



fondazione merz

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#ZACentrale Project

Palermo City Council has signed an agreement entrusting the Fondazione Merz with the management of the ZAC - Zisa Zona Arti Contemporanee for three years, with the task of implementing an innovative interdisciplinary project.

The project called **#ZACentrale** is an innovative and ambitious interdisciplinary plan of cultural interventions intended to involve the entire city, for which, following the selection process set out in the public notice approved by D.D. 6154 of 01.07.2020, the Fondazione Merz has been identified as the "suitable cultural operator" for the production of cultural projects aimed at "promoting, understanding and disseminating Contemporary Art in the spaces of the ZAC Pavilion".

The "**ZACentrale**" project will take place over three years at the ZAC space and will be divided into a series of interdisciplinary activities to include: exhibitions, concerts, theatre and dance performances, training activities at various levels; meetings, debates, conferences to be held also in partnership with the other institutions of the Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa, as well as documentary interventions, creative incubator actions and the creation of a specialised library dedicated to contemporary art for which a donation of 300 volumes by the Fondazione is foreseen.

Statements

Leoluca Orlando, Mayor of the Municipality of Palermo - "After a long suspension in the City's process of cultural growth, which led to a season of great quality and attractiveness in 2018 and 2019, this growth now resumes. The prestigious Fondazione Merz has for years shared the artistic life of Palermo, which has found important phases in its recognition as Capital of Culture and the presence of Manifesta.

The Fondazione's presence in the Area Zac – with its artistic experience and social sensitivity – will further enrich the already extraordinary cultural vitality of the Cantieri alla Zisa".

Mario Zito, Councillor for Culture of the Municipality of Palermo - "ZACentrale 2021-2023 was born from the synergy between the Municipality of Palermo and the Fondazione Mario Merz in order to promote contemporary art through a set of programmatic lines that freely use expressive languages and tools. The ZAC Pavilion for Contemporary Arts is the beating heart of the Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa, a historic place of innovation, a former industrial area of Palermo that played a central role between the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Today the area has been reborn as a Citadel of Cultures, frequented by an increasingly large, enthusiastic and numerous public, due to the many exhibition spaces and the many spaces for theatrical, musical and cinematographic events and cultural initiatives of various kinds.

The aim of the ZACentrale project is to make ZAC a cultural laboratory for research and reflection on the future of the arts and, consequently, of society as a whole. The activities that will take place within ZAC will have a multidisciplinary character that breaks down the existing boundaries, even if sometimes they are only imaginary, between the different artistic languages.

Beatrice Merz – President of the Fondazione Merz

"The reflection from which the various parts of the general project have emerged and been organised originate from an extraordinarily contemporary and urgent theme: namely, that of the environment and the role that man plays in it

as an agent of transformation (not necessarily destructive). Etymologically, the terms culture and cultivation share more than a common semantic origin. We are convinced that practices inspired by criteria of responsibility and sustainability must not only inform the relationship with the 'natural' environment but also form the backbone of all cultural production and its 'distribution' chain, and that no one should be left behind in this important part of the welfare state. It is unthinkable to consider cultural work and artists' work as separate from the social needs of entire communities".

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Fondazione Merz for Palermo #ZACentrale 2021-2023

The aim of #ZACentrale is to transform the ZAC into a **power house** and, at the same time, into a **station** from which journeys can take off that are both departures and returns, welcome and impetus. Far from limiting itself to the ZAC space alone, the programme envisages **paths, relations and fusions** between various parts of the city: from the old monumental buildings to the outlying suburbs, from places of work to those for sport and meeting places, not excluding the so-called marginal places.

In the Fondazione Merz's #ZACentrale project, great **organisational commitment** is combined with a profound **cultural radicalism**: alongside a full programme of exhibitions, concerts, theatre and dance performances, there are plans for training activities at a variety of levels, public meetings in partnership with the other institutions of the Cantieri Culturali, documentary interventions, the creation of a creative incubator and the opening of a specialist library dedicated to contemporary art.

exhibitions | the Fondazione Merz has a heritage that it intends to share for the project. Many of the themes tackled by Mario and Marisa Merz during their fruitful lives and by the many artists that the Fondazione has followed and continues to follow can be found in the themes of #ZACentrale. This is why not only the **long-term installation of some works** is planned, but also the **temporary exhibition of part of the Fondazione's 'baggage'**, which will provide the project not only a good starting point in cultural and qualitative terms, but also the arrival in the city of important elements of *dynamisation of the present*.

education project | the area of educational activities proposes to offer a set of activities and services aimed at fostering the relationship between the territory and the ZAC, spreading the **knowledge of contemporary art languages and practices**.

ZAC public programme | an important part of the general project will be carried out in close collaboration with the various cultural realities and associations present in the vast space of the Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa. Conceived for a varied public, the *ZAC public programme* will offer a **free training service**, promoted by the Fondazione Merz and co-written with other protagonists of Sicilian, national and international cultural life.

terredicoltura | This area of the project will be an **incubator and observatory of young art in the Mediterranean area**, understood as a geographical and historical area that from Italy runs through the Balkans and Anatolia and reaches the Maghreb countries through the complex historical and political events of the Middle East and the Nile delta. The intention is to create a fluid and open reality in Palermo that will connect young and less young artists with a network of observers/cultivators and at the same time with the city and its territory. *terredicoltura* will be animated by a curatorial team that will plant a **hothouse of artists** in the city, while encouraging relations with experiences of the Italian (with a strong focus on the specific Sicilian situation) and international scene.

TALEA library | The project is rounded off with the establishment of a **specialised library** which, in line with the "arboreal" spirit that animates #ZACentrale, will develop from the 'planting' in Palermo of an initial collection of 300 volumes donated by the Fondazione Merz. From this cutting, other books, contributions and donations will grow until a **centre dedicated to contemporary art** is established, which will remain available to enthusiasts and scholars beyond the project's timeframe.

The #ZACentrale project crowns a **history of intense relations between the Fondazione Merz and Sicily**. As many as 17 exhibitions, events and projects involved the Fondazione in Palermo and Sicily between 2014 and 2019: visual art programmes for the **Festival of Migrant Literature**, exhibitions in collaboration with **Fondazione Sicilia** and with the **GAM Galleria d'Arte Moderna** in Palermo, concerts again with Fondazione Sicilia, and collaborations of various kinds with organisations such as the **Museo Archeologico Regionale "Antonino Salinas"** in Palermo, the **University of Palermo**, the **Archdiocese of Palermo** and **Cantine Planeta**. The Fondazione has also promoted and supported the birth of a **new musical formation, the WadiEnsemble**, set up to offer the best young Sicilian talents a new opportunity for growth and sharing with important figures in the international concert scene. With European Alternatives Fondazione Merz organised **ÜberMauer** in Palermo in 2019, the second edition of BAM – Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo.