

Fondazione Ermanno Casoli

Fondazione Ermanno Casoli

Sunday 24 September 2023, 12 pm

Inauguration of

IL PERSONALE

a site-specific artwork by

Claire Fontaine

The collective winner of the 21st Premio Ermanno Casoli
curated by **Marcello Smarrelli**

ELICA

Fabriano (AN), via Ermanno Casoli 2

PRESS RELEASE

Fondazione Ermanno Casoli is pleased to present ***IL PERSONALE*** at ELICA in Fabriano on **Sunday 24 September 2023 at 12 pm**, a site-specific artwork created by collective artist **Claire Fontaine** winner of the 21st edition of **Premio Ermanno Casoli**. The award, curated by **Marcello Smarrelli**, is one of the most prestigious within the field of contemporary art in Italy.

The Chairman of Elica, **Francesco Casoli**, declared, “With Fondazione Ermanno Casoli, we try to transport the passion and innovation that characterizes contemporary art into the company. The real value of Elica lies in our women and men, which is why we have been putting them continuously in touch with the best artists through the Premio Ermanno Casoli. We do this in all the areas where we operate around the world. This year, we are finally returning to Fabriano with the work created by Claire Fontaine, who will certainly succeed in expressing the spirit that guides us every day.”

Claire Fontaine’s **new luminous installation** entitled ***IL PERSONALE*** was conceived for the most iconic location of Elica’s Fabriano headquarters, stemming from the reflections generated during the workshop *Lavoro femminile visibile e invisibile*, attended by a group of 30 women who hold managerial roles within the company. In the light of some fundamental concepts of feminism –that the artistic duo has been exploring since its beginnings – the participants were asked to express themselves on the theme of **female empowerment**, with the aim of highlighting their difficulties in reconciling work and family.

The emotional challenges that emerged during the work with the artist inspired the luminous activation of the powerful quote, “**The personal is political**,” the title of a pamphlet by US feminist activist Carol Hanisch from 1970. With this text, Hanisch created a milestone of feminism by refuting the idea that sexuality, physical appearance, abortion, childcare and the division of domestic labour are personal issues without political dignity.

“The workshop day was exciting and transformative for all participants. It was amazing how all of them, despite their respective roles within the organisation, opened up and described their difficulties and concerns, making this moment even more valuable for the cohesion between the colleagues and for the discovery of hidden aspects of their personalities,” said the artist, who continued, “The companionship that already existed between some of them, given their privileged position in a company that is very attentive to gender equality, certainly facilitated the establishment of this climate.”

The work thus becomes a reflection on the status of women in the professional and social context, bringing to light their value and emphasizing the importance of a broader political vision to promote equality and respect for women’s rights as transformative agents of society.

Deborah Caré, Chief Human Resources of Elica Cooking, said, “For Elica, art is a vehicle to trigger innovation processes within the organisation. This year, we collaborated with FEC to work on the theme of *Diversity and Inclusion*, distancing ourselves from the commonplaces and stereotypes that this theme sometimes brings out. The discussions between our managers and Claire Fontaine brought back unusual and original considerations, emphasizing the value that each of

them brings every day to the work and family dimension. Indeed, even today, women in positions of responsibility struggle with expectations and social pressures to reconcile family and work.”

As is usual in Claire Fontaine’s work, words break out of their usual usage and become something else, changing perception and meaning of the contexts in which they are found. In this case, in the Italian phrase "*il personale è politico*", an ambiguity persists that is not present in English, since the word '*personale*' means both 'personal' and 'personnel'. This ambiguity can be understood as a statement referring to the role of the employees of a company like Elica – where Diversity & Inclusion and Gender Equality strategies are the object of a special attention that emphasizes their importance in both the professional and social contexts.

“To say that the personal is political,” states curator Marcello Smarrelli, “is to understand that the philosophical and existential position of individuals has an effect on society as a whole, and that every desire and emotional reaction we express is the result of our relationship with society itself and not just with the people that we are interacting with.”

In addition to confirming the importance of language within Claire Fontaine’s research, the work also reiterates her stance on appropriation. Indeed, the very title of the book, 'The personal is political', was not claimed by Carol Hanish, who attributed it to other feminists who in turn, when questioned on the issue, decreed it to be the result of the anonymous and collective intelligence of slogans.

On the same day, **E-STRAORDINARIO FOR KIDS**, the workshop curated by Marcello Smarrelli and organized by Fondazione Ermanno Casoli in collaboration with Elica will also take place; the workshop is dedicated to **children** aged 5 to 10 **of employees of the Marche-based company**. Besides offering a chance to see where their parents spend part of their day, E-STRAORDINARIO FOR KIDS aims at bringing younger children closer to the world of art, training them to cultivate intuition, inventiveness and creativity. ***Gli animali scappati (Runaway Animals)*** is the title of the workshop devised by Claire Fontaine. Guided by Fulvia Carnevale and James Thornhill, the children will be asked to draw on a large white sheet their favorite animals, whether real or fantastic.

Fabriano, September 2023

Press materials and photos:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/04204irox0qyyua5qyv1a/h?rlkey=zg11dd03xp4i4rb6e193n8mgc&dl=0>

Elica press office:

Michela Popazzi, Corporate & Internal Communication Specialist
+39 345 6130420 | m.popazzi@elica.com

Fondazione Ermanno Casoli press office:

Maria Bonmassar | +39 06 4825370; +39 335 490311 | ufficiostampa@mariabonmassar.com

INFORMATION:

www.fondazioneecasoli.org | segreteria@fondazioneecasoli.org

Facebook [@FondazioneCasoli](https://www.facebook.com/FondazioneCasoli) | Twitter [@Fond_Casoli](https://twitter.com/Fond_Casoli) | LinkedIn [fondazioneermannocasoli](https://www.linkedin.com/company/fondazioneermannocasoli) | Instagram [@fondazioneermannocasoli](https://www.instagram.com/fondazioneermannocasoli) | Youtube FondazioneCasoli

Share with: #FoundationErmannoCasoli #FEC #ErmannoCasoli Award #FECcreation

Project supported by the Marche Region – Department of Culture



With the support of

