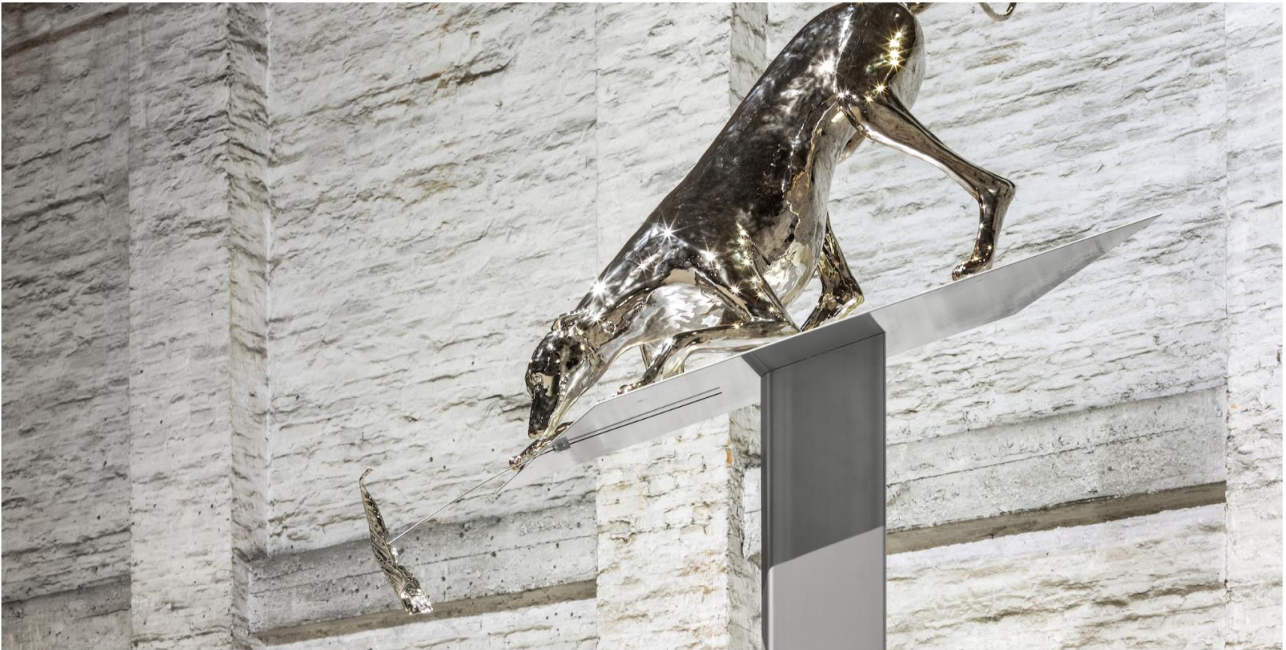


## CURA.



ILARIA MAROTTA  
IN CONVERSATION WITH  
MILOVAN FARRONATO

[Neither Nor: The challenge to the Labyrinth](#)  
Italian Pavilion | La Biennale di Venezia

11 May – 24 November, 2019

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ONE MONTH AFTER THE OPENING OF THE 58TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION, VENICE BIENNALE 2019, WE ASKED SOME QUESTIONS TO MILOVAN FARRONATO, CURATOR OF THE ITALIAN PAVILION, WITH NE' ALTRA NE' QUESTA: LA SFIDA DEL LABIRINTO.

**Ilaria Marotta** How did the work of Italo Calvino that inspired the curatorial idea of the Italian Pavilion feed the narrative and architectural structure of the exhibition?

**Milovan Farronato** While I was thinking about display strategies used by artist Katharina Fritsch in some of her seminal exhibitions – imagining a non-narrative structure and a labyrinth, with multiple perspectives, different entrances and the idea of circumnavigating an exhibition – Stella Bottai, my associate curator, reminded me of the 1962 essay by Italo Calvino. *The Challenge to the Labyrinth* became both the key and the keyhole, from a theoretical point of view, to unlock some of our concepts for the show. But if I have to think about an author, the diachronicity of whose writings I translated into the synchronicity of the pavilion's vision, I would think of the stream of consciousness found in many of Clarice Lispector's novels: one can start reading in any moment of the story and then decide to proceed forward or backward.

