

*ilmondoinfine: vivere tra le rovine*

National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rome

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*ilmondoinfine* must be written with no spaces because it's up to each one of us to insert the spaces and decide whether to live in a world coming to an end (*mondo in fine*) or in a world, finally (*mondo, infine*). The distance between a complement of *a* time coming to an end and an adverb exclaiming the occasion to grasp it, is the space in which a multi-dimensional exhibition project promoted by the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome will take place.

The narratives of the apocalypse be they cultural or ecological, whether they take the shape of collapse or of exhaustion, anticipating the evaporation of symbolic references or a real disappearance of our species, the rupture of the signifying chain or of the production of value, interrogate our presence as humans, living beings among others but certainly singular, on this planet. For none of these narratives our passage is without consequences. And the traces of our era, the geological one of the *homo sapiens*, may take the form of industrialization or intensive exploitation of resources, of technology or of environmental crisis, and so articulate the current geological era around *anthropos* or capital, Cthulhu or plantations, and nonetheless these traces will be those of devastation. In this world that has started to measure our impact and the time it still has left, we will be called to continue living, in a world, *in the end*.

However, *a* world is a different entity from a round shaped star blessed with life called Earth. A world is all this, added to an idea of nature, the thoroughly human idea by which we imagined how to be in it. And so, it is in the *how* that our forms of worldliness precipitate, the different modes of history and geography, through which human beings created and continue to create something without which they seem to experience a certain discomfort: their own *presence*. A word employed by the anthropologist Ernesto De Martino to express our specificity, our being on a planet which entails a certain creativity, by virtue of which *the* world, or better, *a* world, has to be invented. From there, mountains will be divinities or rocky objects, forests will eat children, animals will have the right to speak but only on the night of the Epiphany, and the changeable syntax, which will serve as a relation between what the taxonomic West calls the division into kingdoms – vegetable, animal, mineral etc. – will allow the emergence of the unexpected variation of possible worlds. Among these, the one we presume is ours, of means and ends, of the industrious labour with certain tools that include the materiality of an abstraction called money, is certainly not the best one and is undoubtedly the most problematic. But it is the one that, for the moment being, seems to have won against the worlds of others, leaving the majority of us to live amid the ruins, also its ruins.

Exactly there, amid the ruins of collapsed forests, on the heaps of garbage of cities being continuously ploughed, adjacent to the remains of our civilization before they are transformed into monuments, life, obstinate and surprising, thrives again. In the shape of matsutake mushrooms, agents capable of creating worlds to host the humans expelled from the circuits of value production, of pioneering vegetable species able to arrange an environment so that others may come, of urban jungles proliferating with forms of life in transit, in between the cracks of socially normed territories; to live amid the ruins is a paradigm that goes well beyond the desolate landscapes of war or of catastrophe. It can indeed be read as the capacity to adapt, or as mere survival, but there are those who have taught us how to look at life amid the ruins as an occasion to be grasped to make room for the life of others, for the unrelenting process of metamorphosis through which life expresses itself on this planet. Where that human ability to create worldliness, also on the heaps of ruins left by human transit, restates that life is becoming, and that our *presence* has always had the provisional status of a *world, finally!*

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