

WAL

(1949)

Edited by Cesare Biasini Selvaggi

Wal, alias Walter Guidobaldi, was born in 1949 in the little village of Roncolo of Quattro Castella (Reggio Emilia), where he is still living and working.

He attends the Fine Arts Academy in Bologna, in particular he attends Umberto Mastroianni's course. In the 1970's he moves to Milan and attends the Academy of Brera, where he has Luciano Minguzzi e Alik Cavaliere as professors.

In the Lombard capital he creates conceptual works, being in direct contact with the artistic environment of that period. At the end of the decade, he progressively goes back to painting and he is recruited by Renato Barilli in the New-new group, participating in each one of their exhibitions.



The New-new group, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, 1980. From the left side: Salvo, Felice Levini, Enrico Barbera, Luigi Ontani, Giuseppe Salvatori, Luciano Bartolini, Marcello Jori, Luigi Mainolfi, Bruno Benuzzi, Wal, Renato Barilli, Francesca Alinovi, Roberto Daolio, Giorgio Pagano. Source: "L'Europeo", n.14, April 1980

Besides the personal exhibits and collective shows that he kept in Italy and abroad, one should remember, for the influence it was to have on his future works, the commission entrusted to the artist by the I.S.A.F.F. of Quattro Castella in 1984. The I.S.A.F.F. is a firm specialised in toys and furniture for nursery schools and its aim, thanks to the commission, was to build a wide playground, which would be displayed in important exhibitions in Paris, Genova and Milan. In 1987, those works were used for the scenery of a children's TV show which Rai broadcasts from the Antoniano theatre in Bologna. In 1992, by invitation of the Gemmological Institute of A. C. Guadalajara, Jalisco, in Mexico, the House of Culture Cabañas dedicates a large personal exhibition to him. In December 2003, at Reggio Emilia, his retrospective exhibition is inaugurated, entrusted to the care of Renato Barilli and Massimo Mussini, in the Exposition Hall of the Chiostrì di San Domenico.

In 2005 the Costa Crociere commissions him to make a number of large sculptures that are placed on the *Costa Concordia* and *Costa Serena* cruise ships.

In December of 2007, Kunsthalle of Darstadt (Germany) invites the artist to participate in the show *Baby Body*. In October of the same year and still in Germany, he starts a peculiar journey with his itinerant personal exhibit *Wal, die Schätze einer verlorenen Kindheit* (*Wal, treasures of a lost childhood*), first at the Galerie Studio Art Deco in Frankfurt, then at the Frank Pages Art Galerie in Baden-Baden and, in 2008, at the Langenburg Castle.

In 2011, in the hallways of the Correggio Princes' Palace (Reggio Emilia), Elena Giampietri organises his personal exhibition *Wal: from the 80's to his latest works*, reconstructing the deep imagination vein of the artist, while exploring at the same time, the affinities between his ten-years production and the thematics typical of the poetics of the New-new group.



In 2013 is invited to participate in a relevant art project, *90 artists for a flag*, set up in the Cloisters of Saint Domenico of Reggio Emilia. Each one of the 90 artists involved, among which Wal, created a work of art starting from a particular flag, that they were given, chosen among the flags that had been displayed in Reggio Emilia, City of the Tricolour, in 2011 on the occasion of the celebrations for the 150° anniversary of Italy's unification.

During the summer of the same year, the Foundation Cento Fiori of Savona, in collaboration with the Circle of Artists from Albissola Marina, promotes his review entitled *Wal namely the renewable mystery of astonishment*, curated by Luciano Caprile, with a selection of sculptures, paintings and drawings created during the 80's. Since may 2015 and throughout the Expo period in 2015,

a selection of his latest sculptures have been admired through an evocative path on the boardwalk and within the city of Stresa, Lake Maggiore's pearl. This original exhibition that spread throughout the territory and is entitled *WAL. Games and mysteries of the lake*, is organized by Giampiero Zanzi.

In October of 2016, on the occasion of the Contemporary Day, an initiative promoted by AMACI (Association of Italian Contemporary Museums) that has now reached the 12th edition, the Parmeggiani Gallery of Reggio Emilia hosted the exhibit *Wal. On the banks of the Nile*, a surrealist and enigmatic meeting between the artist's sculptures and the story of the well-known gallery founded by the ambiguous collector of an obscure past Luigi Parmeggiani.

In May 2017, Rome paid homage to Wal with the major retrospective entitled *Il meraviglioso mondo di Wal. Sculture fantastiche, animali magici e dove cercarli*, set up in the Museums of Villa Torlonia, in the halls and gardens of the Casina delle Civette. The aim of the exhibition, curated by Cesare Biasini Selvaggi and Maria Grazia Massafra, is to make it known Wal's artistic universe through fifty sculptures made since the 2000s.