

## ***Two calls for Vajont – International Contemporary Art Contest published by Dolomiti Contemporanee***

*Dolomiti Contemporanee* announces an *Artistic Contest* aimed at the creation of two artworks. The contest will take place between Spring and Fall 2014. It proposes two themes:

**a call for a wall** is the *Contest* that is going to concern the southern front of the *New Venue of Casso*.

**a call for a line** is the *Contest* that is going to concern the eastern side (the Friulian one) of the *Vajont Dam*.

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### **1. General objective and meaning of the Contest**

To be consistent with *Dolomiti Contemporanee's* cultural policy, particularly in Casso where a cultural "construction site" designed to produce innovative images has been initiated in 2012, this double *Contest* is being held in the Vajont area.

The intention is to demonstrate through the *Contest* itself that, right in this place, that for decades has been identified and understood by public opinion exclusively as the *place of the tragedy*, is definitely possible, and indeed necessary, to develop, through an intellectual and creative reflection, a propositional activity that will contribute to generate a new cultural perspective for this area, responsibly looking at the future.

The human being, as such, expresses itself, and can't avoid doing so. No happening, as terrible as it could be, can be ultimately incommensurable, preventing the human to continue to act, through constructive actions of meaning, in the organic process of history.

The famous Sallustian expression "*faber est suae quisque fortunae*", that here, for 50 years, has echoed like a sentence and a warning, can at this point be true in a positive light as well, morphing from epitaph into new perspective.

The *Contest* asserts the primacy of the expression as constructive and propulsive identity peculiar to the human being.

### **2. The Contest concerning the front of the New Venue of Casso: a call for a wall**



## CALL FOR A WALL

The *Contest call for a wall* will involve the southern external front of the *New Venue of Casso*. This wall constitutes in itself the theme of the project. It physically represents a fundamental relationship: the one between past and present; between what has been yesterday and what is proposed and planned today.



The southern front of the *New Venue of Casso*, reopened and managed by *Dolomiti Contemporanee*.

The *New Venue of Casso* is situated in an exceptional position. Only from this spot, in fact, and particularly from the narrow square opposite the southern front of the building, and from the cantilever footbridge placed on the upper level, is possible to fully comprehend what has actually been the *Vajont Tragedy*, the true extent of the event.

The *Spazio* stands exactly in front of the scar left by the huge landslide that, in 1963, detached from *Mount Toc*, causing the *Disaster*, less than a kilometre away as the crow flies from that enormous sign.

The front itself bears to this day the marks of the happening: the re-climbing wave, 200 meters tall, reached Casso, and hit the building that, at the time, housed the elementary school, damaging it heavily.

The building was reopened by *Dolomiti Contemporanee* in September 2012, becoming the *New Venue of Casso*, and thus going back to the carrying out a public function, after almost half a century.

The southern front of the *New Venue of Casso*, now active in this territory as an artistic and cultural engine, is therefore the exact point where the tragic history of these locations comes in contact with a new ability to plan, which proposes a new model of cultural opening. Through this model, that finds expression in the *Contest*, the contemporary person affirms the meaning and the worth of their presence here.

This wall, that faces the *Toc* is thus a passage, a border, a *bilicum*. It was decided to intervene precisely over it, by virtue of its exemplary nature of *limit*, of diaphragm of meaning, proposing an artistic intervention of an installative nature.

The artists who intend to adhere to the *Contest* are encouraged to propose a project for an artwork that is going to be placed on the front of the *Spazio*.

The artwork will be realised with light technology, thanks to the collaboration of *Neonlauro*, a partner of the project.

The artwork will have a temporary nature and will remain installed on the front of the *Spazio* for a six months period, and will be removed after that.

The artwork can constitute of a word, a sentence, an expression, a shape, an object.

The artworks that will be able to relate to the context of the *Vajont* in a non-rhetoric, non-verbatim, poetically-free manner, will be considered with more favour.



The *Mount Toc* landslide seen from the footbridge situated on the upper level of the *New Venue of Casso*

The artists aren't however obliged to refer, directly or indirectly, in an exclusive manner, to the facts connected to the *Vajont*.

Other elements of this territorial setting, linked for example to the natural environment or to aspects of the sociality and the local culture, will be able to be realised through the artistic projects.



### 3. The Contest concerning the Vajont Dam: a call for a line



#### CALL FOR A LINE

**A call for a line** is the *Contest* that is going to concern the eastern side (the Friulian one) of the *Vajont Dam*.

The line that is being referred to is the one that, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 1963 marked the water's altitude inside the artificial basin, twenty meters below the current height of the *Dam*.

Thus, the desire is to create an artwork that highlights that altitude.  
This artwork will be permanent.

As anybody knows, the *Dam*, even more than the former school of Casso, is the monument that represents in an emblematic manner the tragic history of the *Vajont*.

