

Massimiliano Pelletti. Eredità

11 Oct – 10 Nov 2023 at the Bowman Sculpture in London, United Kingdom

12 AUGUST 2023



Massimiliano Pelletti. Courtesy of the artist and Bowman Sculpture

Bowman Sculpture Gallery in Mayfair are presenting the first UK solo exhibition of contemporary Italian sculptor Massimiliano Pelletti. ‘Massimiliano Pelletti: Eredità (Heritage)’ will run from 11th October to 10th November 2023 at Bowman Sculpture Gallery, 6 Duke’s Street, St James’s.

The gallery will also be participating in Frieze Masters 2023 in Regents Park where their stand will feature important works from the 18th century to the present day including works by Auguste Rodin, an artist the gallery specialises in, Pietro Calvi, Camille Claudel, Henry Moore and Emily Young.

Bowman Sculpture director Mica Bowman recently signed Massimiliano Pelletti for exclusive representation in the UK, where he plans to exhibit a new series of sculptures inspired by iconic sculptures of Greek and Roman antiquity while instilling each piece with a contemporary twist.

Pelletti has exhibited to critical acclaim in Italy, including an exhibition with Italian Renaissance Sculptor Canova (December 2021 to April 2022). Pelletti is the second contemporary sculptor Mica Bowman has signed to Bowman Sculpture since she joined as a director in 2019.

‘Eredità’ is a captivating solo exhibition by Italian artist Massimiliano Pelletti, featuring contemporary sculptures carved from exotic stones sourced from around the world that emulate antique models. Pelletti deliberately incorporates visible flaws, cracks, and fissures inherent in the material into his sculptures, inviting viewers to contemplate mankind’s relationship with the past and question the idealisation of past cultures. The classically ideal body was established in Classical Greek sculpture of the 5th Century B.C., and while Pelletti draws influence from Greek and Roman sculpture of antiquity, he emphasises flaws and imperfections to subvert the classical ideal. Through his meticulous craftsmanship and thought-provoking compositions, Pelletti unveils a nuanced exploration of time, imperfection, and our collective fascination with bygone eras.

(Mica Bowman)

Pelletti (Born. 1975) studied at the Stagio Stagi Art School in Pietrasanta, going on to graduate from the University of Pisa with a degree in Philosophy. He began a career as an artist in 2006, getting off to a flying start by winning the 12th edition of the Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean, which led to high profile exhibitions in Italy and abroad, including the Alexandria Biennale in Egypt and the 54th Venice Biennale as part of the Italian Pavilion, curated by Vittorio Sgarbi.

‘Eredità’ is curated by Mica Bowman, whose exhibition recent all women show ‘The Power of She’ (co-curated with Marie-Claudine Llamas of Guerin Projects) received a warm reception in the spring and was featured in Forbes as an ‘Essential Highlight of International Women Artists’ Art Week’ and by the Evening Standard as a highlight of London Gallery Weekend. Mica Bowman is introducing a new generation of gifted sculptors to Bowman Sculpture and will present the unique sculpture of Massimiliano during Frieze Week in London.

The exhibition titled ‘Eredità’ plays on the theme of heritage and the artisanal legacy Pelletti is continuing with his expert knowledge of the art of direct stone carving, a traditional and increasingly rare skill that Pelletti inherited from his grandfather Mario. Massimiliano was educated from a young age in the art of stone carving, spending much of his childhood in his grandfather’s studio surrounded by plaster models of ancient sculptures. His grandfather, an esteemed stone carver in his own right, was one of the traditional Italian artisans called upon to work on the infamous restoration of Michelangelo’s Pietà in The Vatican after it was attacked in 1972 by a man armed with a hammer in the church of San Pietro in Rome.

...a group of sculptors from Pietrasanta was called upon, and they had the innovative idea of sourcing the material to reconstruct the damaged parts directly from the sculptural group by conducting a core drilling beneath the Pietà at a well-hidden point. Michelangelo’s sculpture was restored using this technique, and it still retains the memory of this intervention. It was a favour, that the sculptors of Pietrasanta, returned to the Master who, many centuries earlier, had discovered the marble in our region, thus laying the groundwork for a long professional tradition. One of the sculptors called upon for the restoration was my grandfather, Mario, and this is one of the many fascinating stories that characterised my childhood and motivated me to embark on my artistic career...

