



fondazione merz



Matera 2019, the work of the artist Emily Jacir opens in Pietrapertosa

After being exhibited in Turin for the PUSH THE LIMITS exhibition set up at the Merz Foundation from 7 September 2020 to 26 February 2021, the sculptural work "Pietrapertosa", created by the Palestinian artist Emily Jacir, Golden Lion at the 52nd Biennale of Venice, returns to Basilicata to be permanently installed in the Gardentopia community garden in Pietrapertosa (Potenza, Italy).

The inauguration of the work will be held on Wednesday 4 August at 6 pm in the garden (Via della Speranza) in the presence of the Mayor of the Municipality of Pietrapertosa, Maria Cavuoti, the Vice President of the Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation, Michele Somma and the development and relations manager, Rossella Tarantino, the President of the Merz Foundation of Turin, Beatrice Merz, and the artist Emily Jacir, with musical accompaniment by the "Città di Pietrapertosa" band complex, followed by the sounds of Mediterranean rhythms by Daniele Antezza / Dadub.

The sculptural work, created with the support of the Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation, was conceived by Emily Jacir during her artistic residency in 2019 in the Lucanian village of Pietrapertosa, as part of Matera European Capital of Culture project called "Gardentopia". During this experience, the artist researched the Arab roots of the village in the Lucanian Dolomites, where there is a district called "Arabata". Here she explored the Arab influence on the language and culture of the village, together with the techniques of excavation and modelling of the local stone, interacting with the local community.

Made in 2020 with stone from the Gorgoglione quarries by an all-female company in Pignola (Potenza, Italy), the "Pietrapertosa" work is a circular sculpture, 179 cm in diameter and 6 cm thick. Inside two sentences are engraved, one in Italian and one in Arabic, with the same meaning: You have come among our people and your life is safe.

With this work, Emily Jacir develops two main themes: the importance of hospitality for the inhabitants of Pietrapertosa and the Arab heritage of this tradition. Basilicata, a place where dialects of Greek, Albanian and Arabic derivation are still spoken, has at various times in its history been strategically considered as "the East", a crossroads of cultures. Both the journey of the artwork from Basilicata to Turin and back again plus the materials chosen, were conceived as an artistic action reflecting the multiple stories of movement between the north and south of Italy and the different cultural realities that inhabit within. "The work – says the artist - projects the village of Pietrapertosa into a space beyond national and state borders, into an expansive and ancient shared history, a journey that links Pietrapertosa to Palestine".