This artefact, mighty bastion made of cement, the only true survivor of the *Disaster* of 1963, owns a huge symbolic power.

Its significance, its identity, are completely determined by that fact.

Tens of thousands of people, every year, come to visit it. To those who participate in this silent pilgrimage, the *Vajont Dam* is a gigantic cement tombstone. The *Dam* and the line of detachment of *Mount Toc's* landslide are the two enormous signs, horrified and mute witnesses, that remain, as a perpetual reminder of what happened then.

Wanting to intervene directly on this artefact means having complete understanding of its meaning. The basic belief, that is the foundation of the *Contest*, is that these locations shouldn't, for all eternity, embody and represent exclusively the history of that tragedy and that is instead necessary, precisely here, to responsibly decide to say something else, to bring, precisely here, other meaningful words and images.



*The Vajont Dam as seen from the Friulian side*

We are convinced that ideas, the intellectual and creative motivations, the creative impulses, are the foremost meaning of the human life, and thus, as long as the human being will have the strength to elaborate creatively the meaning of the facts that make up its own history, terrible happenings included, this history will continue to be generated by the human being itself, and no fact, of any kind, will be able to exclude it from this vital project, that the human owns, making it exactly human.

This is why the *Memory* of the fact must be in itself a productive moment. It is clear that we are talking, in this instance, of public and not private *Memory*: the *Tragedy of the Vajont* is a public happening, that concerns the whole of *Humanity*, and this is the area that interests us.

The *Memory* can't take up the desolating role of perpetrating a closed off picture of death. *Memory* can't ever coincide with surrender.

The public *Memory* doesn't have to become, or continue to be, a passive space that guards and preserves, suspending it, a still image stuck in the past, through commemoration. *Memory* has to, instead, be able to live as well, constituting an occasion of continuative creative processing, that is to say of history, in turn, intended as inevitable living destiny of the human. *Memory* can't prevent history: it has to help the human, instead, to understand itself, and its destiny.

Thus, working directly and physically, on the *Dam*, the artefact, means to be willing to responsibly commit to the activation of this place (to this day blocked) a construction site of productive *Memory*, of cultural processing that, through the deployment of vital energies, will sight history, comparing to it.

Art is one of the methods owned by the human to *climb* the meaning of the things, earthly and celestial alike.

Art is a tremendous instrument that links soul and wit, and produces alive images, while it doesn't accept to remain closed. Art is enthusiasm and openness: that is why art is now coming to the *Dam*, to open it.

This sign will therefore collide with great strength, the vital strength of culture that creates images of meaning, in this so very sensible location.

On the other hand, a spectacular mean for this intervention is not sought after.

The sign will not be strong in virtue of an aggressive visibility, but inasmuch it'll constitute a *projective processing* of an *active Memory*.

The winning project will have to demonstrate to be able to integrate itself, through a precisely calibrated sensibility, to the specific situation.

A qualified Jury (see paragraph below), will thus be able to fulfil appropriate evaluations on the presented projects.

We think that this is therefore a big occasion to demonstrate the designative value, as opposed to the mere decorative one, of art.

We think, also, that on the wake of the *Celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tragedy*, this too is the most suitable moment to think about an intervention such as this one.

After 50 years, some questions are in order: what will the *Vajont* be from now on? Is there space, will, capacity, to produce a new series of images, here? Images of meaning and sensibility, analytic and critic and poetic images, that will go and accompany the ones already known, providing their own contribution to the history, and the life, of this place?

With this *Contest*, the reply is given in a positive light: there *is* this space, and now it is its time.

No indication will be given in regards of the *media* or the techniques to employ, except that they must take into consideration the size of the intervention (total length of the line: 180 meters: the artwork won't necessarily have to cover the entire length), clarifying the foreseen modality, techniques and costs of realisation as well.

The Vajont Foundation and Enel support the project, sharing the cultural intent and the manner of action.

#### **4. General Approaching Indications for the artists**

Hereby will be supplied some general indications that can contribute to give direction the artistic projects.

It is clear the absolute peculiarity of the context in which the artists will find themselves to operate. Such context, difficult and delicate, is in that sense stimulating.

We think it is imperative, to understand said context correctly, to physically visit these locations, carrying out at least one preventive survey.

As it's already been said, the *Contest* is created with the intention of proposing and producing a series of innovative images, that will be able to analyze, interpret, translate and represent, the peculiarity of this place.

It is clear that in this place, no artwork could, in any way, avoid relating with the theme of the *Vajont*.

But, through the *Contest*, it is in no way the intention to have the artists exclusively work on the theme of *Tragedy* and *Memory*.

The proposals that will limit themselves on these themes, will not be considered interesting.

The meaning of the *Contest* isn't, indeed, to celebrate, more or less rhetorically, the *Tragedy* and the *Memory*, but to propose new ideas and to realize images that are *other*, in this location, interpreting the history, the signs, in a critical, free and projective manner.

