

PRESS RELEASE

Michael Beutler

Oak Barrel Baroque, 2020

curated by Ilaria Bonacossa

OPENING

Saturday 2 October 2021, 4.00 pm

La Raia, Novi Ligure (AL)

ON STAGE

***Care Selve. Florilegio* by Aline Nari**

Michael Beutler, four years after his project *BALES 2014/2017*, returns to Gavi to create ***Oak Barrel Baroque*** for **Fondazione La Raia–arte cultura territorio**, a work composed of wooden beams and barrique staves, inspired by the architecture of Palladio and the typical Italian churches in small town squares. A shelter, a place in which to linger, a small theater where the performance *Care Selve. Florilegio* by Aline Nari will be staged during the opening.

Novi Ligure, September 2021 - Oak Barrel Baroque is the new project by Michael Beutler for Fondazione La Raia–arte cultura territorio. The German artist, known for his large sculptural installations linked to crafts practices, created with natural materials like paper or recycled wood and reactivated for a new function, such as the large Shipyard shown at the 57th Venice Biennale, intervenes with his installations amidst the hills of La Raia for the second time.

Oak Barrel Baroque is an installation that evokes the history of rural architecture, creating a place that simultaneously resembles a country chapel, a small theater, or a shelter in which to linger and rest for the people who cross the estate, exploring the works of art that have been conceived by artists to enhance its landscape since 2013. Developing his research on materials, Beutler reworks the forms of residential and functional constructions of locations, underscoring atmospheres while altering their characteristics, purposes and function.

Oak Barrel Baroque has been designed to be built with barrique staves at the end of their life cycle in the La Raia winery. Beutler has worked with a team of young assistants on-site, completing the installation over a span of about one month, transforming La Raia into an open-air workshop. Every oak stave taken

from the barriques, and every beam utilized for the load-bearing structures, have been positioned and interlocked by hand, using an ancient Japanese construction technique that requires no screws or bolts. The result has the form of a small votive temple with a sort of frontal pronaos, acting simultaneously as an antechamber and a stage: the apse of the small structure is a half barrel over four meters in diameter, resting on stilts in a hollow surrounded by oak trees, reflecting the complete life cycle of a plant that has been very important for the production of wine across the centuries. From the front of this structure that simultaneously suggests a small church or a small theater, visitors can shelter from the sun, enjoying a fine view of the landscape and vineyards of La Raia.

In 2017 Michael Beutler created *BALES 2014/2017*, an installation for the park of the Kunstareal in Munich, transforming this urban location into an agricultural field, where a baling press packed long colored straws into multicolored bales, which the artist, with the help of local residents and families, had scattered on the well-groomed lawns of the park. Reinstalled in the panorama of the Gavi hills, inside the biodynamic estate of La Raia, *BALES 2014/2017* was further transformed, reminding us of our responsibilities in a system of mass production that threatens the very existence of the natural elements.

Oak Barrel Baroque becomes part of the collection of the foundation for public viewing, like all the other works, by reservation and free of charge. The opening, scheduled for 2 October 2021 at the biodynamic winery La Raia, is also open to the public by reservation, and Michael Beutler will be present.

“Fondazione La Raia welcomes a new work by Michel Beutler,” says **Giorgio Rossi Cairo**, President of Fondazione La Raia, “after the installation in 2017, *Bales 2014/2017*. For us it is a real pleasure to work once again with Michael Beutler and his team, and to observe his extraordinary ability to get in tune with the landscape of La Raia and the Gavi hills. Michael has chosen materials that are related to this ecosystem, combining an artistic installation, landscape and plantings, as already happened in the case of Remo Salvadori. His Oak Barrel Baroque, today and in the future, comes alive as a small building that opens its façade to an audience, a plaza, a landscape.”

“The inspiration came from this place, since I already knew La Raia, its activity and mission connected with protection of the landscape and sustainability, always key factors for the foundation created by Giorgio Rossi Cairo and Irene Crocco,” says **Michael Beutler**. “The idea for the creation of the work started with the possibility of using the wood from barrels at the end of their life

cycle, to transform them into a living space for use amidst the vineyards. At first I wanted to build something larger, resembling a church, with the apse and a portico in the style of Palladio; then I realized that it was better to scale the size down. I wanted a structure similar to a typical country church in small Italian town, blending various aspects of the Italy I love, and putting the typical structures and forms of the city into a rural landscape. Those aspects are all gathered here, in a single building.”