(Massimiliano Pelletti)

Pelletti applies his skills and his inherited artisanal knowledge to a love of iconic sculpture from Antiquity, taking inspiration from Greek and Roman sculpture and subverting Roman-Greco iconography with an unusual marriage of materials and exposure of imperfections in the stones and minerals he uses. His sculptures marry tradition with a passion for pushing the boundaries of sculpture and are carved not from traditional marble, but from rough, porous, or unusual stones, with colourful striations and crystalline fissures which interrupt their beautiful faces and distort their otherwise idealised torsos.

Pelletti finds beauty in imperfection and plays with the ancient Greco belief in Idealism, a metaphysical view that our reality is based upon our own perceptions. The ancient Greek obsession with idealized beauty and physical perfection was conveyed through their sculptures, and Pelletti brings these visions of beauty into the present day by creating sculptures whose beauty if focused on the imperfection inherent in the material. Many of his sculptures are familiar figures from history, inspired by the collection of plaster classical models inherited from his grandfather’s Glyptothekue.

My grandfather taught me to be humble, to fill the work with poetry and to face problems by transforming them into resources. Thanks to these teachings, in my work every defect has turned into merit.

(Massimiliano Pelletti)

Massimiliano Pelletti (Born. 1975) is an Italian stone carver who lives and works in Pietrasanta, Italy. Pelletti initially began his journey as a sculptor in his family’s artisan workshop and was inspired and taught by his grandfather, a sculptor in his own right and who, in his time, worked on the infamous restoration of Michelangelo’s Pietà in The Vatican. Many of Massimiliano’s sculptures are inspired by the collection of plaster classical models inherited from his grandfather’s Glyptothekue.

After obtaining his diploma from the Stagio Stagi Art School in Pietrasanta, he went on to graduate from the University of Pisa with a degree in Philosophy. He made his artistic debut in 2006, winning the 12th edition of the Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean, followed by a series of other prestigious exhibitions, both in Italy and abroad, such as the Alexandria Biennale in Egypt and the 54th Venice Biennale as part of the Italian Pavilion, curated by Vittorio Sgarbi.

On initial inspection, Pelletti’s sculptures resemble those triumphant figures from antiquity, however, they are decidedly not. Massimiliano’s sculptures are not only hewed from the marble quarries of Pietrasanta, opened under the Medici government, but are instead carved from rough, porous, or unusual stones, with colourful striations and crystalline fissures which interrupt their beautiful faces and distort their otherwise idealised torsos.

Pelletti gravitates toward imperfection and his approach revolves around transforming presumed defects, impurities, cracks, or chips into elegantly carved figures from antiquity. A rough crystalline landscape intersects fragments of the artist’s interpretation of ‘Discobolus’ while emerald and ochre onyx are interweaved together and carved to form an antique bust of Venus. Through this practice, Pelletti considers the tensions between the careful craftsmanship of ancient sculpture traditions and the unformulated chaos of the natural world.

The artist’s work combines the past with the present, contrasting smooth segments with the rough texture of unpolished stone. Natural stones and materials are selected to complement his subject matter and their natural flaws and fissures serve as the unusual focal point of his work.

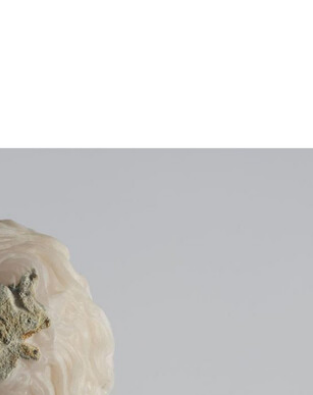
I’m not a sculptor who imposes himself on the material and transforms it according to his desire, I’m a sculptor, an artist who seeks a collaborative relationship, who seeks an intimate dialogue with the material.

Pelletti selects his materials based on the quality and intrigue of the stone type. While some stones are chosen for their crystalline structure and opaque qualities, others are selected for more unusual reasons. Pelletti favours some stones such as quartz and obsidian for their particular energies, thought to have specific healing qualities that can benefit the mind, body and soul while other rarer works are carved from black marble with prehistoric sea life fossils known as Orthoceras.