It is believed that, right here, it is extremely necessary to commit to the generation of new figures of meaning, and that the art is able to actively participate in a meaningful way in this critical process of redefinition, enrichment, recovery, redemption, of the identity of these places, and of the people who inhabit them.

Art is imagination, and production of the image itself. The image is the formalization of a thought, of a critical and vital intention, and in that it is the farthest away from the resigned celebrative ceremony of mourning as it is conceivably possible.

Art doesn't neglect or forget anything, but comes in to bring innovative promptings, refuting the retroverted logic of "eternal grave".

The respect for these places and for their history is precisely what moves and determines the *Contest* itself.

But the attention and the respect of the contemporary person (that is to say the person who lives responsibly their time, the present time, without shutting themselves off in a mute past) in the face of such a terrible happening can at this point manifest itself solely through purposeful actions.

What that is purposeful, and propelling, can't be in any way commiserative.

The *Contest* isn't needed to "overcome" the *Tragedy of the Vajont*, which isn't possibly ever overcome, and shouldn't be overcome.

Nor to commemorate it for the umpteenth time.

It is needed to declare, and to demonstrate the possibility, and the will, to undertake, finally, an active path.

As mentioned before, the human *is* its own history, and no happening can prevent it to keep on generating daily, to create its own history, that is to say, to live.

## **5. Contest Rules**

The rules will be published on the website [www.twocalls.net](http://www.twocalls.net) and supplied to the artists. They will comprehend:

1. Indications on the means of enrolment and participation and on the schedule of the *Contest*;
2. Introductory and explicative materials (cartography, photos, videos, texts);
3. Technical indications regarding the characteristic of the artwork and of their actual feasibility (size, materials, economical and geometrical parameters, logistics, etc.);
4. Modality of presentations of the projects and the materials to be produced in the needed formats for the publications (biography of the artist or of the members of the group, description of the artwork's concept, sketch of the realization, images, renders, texts);
5. Prizes;

## **6. Phases of the Contest, promotion and communication**

The main objective of the *Contest* is thus to reach the point of realization of two works of contemporary art, that will demonstrate the possibility, the plausibility, the opportunity, on a human, social, cultural level, to trigger breeding-grounds of innovative action in the context of the *Vajont*, to this day heavily oppressed by the heritage, paralyzing in places, of the *Tragedy*, that has determined in an univocal and objectifying manner the identity of these places.

In the first phase, between July and October 2014, the best projects gathered will be published on a dedicated website. In regard of this first conception phase an intense promotional and communicational activity will be carried out on a national level.

The "open call" formula will allow, then, to gather all the projects of those artists that will want to freely adhere to the contest.

The participation is therefore open to all artists, with no limits of age, sex, nationality and experience. Every artist will be able to participate in both sections.

We appointed a qualified technical composed by critics and curators, contemporary art experts, selected from the directors of some important Italian *Museums*, representatives of cultural Institutions.

We think that this *Contest* possesses an elevated cultural value, before having an artistic one, and that thus the Jury should not only include exclusively art experts, but on the contrary a series of relevant personalities in a broader cultural setting.

These are the judges of the *Contest*: Marc Augè, Pierluigi Basso Fossali, Maria Centonze, Cristiana Collu, Gianluca D'Inca Levis, Alfredo Jaar, Marcella Morandini, Franziska Nori, Fabrizio Panozzo, Angela Vettese.

At the end of the *Contest*, in November 2014, the projects will be evaluated, and the two winning artworks will be made. For both sections of the *Contest* a *Special Prize* will be assigned to the best non-feasible project idea.



We are convinced that this *Contest* has a very strong attractive potentiality, for both the artist and the public opinion, in light of all the considerations that we have expressed in this document. Everything will be carried out with the outmost professional commitment to guarantee the maximum possible amount of visibility, with the conviction that the perspective that the *Contest* tries to propose, is positive, from a cultural and human standpoint, and that it should be offered, and shared, with the maximum possible number of people, because it constitutes as an open occasion and public innovative reflection on this location, that to this day keeps on living.

Among the individuals that support the *Contest*, there are: Ministry of the Environment, Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Region of Veneto, Dolomites Unesco Foundation, Vajont Foundation, Province of Pordenone, Province of Belluno, CNAPPC (National Council of Architects), Municipality of Erto and Casso, Municipality of Cimolais, Municipality of Claut, Municipality of Vajont, Municipality of Belluno, Municipality of Longarone, Confindustria Belluno Dolomiti (confederation of industries of the Belluno area), Consortium Bim Piave, Enel, Acqua Dolomia, Neonlauro, Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, Merz Foundation, Mart Museum of Modern and Contemporary art of Trento and Rovereto and CCC Strozziina.

Gianluca D'Incà Levis

Curator of *Dolomiti Contemporanee*, director of the *New Venue of Casso*



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