

# Life Masks Project

*There exist numberless masks, as numberless are the reasons that urge man to wear a mask: religion, power, emotions... They all have a double aim in common: to hide a certain reality and communicate another one. They convey behaviors, values and emotions that surpass the individual to become universal. Like mirrors, they act as filters between the person and the community, the individual and collectivity. Wearing a mask is a social fact for the humans, a manner to communicate. Indeed, every day we all wear several masks: mental, behavioral, physical and virtual masks. A mask for each and every one activity of ours.*

*The illusory ethic to pursue absolute good and truth orders us to put them down, but often we are not up to it. Masks are so deeply rooted in social conventions and intrinsically connected with roles, duties, rules and obligations, that they condition our behaviors and determine the effectiveness of our actions. Today's 'horizontal' society seems to definitely exhibit renewed freedom from stereotypes. In reality it urges us to work out more refined masks, increasingly effective in filtering our real identity. While we take shelter in them, we feel unique, uninhibited, authentic and free, but this is only an illusion.*

*Caught in the grips of communication, we are discouraged in our quest towards the truth, our individuality, and our value and are encouraged to wear masks to claim our place in society and conceal our real self for a thousand reasons... And in the end we find out that the mask we are wearing discloses who we are to all, except ourselves!*

*This project honors Venice that hosts this exhibition ironically reinterpreting the most famous five masks of the Venetian tradition. Clad in new meanings, between art and imagination, they help us think about the multiple folds of life, and smile of the thousand faces of ourselves. Four masks feature a deep saturated shade of dark blue, which softens the folds of the shape: you must get closer to distinguish them. Similarly, you must get close to people who wear a mask, to unmask them! On the other hand, Dr. Peste displays its meaning with white replacing traditional black.*

## Volto

Volto (Face) is a neutral mask that comes decorated in a myriad of different manners, but always basically similar. Today it iconizes people who want to show they belong to a group through the fashion of the time.

## Bauta

Bauta is a mysterious mask that puts a spell on you with its enigmas. Today it stands for people who want to be alternative at all costs and think to affirm their selves by challenging everything beforehand. In reality they are nothing more than fashion-victims.

## Dr. Peste

Dr. Peste (Dr. Plague) is a mask whose origins are rooted in reality. Doctors used to wear it with handkerchiefs stuffed into its enormous nose to avoid being infected by plague. Today it stirs superstition and inspires mistrust, almost transforming Medicine into witchery and Science into magic. Meaningful black replaces white where this was by tradition: a play of opposites indicating how fanaticism can confront knowledge. Behind this mask hide technique nuts, bureaucrats, and devotees that safely ensconced in even spiritual regulations, are miles away from life and its emotions. Scared by the opportunities change brings about, they spread terror in the world with their fanatic stupidity.

## Gnaga

Gnaga is the mask worn by men disguised as maidens in a sort of role exchange game. Today, the person who wears is like a court jester daring to talk without fears, free to tell everything and its contrary. Irony, pleasantness and lightness sow the seed of doubt and protect the person against the truths so revealed..

## Moretta

Moretta is the mask reserved to women. As it is held in place by a button in the mouth, masked women could not utter a single word and, deprived of the power of speech, had to express themselves with gestures. A silence full of expectations in the quest of a meaning. Today, it expresses the mystical attitude of those who take shelter in alternative dimensions, ready to believe beyond all evidence, looking for new meanings in existence.

### **VOLTO**

2017

20 x h 30 cm, depth 13 cm

Blue painted mask and rusted iron.

Daniele Basso

### **BAUTA**

2017

20 x h 30 cm, depth 16 cm

Blue painted mask and rusted iron.

Daniele Basso

### **DR. PESTE**

2017

40x30x h165 cm, base diamt. 30 cm, sculpture 17x40x h48 cm

Black and white painted mask and rusted iron.

Daniele Basso

### **GNAGA**

2017

22 x h 20 cm, depth 13 cm

Blue painted mask and rusted iron.

Daniele Basso

### **MORETTA**

2017

21 x h 22 cm, depth 13 cm

Blue painted mask and rusted iron.

Daniele Basso