

## ***Sculptureless Sculpture***

Villa Lontana

Curated by Dr. Jo Melvin and Vittoria Bonifati

This exhibition at Villa Lontana launches a new collaborative exchange between the Fondazione Dino ed Ernesta Santarelli and contemporary art. Through creating a series of intimate juxtapositions, we hope to draw attention to the performative and sculptural elements that are inherent in classical statuary and architectural fragments, to the potential of being experienced within the context and concerns of contemporary practice. *Sculptureless Sculpture* brings film and other projected work with selected artworks and fragments from the Fondazione Santarelli. John Baldessari *I Am Making Art* (1971) and *Baldessari Sings LeWitt* (1973), Elisabetta Benassi, *Son of Niobe* (2013), Ketty La Rocca *Appendice Per Una Supplica* (1972), Mario Merz, *Lumaca* (1970) and Ad Reinhardt *Travel Slides* (1952-1967) will be shown alongside a selection of works from the Fondazione Santarelli including: Giove Eliopolitano III AD, Greek female head I BC, arm fragment II AD, torso of Alexander the Great III AD, fragment of striated sarcophagus II AD, Pinax with theatre masks I AD, Etruscan high relief of Perseus and Medusa V BC and a cleric from Palmyra III AD.

Villa Lontana translates into English as Faraway Villa, was so named because of its distance from the city of Rome. It was literally faraway on a hill. Slowly the city grew to surround it, with land changing from fields and vineyards to conurbation. As an ancient site and an historical building, Villa Lontana provides the opportunity to retrace the complex multilayers of histories of the area of Rome near the Milvian Bridge (built 115 BC). A Roman necropolis of more than one hundred sixty tombs dating back to the first half of the I BC has recently been 'rediscovered'. Since the Middle Ages the Villa Lontana Estate has been recorded on maps due to its proximity to the Milvian bridge and the Via Francigena. Later it belonged to the Orsini family and then, from the second half of the XVII century, to the Reverend Apostolic Chamber. The property once a notable vineyard, became an exotic garden and the main building was transformed from a rural country house to become the Casino delle delizie (Casino of delights) taking on the imprint of the "illustrious" people that passed through the estate, from Prince Stanislaw Poniatowski to Claude Poussin, Antonio Canova and Bertel Thorvaldsen and for the latter three the situation of the Villa created a backdrop for painting and sculpture. Further changes to the historical building have been made by the British consul among the Vatican Giovanni Freeborn, the engineer, architect and oenologist Giovanni Gabet and by the first director of the American Academy in Rome Samuel A.B. Abbott.

The Collezione Dino ed Ernesta Santarelli spans from the Ptolemaic period until the XIX century with a particular interest on Roman statuary and coloured marbles from Imperial Rome, architecture fragments and painting on stone. There is also an extensive collection of Glyptic art, spanning across five millennia, which is in loan at the Capitolini Museums in Rome.

**Private view Wednesday 16 May, 6pm to 9pm.**

The exhibition is open:

**17 May - 6 June 2018**

11am - 7pm

Tuesday - Saturday and by appointment.

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The exhibition is in the former garage of Villa Lontana, designed in 2010 by architect Fabio Ortolani.