IM Is the maze a place to get lost or find oneself?

MF The labyrinth is a metaphor, no one really needs to get lost, not even to find oneself. At most, I suggest meeting the other. The maze of *Neither Nor* invites you to make choices, whether overriding or minor, fundamental or accessory, it is just a matter of choosing.

IM The idea of maze comes here to a synthesis, or rather to THE synthesis: an intricate architecture that guides the visitor in discovering the works. Did you look at the maze as a process, an experience, or a display?

MF As mentioned earlier, the labyrinth is primarily a metaphor for a paradoxical rational complexity in which opposites can coexist. It's underpinned by an idea of dilated time that only a structure of this kind could allow. It is definitely also a display: clear, neat, a support structure for the artworks that live within it, for the artists who animate it, and for the public who navigate or are shipwrecked there.

IM Italy is the country of light and colours, as told in literature, cinema, fashion, and common knowledge. Clichés always hold a truth and even if this were a cliché, it would definitely express one of the aspects of the character and spirit of this country. This aspect, however, is never highlighted when representing Italian art in the Italian Pavilion. This may be because it is indeed a cliché and thus far from the imagination of artists. I find that in recent years the Pavilion was taking on a certain gloom and austerity. In your case, the first impression is that of "elegance," "structure," of a well-sewn garment. How do the allegorical visionariness and the shrewd irony of Calvino's works, which inspired the exhibition, surface or how did they have a role in the creative process?

MF Thank you for the 'elegance', 'structure' and 'well-sewn garment'. I am very much into formal aspects in my curatorial practice. Nevertheless, I think the pavilion has many lights and many colours. I appreciate, for example, the complementarity of the sunny world suggested by Liliana Moro's *Quattro Stagioni* (a yellow table, with yellow chairs, hastily assembled to host colourful beach umbrellas) placed beyond a shady area that hosts works by Enrico David. Or *Capovolto* by Liliana is a streetlight hung upside down, like Italo Calvino's Orlando in *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, who, at the end of his troubled existential experience, while hung upside down, says 'Leave me like this. I have come full circle and I understand. The world must be read backward.'







IM How did you manage to balance the relationship between architecture and works, between curatorial vision and artist?

MF With harmony and in full respect of each other's rules. For both Liliana and Enrico, it has been a positive experience to be able to create, inside the labyrinth, the perfect architectural set-up to show the works we selected. For instance, Liliana wished to have a raised platform to view the illusionistic sinking of her well of St. Patrick from above. While Enrico had decided to open, with a double wall of arches, the room where one of his sculptures, which is liquifying, is displayed, so as to 'quote' another of his works, one that represents the same trilogy of arches, also exhibited in another room of the labyrinth. Enrico also imagined the long perspective cone that leads to the vision of a trauma or a memory included in the *Ultra Paste's* diorama. For Chiara Fumai, on the other hand, this balance was found in the philological respect of her posthumous work, and in the idea of having enough space to be able to fragment it and then put it together again in a single, conclusive environment.

IM Can you tell us about the work of the three artists, and the relationship between past and present which is so carefully and necessarily included in the context of the exhibition?

MF I would prefer to talk about the future. I am curious to know what influences this exhibition will have on the work of Liliana, which surely has been rediscovered in its existential parable within the Italian Pavilion. What this project will bring to the memory of Chiara's work, on which a museum retrospective has already been planned, and to the practice of Enrico for whom this experience, in his own words, marks a moment of no return.

IM After this experience, what would and what wouldn't you do differently?

MF There is nothing I would change at this point, I might need a little bit more distance to judge though. It was interesting to be back to Venice last week, one month after the official opening, for the first event of our public programme, a conversation between the artists, Stella Bottai, Lavinia Filippi and me. What I certainly would not do anymore is to reveal all my references, because sometimes people tend to associate suggestions to meanings that might be too literal. The will to strictly get lost inside this exhibition, for instance, feels, to me, somehow like a childish reading of the metaphor of the labyrinth. Disorientation is what I would like to offer. The idea of realising, while walking through the pavilion, to have seen another work in the distance and therefore wanting to go back, then retracing our steps and discovering it, this is what I find attractive.

#### CREDITS

*Neither Nor: The challenge to the Labyrinth*

Italian Pavilion at the Biennale Arte 2019

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