

Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro
presents

PROJECT ROOM #18

Paul Maheke
The Purple Chamber
curated by **Chiara Nuzzi**

For the second appointment of *Corpo Celeste*,
exhibition cycle curated by Chiara Nuzzi for the observatory *Project Room*,
the Foundation presents the **first solo exhibition** in Italy of French artist **Paul Maheke**, whose practice
explores the potential of the body as an archive to examine the formation and construction of memory
and identity.

For the duration of the exhibition, a work by the artist
will also be on display in the spaces of **Fondazione ICA Milano**

28 October – 17 December 2023
Opening: 26 October, 6 pm

Milan, 26 September 2023. On view from October 28th, *Paul Maheke. The Purple Chamber* marks the
second appointment of *Corpo Celeste*, the exhibition cycle curated by Chiara Nuzzi specifically
conceived for the Project Room programme, the Foundation's observatory project on contemporary
arts. The project is the first solo show in an Italian institution by French artist Paul Maheke (b. 1985,
Brive-la-Gaillarde, France).

Through his research, **Maheke** uses different media that contaminate each other, ranging from
installation to video, from sculpture to sound, drawing and performance, an element - the latter - that
he considers central for its ability to transcend the use of language. In his practice thus **movement,**
gesture and the environment become vehicles for exploring limit, potential and transformation in
relation to human identity and perception.

In *The Purple Chamber*, the artist condenses the themes and research that have always characterised
his work within a space of reinvention and meditation: a true **cosmology**, conceived by the artist as a
world taking shape in front of the public. A constantly changing space in which different elements -
sculpture, drawing, performance - meet and intertwine with each other while maintaining their
potential autonomy. The public is invited to enter an intimate and disorienting environment, the walls

of which are covered by lilac curtains that reveal the presence of sculptures and drawings in a continuous game of layers. These include the newly produced body of work *The Purple Chamber series* (2023) and a mighty **wall painting** - especially conceived for the exhibition - as well as earlier works such as *Sans titre (ombre blanche)* (2020) and *You & I (fallen orbiters)* (2023).

As a whole, the works compose an intense dialogue between body and material surface that punctuates the exhibition rhythm and transcends space-time limits.

The drawings, made with acrylic pencil on black aluminium panels, draw inspiration from the Psychomanteum, a dark room used by mediums or psychics in the attempt to enter into dialogue with the dead through a dark mirror. The reflective surface, here rendered thanks to the black aluminium panels, is aimed to allow the spontaneous appearance of images and figures from the afterlife, which the artist evokes through the drawings, blurring the boundary between the living and the dead. The works have a strong performative component that involves the artist's body in an active dialogue with the material surface, similar to a choreography and - as curator Chiara Nuzzi explains - "result from a process of emergence, similar to automatic writing, in which the images are neither predetermined nor intentionally guided by the artist, but they manifest themselves on the surfaces in the process of creation, emerging almost unconsciously".

In *The Purple Chamber*, the artist thus evokes **ghosts and non-human** creatures that invite the public to reorient their way of perceiving, seeing and feeling. The exhibition is therefore configured as a **site-specific** project that, through heterogeneous elements, guides visitors between **unknown visions and identities**, further deepening a research aimed at **identifying new ways of understanding the world and producing knowledge**, opening up **imaginative reflections** in contrast to traditional narratives of space and the cosmos. "*The Purple Chamber attempts to articulate and destabilise dominant narratives,*" the curator emphasises, "*by transcending the limit of the human visible through the creation of a suspended space for meditation and imagination, inviting us to reconfigure an identity knowledge capable of going beyond hierarchical and colonialist dynamics through a continuous tension between hypervisibility and erasure, intimacy and voyeurism.*"

As with the first exhibition of the *Project Room* cycle in 2023 dedicated to the work of **Lito Kattou**, on this occasion too Fondazione ICA Milano hosts a work by Paul Maheke which is connected to the themes of the exhibition at Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro and creates a spatial-temporal connection between the two institutions.