In 2014, he was among the winners of the Henraux Foundation International Sculpture Award, curated by Philippe Daverio. He has published several articles in magazines devoted to contemporary art and, over the years, has shown his works in several museums and public areas such as the Villa Croce and Sant’Agostino in Genoa, the Abbey of San Zeno in Pisa, the Temple of Hadrian in Rome, Castel Sant’Elmo in Naples, Sapienza University in Rome, the Contemporary Art Museum Luigi Pecci in Prato, the Paolo Giovio Civic Museum in Como, Palazzo RISO Museo d’Arte Contemporanea della Sicilia in Palermo and the Jewish Museum of Bologna.

In recent years Pelletti has completed several important public commissions including a 5-meter-high monumental work in Carrara white marble for a new urban project in Acapulco, Mexico, and a prestigious public commission for a monumental sculpture in Forte dei Marmi, Italy. His recent solo exhibitions include ‘Looking forward to the Past’ at the MARCA in Catanzaro and ‘Gazing of Tranquility’ at the Zhejiang Art Museum in Shanghai which later travelled to the Wuhan Art Museum and the Guangdong Museum of Art in China. In 2021 his works were displayed alongside those of Canova in an exhibition called ‘Canova. Between innocence and sin’ curated by Beatrice Avanzi and Denis Isaia.

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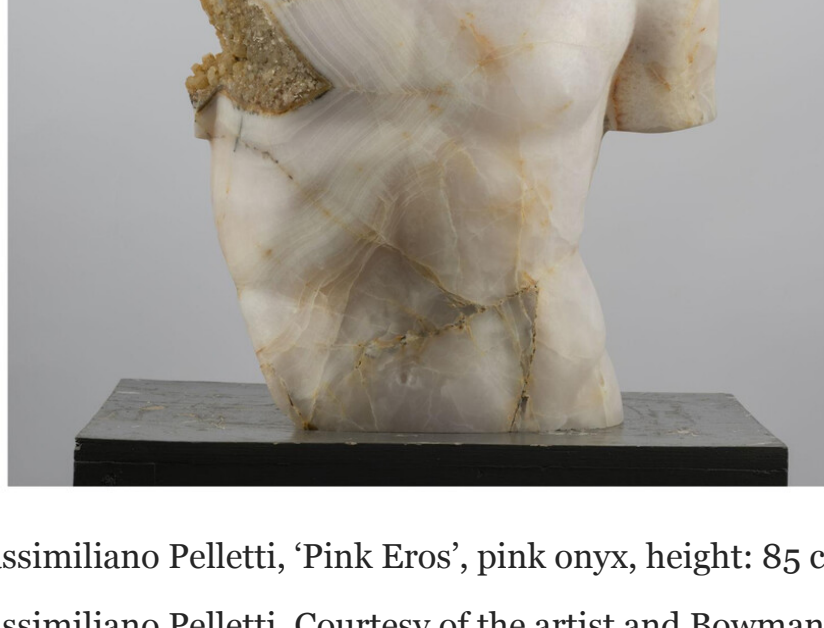
Bowman Sculpture

The gallery starts its sculptural journey with European Romantic sculpture of the 19th century, dealing in the masters of this period such as Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse and Aimé-Jules Dalou through to the Impressionist, Modern and Cubist sculpture of Edgar Degas, Pablo Picasso, Henri Laurens, Jacques Lipichitz and Ossip Zadkine.

Gallery profile

Location
London, United Kingdom

Founded in
1993



- Massimiliano Pelletti, ‘Pink Eros’, pink onyx, height: 85 cm, unique. Courtesy of the artist and Bowman Sculpture
- Massimiliano Pelletti. Courtesy of the artist and Bowman Sculpture
- Massimiliano Pelletti, ‘Dreaming of Olympia’, mexican white onyx, 96x70x47 cm, unique. Courtesy of the artist and Bowman Sculpture

