

# GAGOSIAN GALLERY

August 14, 2014

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **GAGOSIAN GALLERY**

456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE

BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210

HOURS:

SUMMER HOURS (Through August 29):

T. 310.271.9400

E. losangeles@gagosian.com

Tue–Sat 10:00am–6:00pm

Mon–Fri 10:00am–6:00pm



## **GIUSEPPE PENONE: *Ramificazioni del Pensiero / Branches of Thought***

Friday, September 5–Saturday, October 18, 2014

Opening reception: Friday, September 5th, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

*What fascinates me about trees is their structure: the tree is a being that memorializes the feats of its existence in its very form. Similarly, our bodies could be considered the sum of the performance of our existence. The tree can be considered a metaphor for the work of a sculptor who fixes his actions in the material.*

—Giuseppe Penone

Gagosian Beverly Hills is pleased to present Giuseppe Penone's first major exhibition on the West Coast.

In sculptures, drawings, photographs, and installations, Penone heightens the subtle levels of interplay between man, art, and nature. His work represents a poetic expansion of Arte Povera's radical break with conventional media in favor of organic and accessible matter, and emphasizes the involuntary processes of respiration, growth, and aging that are shared by man and tree. During the late 1960s in the forests near Garessio, Italy, Penone stunted the growth of trees with nails, metal wire, and an iron cast of his hand that gripped a living trunk, thus insinuating himself into the cycles of the landscape. He continued to engage his own body in the early 1970s by drawing the textures of his skin and casting his face in plaster; in *To Reverse One's Eyes* (1970), he was photographed wearing mirrored contact lenses, positing vision as the precise point of separation between self and environment. In recent years, Penone has taken the natural attributes of traditional sculptural media, including wood, bronze, and marble, as points of departure for the creation of monumental, tactile forms.

The exhibition takes its title from a passage in John Keats's poem *Ode to Psyche* (1819), an anecdotal narrative of love, nature, and the creative imagination. Each work is a revelation of the sculptural qualities innate to natural materials. Penone chisels cedar trunks and masses of marble to expose the deep patterns resulting from growth and time, characteristics that he further emphasizes through carving, patination, and replication. In *Anatomia / Anatomy* (2011), a 23-ton marble block, he reconceives the veined surface as a matrix of tendrils, advancing the original marks into multiple dimensions.

(Continue to page 2)

456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210 T. 310.271.9400 F. 310.271.9420

LOSANGELES@GAGOSIAN.COM WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM

The tree and its relationship to man is among Penone's most enduring subjects. *Albero Porta-Cedro / Door Tree-Cedar* (2012), which was part of the artist's major installation at Château de Versailles in 2013, is a natural trunk with a rectangular cavity that reveals a carving of the heartwood within, a window onto the plant's former life. *Luce zenitale / Zenithal Light* (2012), a tree trunk mimetically rendered in cast bronze, also contains a veiled interior dimension coated in shimmering gold leaf, while the exterior retains Penone's fingerprints as subtle records of the manmade sculpting process. In *Spine d'acacia-Contatto, aprile 2006 / Acacia Thorns-Contact, April 2006*, he revisits an organic medium that has informed his work since the 1990s: hundreds of thorns are attached to twelve canvases in patterns forming an intricate yet massive impression of lips, another visceral meditation on human and natural contact. Engaging with and subtly intervening in nature so as to reimagine it in artificial manmade terms, Penone finds ever new ways to harmonize elemental occurrences with his own artistic drive.

Penone was awarded the Praemium Imperiale by the Japan Art Association in 2014.

**Giuseppe Penone** was born in 1947 in Garessio, Italy. He lives and works in Paris and Turin. Public collections include Tate Gallery, London; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; MAXXI, Rome; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions include Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2004); Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Toyota, Japan (2008); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, United Kingdom (2009); Musée des Arts Contemporains, Grand-Hornu, Belgium (2011); Documenta 13, Kassel (2012); "The Bloomberg Commission: Giuseppe Penone," Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2012); "Penone Versailles," Château de Versailles, France (2013); Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2013); and Madison Square Park, New York (2013–14). Penone co-represented Italy in the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007).

"Giuseppe Penone: Breath is a Sculpture" will be on view at Beirut Art Center from September 16–November 29, 2014. Musée de Grenoble will present a major solo exhibition from November 22, 2014–February 22, 2015.

For further information please contact Alexandra Magnuson at [alex@gagosian.com](mailto:alex@gagosian.com) or at +1.310.271.9400. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

#### Press Enquiries

Blue Medium, Inc.  
T. +1.212.675.1800  
[www.bluemedium.com](http://www.bluemedium.com)

Contact: Deirdre Maher  
E. [deirdre@bluemedium.com](mailto:deirdre@bluemedium.com)

Contact: Andy Ptaschinski  
E. [andy@bluemedium.com](mailto:andy@bluemedium.com)

Please join the conversation with Gagosian Gallery on Twitter (@GagosianLA), Facebook (@GagosianGallery), Google+ (@Gagosian Gallery), Instagram (@gagosiangallery), and Tumblr (@GagosianGallery) via the hashtags #GiuseppePenone #BranchesofThought #GagosianBeverlyHills.

Image: *Luce zenitale / Zenithal Light* (detail), 2012, bronze and gold, 157 1/2 x 59 1/8 x 59 1/8 inches (400 x 150 x 150 cm)  
© Archivio Penone

---

*Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.*