

PRESS RELEASE

12/02/2018

Belgian artist Emmanuel Muraille selected for the International Biennale of Contemporary Art Sacred of the religions of humanity 2018 (BIAS 2018) in Sicily.

He will present the project *Villa Giulia. From the beautiful to the sublime. 15 photographic interventions*, between April 22 and July 10, 2018 at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Sicily, at the Archaeological Park of Selinunte and in the Crypt of the Church of San Giuseppe dei Tetatini in Palermo.

The exhibition will take place at the same time as *Manifesta 12* and *Palermo - Italian Capital of Culture 2018*.

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PRESS KIT

Presentation of the project:

Villa Giulia. From the beautiful to the sublime. 15 photographic interventions.

« The *Villa Giulia* in Palermo is the oldest public garden in Italy. Designed in 1778, it has suffered greatly: of the twenty-two busts adorning the central place, fifteen have been decapitated. The very concept of the garden as a work of art is thus disrupted, tilting from the beautiful to the sublime in a way which I undertake through my own interventions to show that it may constitute a powerfully meaningful passage. On a first level, every public garden is thought out as the reconciliation of architecture and nature, combining the reality of urban space to the ideality of idealized nature. For anyone strolling into the *Villa Giulia*, the walking tempo slowly settles down into a feeling of airy suspension. The leisurely peregrination subtly changes into an initiatory journey, prompted by pervading yet understated masonic suggestions of cosmic harmony. Visitors are unknowingly nudged out of their customary sense of spatiality to experience another dimension which is all passage and no definite destination. The ideal garden offers invisible gateways leading both to experiences of inner peace as well as outer vistas where art and nature resonate together in harmony. This is the essence of Kant's judgement of the beautiful, i.e. the harmonious operation of the mind's various faculties as it judges at the occasion of an aesthetic experience.

However, at a second level, the mutilation of the *Villa Giulia* statues constitutes a horrific sight which exiles the ideal of beauty into the sublime as it ruptures the very harmony of faculties; this, according to Kant, must necessarily produce some spiritual meaning beyond the first shock and demise of the mind as it confronts the irreversible.

My intervention, i.e. staging the decapitated busts to let the sublime significance unfurl, is essentially an artistic statement. The wounds and stigma do remain as they are, unadulterated, while they may be apprehended in a reconciled perspective drawn from the vantage point of the intact and the ideal. »

Emmanuel Muraille

*This work benefits from the collaboration of the historian of art **Justyna Gajko-Berckmans** and of the philosopher **Frank Pierobon**. It has been the subject of a publication in French.*

Project website: <http://emmanuelmuraille.be/portfolio/villagiulia/>
HD photo: http://emmanuelmuraille.be/delivery/VillaGiulia_HD.zip

Biography:

Emmanuel Muraille

Visual artist.

Lives and works in Brussels.

Graduated from Brussels Superior Art School Saint Luc (1976-82), and studied at the Brussels Royal Academy of Fine Arts – Painting section (1983-86).

