

Biography | Oliviero Rainaldi

Oliviero Rainaldi was born in the town of Caramanico Terme in 1956. From 1975 to 1978 he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice with Emilio Vedova as professor, he then graduated at the Academy of Fine Arts of L'Aquila (Abruzzo) with Fabio Mauri as professor. His first solo exhibition was in Venice in 1976.

Through drawing, graphics, painting and sculpture, Rainaldi's research focuses and explores the human figure, through the mediums of drawing, graphics, painting and sculpture.

His early works are subtle narrative compositions, which in the 90s evolved in works depicting isolated figures and fragmented bodies, through a linear approach that emphasises their most ideal and essential qualities, revealing subtle and underlying connections with medieval cultures. This can be seen in the following artworks: *Gisant*, 1990; *Battesimi Umani*, 1992; *Caduti*, 1993; *Santo*, 2000; *Conversazioni*, 2004; *Vergine*, 2006; *Malebolge*, 2007; *Copia*, 2010; *Naiadi*, 2012.

Over the years Rainaldi's practice has engaged with historically significant figures and sites, these sites often considered unconventional exhibition venues. He produced works in dialogue with: Bernini, Complesso di Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, *Dono del Mattino*, 2000, Rome; Vanvitelli, Sala dell'Avvocatura Generale dello Stato, 2012, Rome; Bramante, Tempietto, *Nada y Todo*, 2014, Rome; Caravaggio, Chiesa del Pio Monte della Misericordia, *Le Otto opere di Misericordia*, 2018, Naples.

A selection of key exhibitions includes: Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, 2003, Bologna; Palazzo Venezia, 2006, Rome; Giardini di Villa Aldobrandini, 2010, Rome. In 2011 the last mentioned exhibition was moved and exhibited in Venice at the National Museum of Villa Pisani.

In 2013, during the 55th Venice Biennale, he exhibited his works at the Venice International University in the Island of San Servolo.

During the course of 2015 and 2016, Rainaldi's works were brought in Asia and exhibited in the following places: in the Museum of Contemporary Art of Shanghai, in the Petronas Gallery in Kuala Lumpur and in the Partners&Mucciaccia Gallery in Singapore.

In 2017, the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) invited Rainaldi to exhibit, in a double solo exhibition shared with Sir Tony Cragg, his sculptures in Dubai.

In 2020 a solo exhibition titled *Versi* was held in Forte dei Marmi in Villa Bertelli, where a selection of drawings, paintings and sculptures retraced thirty years of Rainaldi's artistic research.

In the late 90s, Rainaldi further explored his personal interest concerning the relationship between Art and Christian Liturgy by attending a two-year course at the Pontifical Atheneum of St. Anselm in Rome which was later followed by a three-year course of theology for lay people. He was entrusted with several ecclesiastical commissions and created the liturgical furnishings for several churches in Rome, Terni, Prato and Warsaw.

During the Great Jubilee of 2000, Pope John Paul II awarded him the title of Academic of the Pontifical Academy of Fine Arts and Letters of the Virtuosi of the Pantheon.

Through the years Rainaldi received various awards, including: the European Personality Award at the Campidoglio in Rome in 2010, the Brand Personality Award from the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation (APBF) in 2015 and the Franco Cuomo International Award in 2017, that held its ceremony in the Italian Senate.

In 2015 the Maserati automobile company celebrated their 100th anniversary and commissioned Rainaldi to create an artwork: *Neptune in the Wind*, a large bas-relief created with a piece of backlit marble representing the Roman God Neptune.

In 2016 he was given an honorary degree by the Roma Tre University of Rome.

Oliviero Rainaldi has also created artworks for the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation of Europe; the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park at Grand Rapids in Michigan; numerous works for the Grimaldi Group; the portrait of the Queen of Malaysia; the sculpture dedicated to Pope John Paul II, located in Piazza dei Cinquecento; *Infinito Campari* commissioned for Campari's headquarters in Sesto San Giovanni; and *Flammation*, created for Italgas.

In 2022 he created the sculpture *Presidium* for the art collection of the Geneva headquarters of the International Red Cross and Crescent; the sculpture *Conversazioni* for the Italian Embassy in Bern; and he completed *The Tribute* at the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park in Michigan.

In 2023 he carried out two important solo shows: "*Oliviero Rainaldi. 2023 AD.*" in Cripta di San Sepolcro (Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana) in Milan and "*Calma tu alma*" in the Pantheon in Rome.

Some of the artist's artworks are present in permanent collections of national and international public institutions, such as: *Battesimi Umani*, 1995, at the Stockholm City Hall (the Nobel Prize Award Ceremony location); *Battesimi Umani*, 1998, at the UN Building in Geneva; *Vergine*, in the Collection of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome; *Santo*, 2012, at the Pontifical Council for Culture, Vatican City; *Caduti*, 2015, at the Soumaya Foundation, Mexico City; *Presidium*, 2022, at the International Red Cross and Crescent, Geneva; *Sindone Ambrosiana*, 2023, Cripta di San Sepolcro, Milan.

STUDIES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2023 He created the sculpture for the *Joaquín Navarro – Valls International Award for Leadership and Benevolence*. Palazzo della Cancelleria, Rome.

2023 *Il Papa incontra gli artisti*. Invited to participate in the Papal Audience with His Holiness Pope Francis. Sistine Chapel, Rome.

2017 *Franco Cuomo Award, International Award*, VI edition, Aula del Senato, Rome.

2015 Awarded the title of *Honorary Academic Professor* by the University of Rome Tre, Rome.

2015 *International brand Personality Award*, Asia Pacific brand Foundation, Kuala Lumpur.

2011 *Il Papa incontra gli artisti*. Invited to participate in the Papal Audience with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. Sistine Chapel, Rome.

2003 *Premio internazionale Tarquinia Cardarelli*. Special recognition from the Lazio Region and the Province of Viterbo for the sculptures in the Church of Santa Maria della Pace in Terni, Viterbo.

2000 Awarded title of *Academic of the Pontifical Academy of Fine Arts and Letters of the Virtuosi of the Pantheon*, by Pope John Paul II, Rome.

1999-2000 Two-year course in Liturgy for Art and Architecture at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute of St. Anselm. Acolyte and Lectorate course at the same institute, Rome.

1995-1999 Three-year course at the Diocesan Center of Theology for Laity, S. Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome.

1993 International Fellowship in the Visual Art, the United States Information Agency and Mid - America Arts Alliance, Washington.

1983 Degree in painting of the Academy of Fine Arts of L'Aquila, L'Aquila.

1980 *Bevilacqua la Masa Award*, Bevilacqua la Masa Foundation, 64th edition, Venice.

1975-1977 Academy of Fine Arts of Venice, Venice.

1971-1974 Art High School of Venice, Venice.