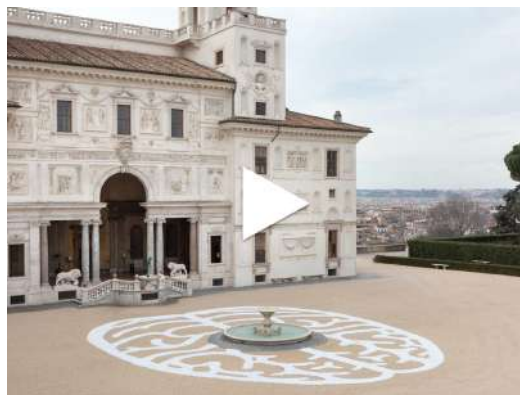
SON VISAGE EST TOURNE VERS LE PASSE .  
LA OÙ NOUS APPARAÎT UNE CHAÎNE D'ÉVÉNEMENTS ,  
IL NE VOIT , LUI , QU'UNE SEULE ET UNIQUE CATASTROPHE ,  
QUI , SANS CESSER ANONCE LES RUINES SUR RUINES , ET ,  
LE PRÉCIPITE A SES PIEDS . IL VOUDRAIT BIEN S'ATTARDER ,  
REVEILLER LES MORTS ET RAISSEMBLER CE QUI A ÉTÉ  
DÉMEMBRÉ . MAIS DU PARADIS SOUFFLE UNE TEMPÊTE  
QUI S'EST PRISE DANS SES AILES , SI VIOLEMMENT , QUE L'ANGE  
NE PEUT PLUS LES REFERMER . CETTE TEMPÊTE LE Pousse  
IRRESISTIBLEMENT VERS L'AVENIR AUQUEL IL TOURNE LE DOS ,  
TANDIS QUE LE MONCEAU DE RUINES DEVANT LUI S'ÉLÈVE  
JUSQU'AU CIEL . CETTE TEMPÊTE EST CE QUE NOUS APPELONS  
LE PROGRES . . .

Anne & Patrick Poirier, *Inferno/Dante*, 2020. Acrylic on paper, 80x3000 cm. Courtesy the artists

Anne and Patrick Poirier, one of the most famous couples of the international art scene, decided to combine their artistic vision, signing together the works, starting from their residency at **the French Academy - Villa Medici** (1968-1972).

**The very Rome-based institution dedicated to them their first monographic exhibition in Italy, *ROMAMOR* (1 March - 5 May, 2019).**

The exhibition, curated by Chiara Parisi, presented historical works and site-specific productions in dialogue with the enchanting late-Renaissance architecture and the gardens of the Villa: a tribute to the city that engendered the creative symbiosis between the two artists.



Click the image or the following [LINK](#) to access a short video of the exhibition *ROMAMOR* (2019), kindly shared by Agneta Mazonyte.

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To learn more about the artists' work, browse [Galleria Fumagalli's website](#).

The full program of virtual initiatives of the gallery is available at the [webpage #iamstayinghome](#).

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