



Press Release

**With water, for water, in water,
from ditches to oceans.**

On September 15, 2023, at the Oratory of San Rocco in Padua, the installation of Federico Soffiato's "Madonna dell'acqua lurida" (Madonna of the filthy waters) will be inaugurated. The display of the polychrome terracotta sculpture marks the starting point of a widespread initiative on land and water, comprising a rich cycle of public conferences (15.09.23-04.11-23).

In this historical period characterized by climate emergencies, Federico Soffiato treats water as a vital, creative, and generative resource, the centerpiece of the event he organized in collaboration with the Municipality of Padua, the Departments of Cultural Heritage, and Civil, Architectural, and Environmental Engineering of the University of Padua, and WWF. The sculptor's objective is to stimulate a discussion on the state of water and all that it entails from an environmental, social, and scientific perspective, not only on a local level but also at a national and multicultural level.

The public conferences will be delivered by prominent figures from culture, entertainment, and representatives of institutions. Alongside Padua's Deputy Mayor Andrea Micalizzi, there will be professors and researchers from the University of Padua, actor and author Marco Paolini, writer Sara Segantin, Laura Boella, former professor of Moral Philosophy and Environmental Ethics at the State University of Milan, General Giuseppe Giove, former Commander of the Carabinieri Forestale in Emilia Romagna and Lombardy, Gaetano Benedetto, former co-General Director of WWF Italy and Vice Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Environment, and many others. The seminars will take place partly on land, in the Paladin hall of Palazzo Moroni, and partly on water. For the first time, the rowing clubs of Padua will provide traditional Venetian boats and oarsmen for a series of itinerant conferences along the waters of Piovego and Bacchiglione, focusing on archaeological, artistic, and cultural heritage.

The event will also feature various performances by Matteo Raciti, winner of the Carnevale di Viareggio, Nico Soffiato, guitarist and composer from NY, and Antonio Irre, performance artist of the 2022 Venice Biennale.

The first exhibition of the "Madonna of filthy waters" took place in Padua on September 9, 2019, during the Future Vintage Festival. The sculpture immediately sparked controversies, although it was neither blasphemous nor offensive, as demonstrated by an article by Luisa Pozzar published in the Catholic press. Instead of being offensive or blasphemous, the Madonna of filthy waters is recognized by the Church as the first "Madonna against pollution."

Many people have come to Padua to see the sculpture, including Vittorio Sgarbi, Maurizio Corona, Oliviero Toscani, Giacomo Poretti (from the renowned trio Aldo, Giovanni e Giacomo), and other representatives of Italian culture, including writer Massimo Carlotto.

Watch the Madonna of filthy waters commercial here:

<https://youtu.be/dSFuefHR5QQ>

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