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Francesco Arena
Biography

Francesco Arena was born in Mesagne, Brindisi, Italy in 1978. He lives and works in Cassano delle Murge, Bari, Italy.

If one tried to summarize a large part of Francesco Arena's work into a formula, it would be as follows: numbers that take on form. From a linguistic point of view his work can be read as a development, a personal "derivation", of sculptural processes that arise from the geometric shapes typical of Minimal art and from the more archetypal ones of Arte Povera. But from a thematic point of view his pieces are often the translation of formulae and numbers linked to private and personal facts.

Arena's research moves along two tracks: that of collective history, mainly national, and that of personal history. These form a sort of two lines that touch, overlap, cross each other. In his performances, installations and sculptures, the narrative creates the objects. They can be everyday objects such as diaries, cigars, living room furniture, or made out of traditional sculptural materials, such as marble, slate, bronze. Arena always imposes at the beginning a rule to be followed, a fact that remains a fixed point in the piece's production process: the weight of a boat used by illegal immigrants reaching the coast of Lampedusa, the distance travelled by the anarchist Pinelli in his last day as a free man in Milan, the volume of a crater made by a bomb explosion. These are starting points that determine the form, the dimensions and at times even the materials of the piece: "Facts are a wilderness where different views confront and oppose each other; facts interest me as units of measurement around which to build a sculpture... a weight, a distance or a surface inform the work and determine its form or dimensions," he said. The facts chosen by Arena often come from the

reservoir of personal history, but also from collective memory, which was initially focused above all on Italy, but which has now opened up to global situations and events. Several solo exhibitions have been devoted to the artist, including: *La Spiaggia*, Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, Milan (2025), *30 Altalene*, Polignano a Mare (2024), *Il fulmine goerna ogni cosa*, Fondazione Nicola del Roscio, Rome (2023) *Dieci minuti e un soffio*, Palazzo Borromeo, Milan (2022); *Una cartolina, un passo, una linea e una pietra*, BASE / Progetti per l'arte, Florence, Italy (2019); *Letto*, The Open Box, Milan, Italy (2019); *Orizzonte*, Art Basel | Unlimited, Basel, Switzerland (2017); *Francesco Arena. Perimetro con quattro opere in uno spazio*, TRA Treviso ricerca arte, Treviso, Italy (2016); *Jannis Kounellis – Francesco Arena*, Palazzo Baronale, Novoli, Italy (2015); *Francesco Arena: Posatoi*, Olnick Spanu Art Program, Garrison, NY, USA (2014); *Onze mille cent quatre-vingt sept jours*, Frac Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France (2013); *Trittico 57*, Museion, Bolzano, Italy (2012); *Com'è piccola Milano*, Peep Hole, Milan, Italy (2011); *Art Basel | Statement*, Basel, Switzerland (2010); *Teste*, Fondazione Ermanno Casoli, Fabriano, Italy (2010); *Cratere*, De Vleeshal, Middelburg, Netherlands (2010).

Selected group shows include: a permanent installation, *GOD*, for the Khao Yai Forest project, Thailand (2025); *La dodicesima altalena*, Hypermarea, Capalbio (2025); *Votiva / Parabita per il Contemporaneo*, Parabita, Italy (2024); *Leggere il Tempo. Libri nell'Arte*, Palazzo Nicolosio Lomellino, Genoa, Italy (2024); *Paesaggio/Unpacking My History: Francesco Arena, Rossella Biscotti, Claire Fontaine*, Quadriennale di Roma, Rome, Italy (2024); *E la mia Patria è dove l'erba trema*, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (2023), Rome, Italy;

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Afterimage, MAXXI L'Aquila, Italy (2022); *Utopia Distopia: il mito del progresso partendo dal Sud*, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina - Museo Madre, Naples, Italy (2021); *Camera Picta*, Galleria Civica di Trento, Trento, Italy (2021); *The Paradox of Stillness: Art, Object, and Performance*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, USA (2021); *There will never be a door. You are inside. Works from the Coleção Teixeira de Freitas*, Santander Art Gallery, Madrid (2019); *The Humans*, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland (2018); *Sculpture Projects Ping Yao*, Pingyao, China (2018); *Re-Evolution*, MAXXI, Rome (2017); *Mario Merz Prize*, 2nd Edition, Fondazione Merz, Turin, Italy (2017); *Par tibi, Roma, nihil*, Area archeologica del Palatino, Rome (2016); *The 3rd Nanjing International Art Festival*, Baijia Lake Museum, Nanjing, China (2016); *Ennesima*, Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy (2015); *Ritratto dell'artista da giovane*, Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy (2014); *La storia che non ho vissuto. Testimone indiretto*, Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy (2012); *Sotto la Strada la Spiaggia*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy (2012); *Il bel paese dell'arte*, GAMEC, Bergamo, Italy (2011); *Les sculptures meurent aussi*, Kunsthalle Mulhouse, Mulhouse, France (2010); *Annisettanta. Il decennio lungo del secolo breve*, Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy (2007).

In 2013 his work was included in *Vice Versa*, Italian Pavilion of the 55th Venice Art Biennale.