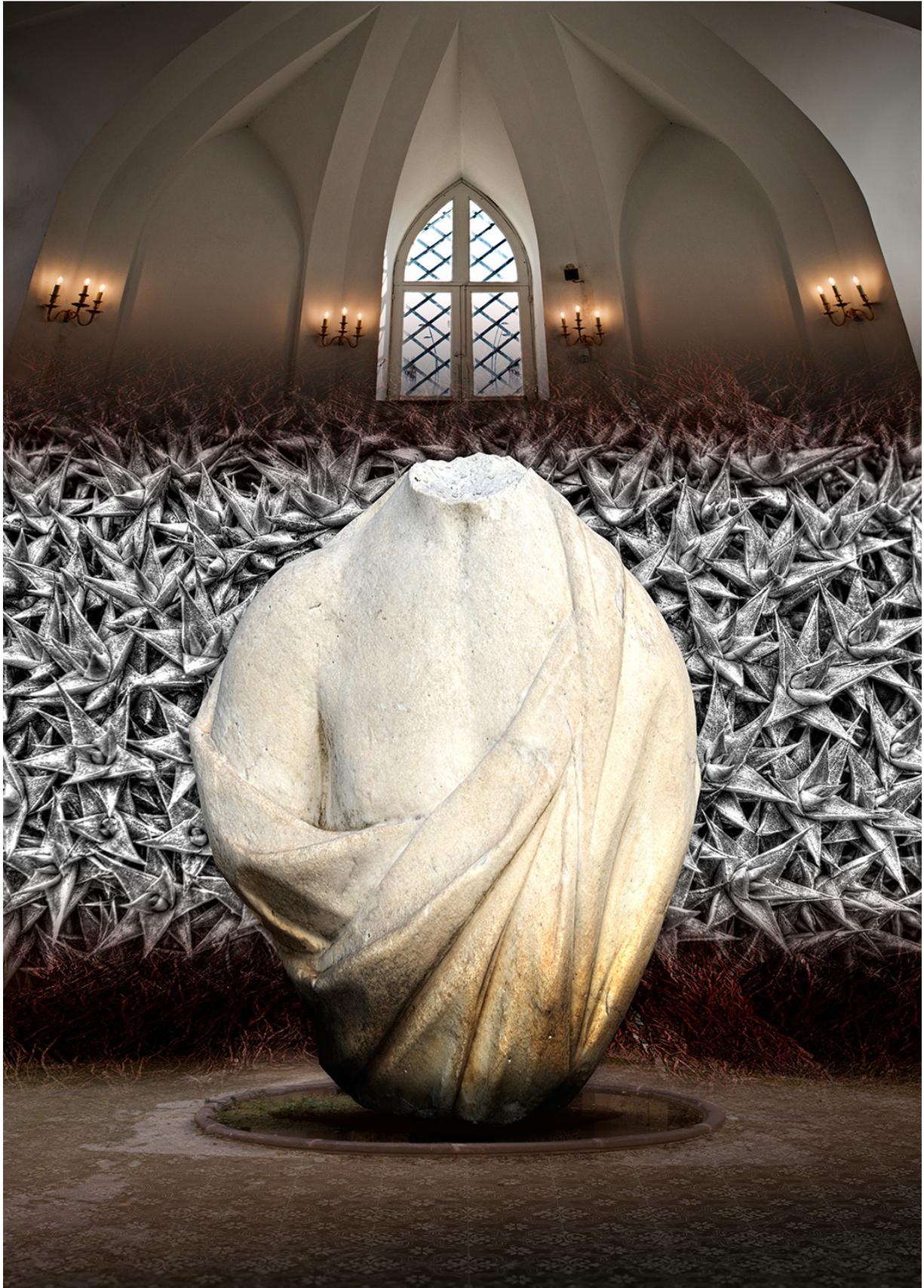
Emmanuel Muraille works with many different techniques like photography, tempera, oil, acrylic, charcoal and pastels. His photographic work coexists closely with his painting.

Nature represents for him an infinite and inexhaustible source of inspiration as it offers all imaginable forms and textures, and generates pure emotions. Since 2012, he has been studying the possibility of recomposing nature in an abstract way, through complex structures inspired by his photographic researches. His recent works show the impact of nature on statues in public spaces, and the contrast between the sad and frozen expression of the sculpture and the fullness of life brought by the wild expression of nature. He has been working for almost two years on the reconstruction of 15 decapitated busts of the Villa Giulia in Palermo. With this work he combines his two main centers of interest: nature and statuary in the public space.

SOME ARTWORKS



#02/15 - Digital print 60x80cm © Emmanuel Muraille 2017



#07/15 - Digital print 60x80cm © Emmanuel Muraille 2017



#18/15 - Digital print 60x80cm © Emmanuel Muraille 2017