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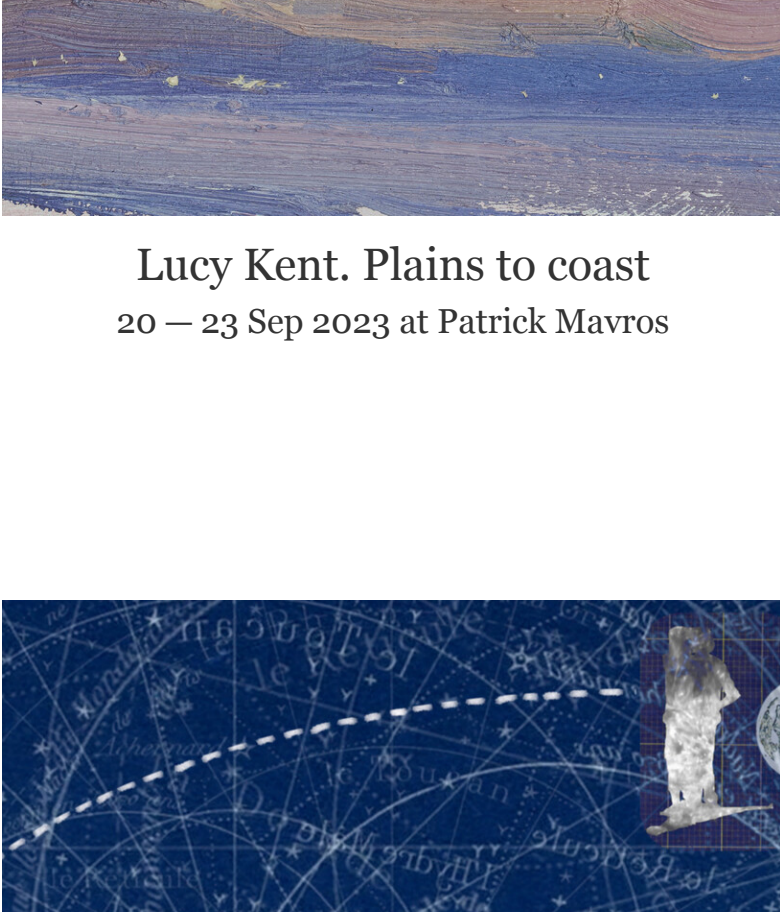


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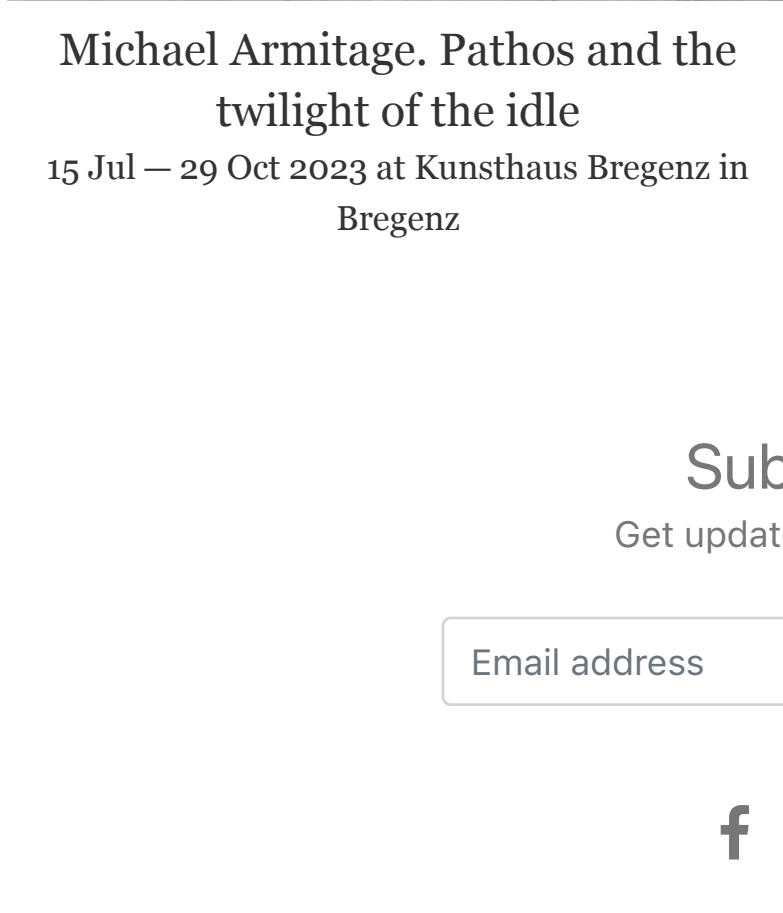