We thank Goodman Gallery and Sultana for their kind support of the exhibition.

Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro

Via Vigevano 9 - 20144 Milano

tel (+39) 02 89 075 394

info@fondazionearnaldopomodoro.it

fondazionearnaldopomodoro.it

Lara Facco P&C

press@larafacco.com

larafacco.com



Fondazione ICA Milano

GOODMAN GALLERY



BIOGRAPHIES

Paul Maheke (1985, Brive-la-Gaillarde, Francia) lives and works in Montpellier, France. He completed a Masters in Art Practice from the École nationale supérieure d'arts de Cergy (2011) and was an Associate of Open School East's Programme of study, London/ Margate, UK (2015). With a focus on dance and through a varied and often collaborative body of work comprising performance, installation, sound and video, Maheke considers the potential of the body as an archive in order to examine how memory and identity are formed and constituted. Maheke's works and performances have been shown at High Line, New York, Tate Modern, London, the Venice Biennale, Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo and Lafayette Anticipations in Paris, Baltic Triennial 13, Manifesta 12, Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich and Chisenhale Gallery in London, amongst others. In 2021, he was shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize and he was resident at Villa Albertine in 2023.

Curator and researcher, **Chiara Nuzzi** (Naples, 1986) lives and works in Milan. She graduated from the Cà Foscari University and the IUAV University of Venice. In 2012–13 she participated in the first edition of CAMPO, a program for Italian curators created by the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, and in 2014 in the CuratorLab research program for international curators at the Konstfack University in Stockholm. She has collaborated with various public and private institutions in Italy and abroad, and since 2018 she has been the curator and editorial manager of the Fondazione ICA Milano, for which she collaborates in the development and coordinating of the exhibition and editorial program. For the Fondazione ICA Milano she curated the exhibitions: Camille Henrot & Estelle Hoy. *Jus d'Orange* (2023); Rebecca Moccia. *Ministry of Loneliness* (2023); Chemutai Ng'ok. *An impression that may possibly last forever* (2023); *Small Fixations* (2022); Annette Kelm. *DIE BÜCHER* (2022), co-curated with Alberto Salvadori; Constance Candeloro. *My skincare, my strength* (2022). She also co-curated with Alberto Salvadori the first solo exhibition in Italy of the artist and dancer Simone Forti *Vicino al Cuore/Close to the Heart* (2019–2020) and in 2021 she conceived and curated the digital program ICA COMMITTED dedicated to the digital channel of the foundation, still ongoing. In 2018 she co-curated with Luigi Fassi the collective exhibition *Sense and Sensibilia*, a side-project on the occasion of the Gherdëina Biennale. Between 2017 and 2018, on the occasion of the curatorial residency at the French institution *Thankyouforcoming* in Nice, she curated the cultural and exhibition program *What happens to people and what happens to the land is the same thing*, created with the support of Mibact, collaborating with artists including Ursula Biemann & Paulo Tavares, Melanie Bonajo, The Karrabing Film Collective and Uriel Orlow. In 2014 she won the CXC (Call for Curators) award promoted by the MART – Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto for the exhibition project *Afterimage. Immagini del Conflitto* (co-curated with Valeria Mancinelli and Stefania Rispoli) realized in 2014–2015 at the Galleria Civica di Trento. In 2015 she co-founded the Florentine festival SONIC SOMATIC, focused on contemporary sound and performative research.

PRESS CONTACTS

Lara Facco P&C

press@larafacco.com

Lara Facco | M. +39 349 2529989 | E. lara@larafacco.com

Camilla Capponi | M. +39 366 3947098 | E. camilla@larafacco.com

Claudia Santrolli | M. +39 339 7041657 | E. claudia@larafacco.com

Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro

Via Vigevano 9 - 20144 Milano

tel (+39) 02 89 075 394

info@fondazionearnaldopomodoro.it

fondazionearnaldopomodoro.it

Lara Facco P&C

press@larafacco.com

larafacco.com