

Toshimitsu Imai

An exhibition sponsored by Phoenix Etrusca
Opening: Wednesday 14 August at 7:30 pm
Capalbio, Piazza della Provvidenza 2, Frantoio
Hours: 6pm to 11 pm, until 10 August

Following Giuliano Mauri's first exhibition, the activities of Phoenix Etrusca continue with the exhibition of Toshimitsu Imai, the great Japanese artist who died last year. Exhibited here are great paintings from his recent period which take up the themes of life and death, themes of major importance in Imai's work which are addressed with moving intensity: life is shown in the paintings of the "girls of Shibuya" cycle, in which these exuberant and lively Tokyo girls are depicted with the rapid technique and strong colours reminiscent of some metropolitan graffiti. Death, on the other hand, stares at us from paintings which confront the subject of war: Hiroshima, Nagasaki and, courageously, the responsibilities of Japan in some of the atrocities of World War II, such as the massacre of Nanchino, where the Japanese army savagely wiped out the civil population of the Chinese city. Imai confronts this difficult subject without rhetoric in huge paintings drenched with dark colour, where the figure of death hovers over the disasters brought about by man. The personal suffering of the artist, tortured by illness, is combined in these works with that of all humanity. Imai was a painter of great creative energy, a bridge since the 1950s between Japanese and European culture, cultures which he has experienced and depicted in an extraordinarily effective formal and political syncretism.

Phoenix is a project born from the co-operation between the Mudima Foundation and Castra Virtualia, with the aim of promoting contemporary art in less usual parts of the country, with the organisation of non-profit making exhibitions and events.

Phoenix seeks out exhibition spaces where it can establish a new, everyday relationship with art and culture, avoiding the complex filters which often limit the public's attendance at exhibitions held in institutions. Phoenix therefore plans to promote an Italian model of exhibition space which takes into account the positive characteristics of the historic urban structure of which it forms part, to be a workshop which can be replicated in other locations. The first place to have been selected is Phoenix Etrusca in Capalbio which, with an exhibition space of 350 square metres, is located in a context already well-endowed with important figures in contemporary art.

The first Phoenix Etrusca exhibition, Giuliano Mauri's "Stromatolites", currently in progress in Capalbio, has seen an attendance of over 1000 at its opening and an average of 50 visitors a day.

Phoenix Etrusca exhibitions have been made possible thanks to the contribution of Rottapharm - Monza.