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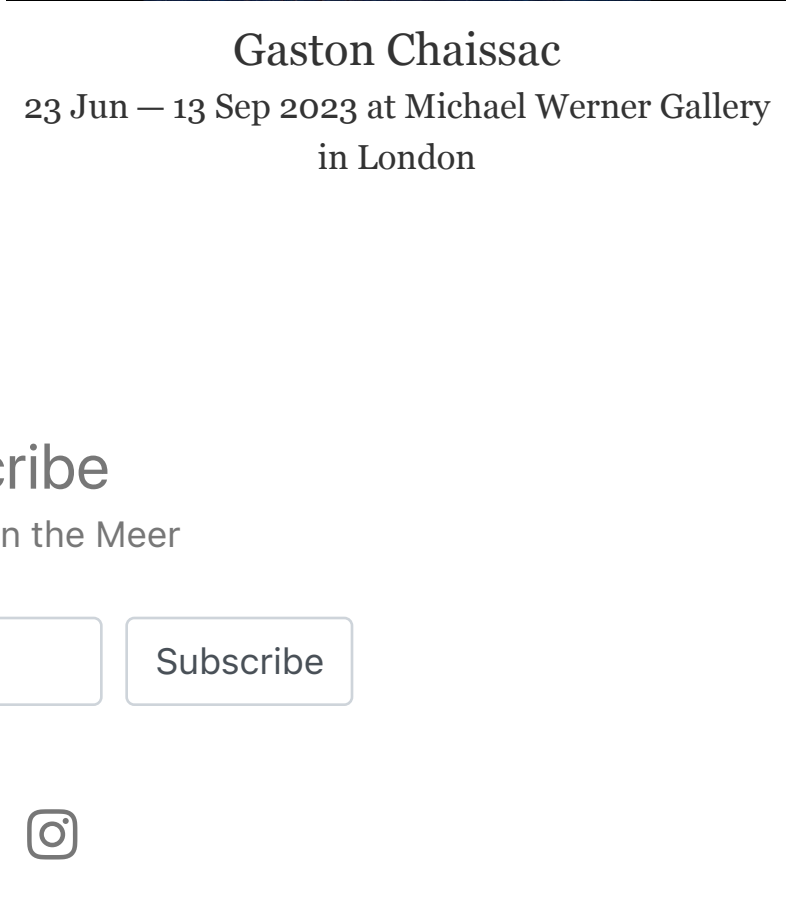
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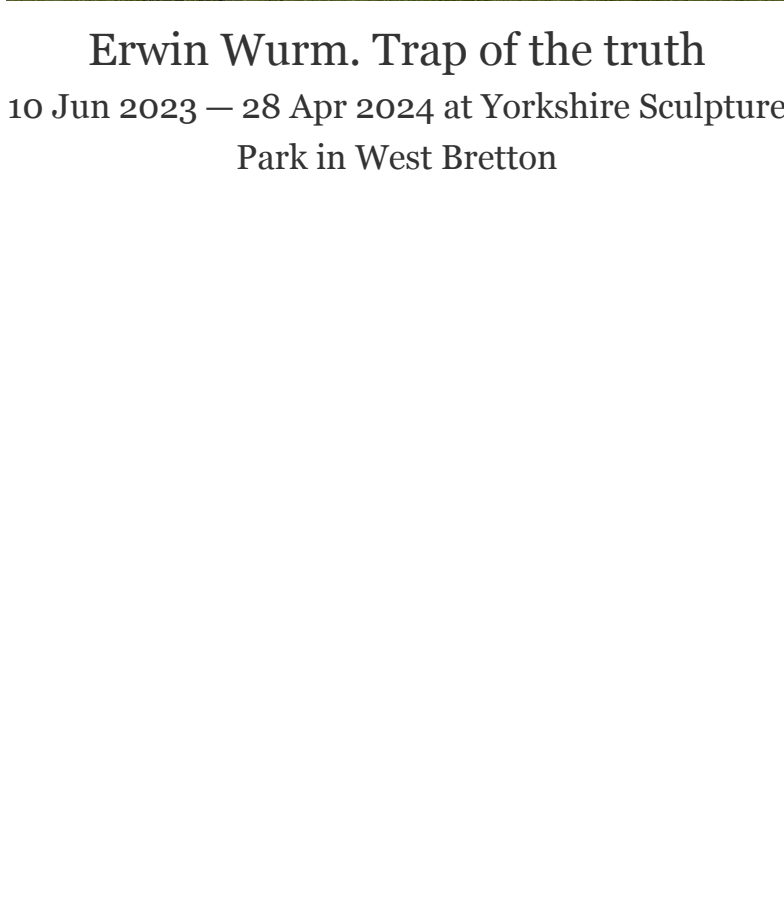
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