“The new work by Michel Beutler created for Fondazione La Raia,” says **Ilaria Bonacossa**, Artistic Director of Fondazione La Raia, “reflects this artist’s attraction for simple materials, which he is always able to transform in a surprising way, on the one hand, as well as his extraordinary investigation of the decontextualization of forms, processes, the materials themselves, almost as if to prompt all of us to live in different contexts – urban or natural – in a seamless way, nurturing respect, awareness and care. The structure references the history of rural architecture, creating a place that simultaneously suggests a small church or a small theater. For this reason, the opening also features the performance **Care Selve. Florilegio**, a work by **Aline Nari** that is an invitation to rediscover the spirituality of nature.”

Care Selve. Florilegio, first conceived by Aline Nari on 9 February 2020, has grown during the hiatus imposed by the Covid-19 emergency. The work takes its title from an aria by Georg Friedrich Händel, linking back to the literary motif of the praise of forests as places of relation between spirit and nature. The performance, which combines dance, singing and music, introduces viewers to an ecological perspective whose fulcrum is gratitude and respect for all creation, a state of pleasure in which to feel we are loved, returning to a vivid sense of belonging. The selected musical repertoire includes Baroque and classical compositions for solo voice, to accompany a timeless voyage: the recognition of two human beings who turn for comfort to the forests, and thus discover a shared possibility. The performance by Aline Nari, with Aline Nari (dance), Marco Mustaro (voice), Alice Belardini (harp), is produced by ALDES and made its debut in September 2020. It was recently staged in Bologna (Festival Cuore d’aria, Teatri di Vita) and Castiglioncello (Festival Inequilibrio/Armunia).

Michael Beutler (Oldenburg 1976) lives and works in Berlin. His works have been featured in solo shows in many museums, including Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, and the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt. He has taken part in a number of biennials, including Gwangju, South Korea, and the Berlin Biennale.

Ilaria Bonacossa, curator and critic, after working for eight years at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, from 2012 to 2017 was the director of Museo di Villa Croce in Genoa, a municipal institution for contemporary art. Since December 2016 she has been the director of the international fair of contemporary art of Turin, Artissima. In 2013 she co-curated the Iceland Pavilion at the Venice Biennial; in 2007 she was a member of the jury for the Leone d'Oro awards at the 52nd Venice Art Biennial, and in 2013 she was a member of the jury of the Inamori Foundation Prize in Kyoto.

Aline Nari has been working as dancer and choreographer since 1993 in contemporary dance companies, Opera Houses, urban dance festivals, in Italy and abroad, trying to merge research and dialogue with transversal audiences, contemporaneity and tradition. After dancing for a long time in Sosta Palmizi Association, in 2008 she founded UBIdanza together with the performer Davide Frangioni and, since 2014, she has been part of ALDES Association. Aline's artistic activity combines continuous didactic research and an academic profile. PhD in Italian Studies, from 2015 to 2018 she taught History of Dance at University of Pisa. She participated in lectures on dance studies in Italy and in the United Kingdom and published several essays on theatrical literature and dance of XVIII and XX centuries for specialized magazines, for Bompiani, Marsilio, Akropolis Libri, Ephemera publishing houses. Care Selve (2020) is her latest performance.

Fondazione La Raia - arte cultura territorio was founded in June 2013 with the aim of promoting critical reflections on the landscape in Italy and abroad, through contributions in a wide range of fields. The foundation develops artistic, cultural, educational and scientific activities and research, also with the objective of fostering specific knowledge of the Gavi area. Fondazione La Raia, directed by Ilaria Bonacossa, was created by Giorgio Rossi Cairo and Irene Crocco, who formulated the project "Nel Paesaggio" which set the course of research of the foundation with the implementation of an initial series of works and series of public encounters. To date, permanent works have been produced by Remo Salvadori, Koo Jeong A, Michael Beutler and Adrien Missika (open to the public), as well as the exhibition by Francesco Jodice "Il Corsaro Nero e la vendetta del Gavi" at Forte di Gavi, a publication with Elio Franzini released by Corraini, and many public conferences on landscape, featuring (among others) personalities like Gilles Clément and the French group Coloco, Paolo D'Angelo, Adriana Veríssimo Serrão, Francesco Jodice and Francesco Zanot, Stefanie Hessler and Franco Farinelli. The steering committee of the foundation is composed of Flavio Albanese, Marco Galateri di Genola, Vicente Todolí, Stefano Baia Curioni and James Bradburne.

XIBITION

Alexandra....

FONDAZIONE LA RAIA – ARTE CULTURA TERRITORIO
Ufficio stampa | Tina Guiducci
E. tina@la-raia.it
M. +39 335 7295264 | T. +39 02 48548605