PRESS KIT

LA SCIA DEL MONTE OU LES UTOPISTES MAGNÉTIQUES

THE TRACE OF THE MOUNTAIN OR THE MAGNETIC UTOPIANS

23.03 – 15.09.2024



M B L A MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS LE LOCLE

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MONTE VERITÀ'S UTOPIAS

In response to the dystopian scenarios confronting our contemporary society, the MBAL has chosen to celebrate utopia through the legacy of the mythical Monte Verità, the Swiss cradle of the avant-garde, revered worldwide. This magnetic oasis on the Monescia hill in Ticino was home to the first alternative, naturist, feminist and vegetarian colony in the early 20th century, a precursor of the counter-culture movements that followed, and has seen a succession of anarchists, thinkers and artists pass through its doors over the years. Consecrated by visionary curator Harald Szeemann, with his exhibition *Monte Verità. Le mammelle della verità* (1978), the hill is still today a place of pilgrimage that awakens, enlightens and consoles. But what remains of the utopias that gravitated around this "Bermuda triangle of the spirit"?

Created in collaboration with the Fondazione Monte Verità, the exhibition *la scia del monte (the trace of the mountain) ou les utopistes magnétiques (or the magnetic utopians)* brings together 26 contemporary artists, whose creations have been inspired by Monte Verità and its surrounding aura, to resonate with the genius of the place and its female figures. The exhibition offers an eclectic and captivating dialogue between nature, art and spirit, questioning the notion of the "reform of life" desired by the precursors. Exploring all media and techniques, from video art to artificial intelligence, installation, sculpture, painting, photography, engraving, sound and fabric, the exhibition highlights the importance of Switzerland as a land of refuge for free spirits and iconoclasts.

Federica Chiocchetti, Director, Museum of Fine Arts
Le Locle (MBAL), and Nicoletta Mongini, Cultural Director,
Fondazione Monte Verità

GENIUS LOCI

Drawing inspiration from classical Roman religion and the concept of the "*genius loci*", which refers to a supernatural spirit inhabiting a place or a person, the exhibition explores the notion of a "genius of place" at Monte Verità. This genius, akin to a magnetic force, is believed to transmit and activate memories of freedom, creativity and anti-conformism to its visitors. The 26 contemporary artists participating in the exhibition engage in a dialogue with the hill, its spirits and its historical figures. Through their testimonies, the lingering aura of the Monescia remains palpable and alive.

Like their predecessors, the artists continue to challenge the prevailing values of contemporary society. The exhibited artworks embody the ideals of past or future utopia: whether it's the celebration of nature, the integration of digital technologies into our world, the power of aesthetic forms, the liberation of the body through dance, the enlightenment of the mind through meditation, the evolution of feminism and the power of witches, irony and humor, or the exploration of sound poetry.

The exhibition, curated by Federica Chiocchetti and Nicoleta Mongini, captures the enduring feminine aura of the hill throughout history. This sentiment permeates the entire display, with focus on the female artists of Monte Verità. Their influence is a throughline across the exhibition, culminating into a dedicated wall featuring 16 historical portraits, a special tribute to the figures who inspired some of the works and scenographies presented. Their presence highlights the significance of feminism and the concept of matriarchy in this heritage, often overlooked in historical narratives.



Four portraits of the historic women of Monte Verità. From left to right: dancer Isadora Duncan, Ida Hofmann and Lotte Hattemer, two of the founders of the Monte Verità colony, and Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, founder of the Eranos circle. © Fondazione Monte Verità, Fondo Harald Szeemann

HISTORICAL DIVE

The exhibition begins with the history of Monte Verità, depicted through a frieze conceived by designer Nicolas Polli that traces the rich past of the Ticino hilltop. The narrative chronicles pivotal figures and events from its anarchist origins beginning in 1869 with Bakunin's arrival in Locarno, to the establishment of the Monte Verità "vegetabiliana" cooperative in 1899, to its purchase by Baron Eduard von der Heydt in 1926, who transformed the artistic enclave into a more opulent and exclusive resort while still attracting intellectuals from across Europe.

Following the Baron's death, ownership of the hill transferred to Ticino. The landmark exhibition *Monte Verità. Le mammelle della verità*, conceived by visionary curator Harald Szeemann in 1978, marked the renaissance of Monte Verità, positioning it as a "total work of art" on the international art scene. Subsequently, in 1989, management of the utopian hill was entrusted to the Fondazione Monte Verità.



Groupe de danseuses à Monte Verità. © Fondazione Monte Verità, Fondo Harald Szeemann, Fondazione Suzanne Perrotet

In recent years, a program of artist residencies was launched, with some notable achievements presented here alongside this journey through time. Examples include a video of artist **Elena Muresu** during her residency at Monte Verità in 2023, invited by the Museo d'Arte Provincia di Nuoro (MAN), as well as a model and preparatory drawings for the mosaic *L'arcobaleno di Chiara*, the

iconic permanent installation in the Monte Verità gardens designed by **Oppy De Bernardo** in 2003. Additionally, a neon piece by duo **Filippo Filliger & Dorothée Thébert**, serving as a fragment of a scenography, stands as a further testament to Monte Verità's ongoing dynamism.



La joie de la liberté. © Fondazione Monte Verità, Fondo Harald Szeemann

Swiss artist **Una Szeemann**'s video, *Montewood Hollyverità*, provides a conclusion to this chapter of the community's destiny. In this humorous and ironic 26-minute film, Szeemann blends traditional narrative using archival footage with fictional sequences performed by notable figures such as artists Lawrence Weiner and Paul McCarthy. These scenes are imbued with a distinct 1980s Hollywood aesthetic, adding a unique dimension to the portrayal of Monte Verità's history.



Una Szeemann, *Montewood Hollyverità*, 2002, capture vidéo. Courtesy : Una Szeemann

THE FORMS OF NATURE

On the second floor, **Jean Arp**'s tribute to **Sophie Taeuber**, *Composition verticale-horizontale à triangles réciproques*, brings the work of the Swiss artist to the forefront. Taeuber, who was a painter, sculptor and dancer, joined the community in 1916 to attend Rudolf von Laban's "School of Movement Arts" alongside her friend, the dancer Mary Wigman.



Jean Arp da Sophie Taeuber-Arp, *Composition verticale-horizontale à triangles réciproques*, [s.d.]. © Collezione Città di Locarno. Photo : Roberto Pellegrini

Luca Mengoni, an artist from Ticino, found inspiration in the vibrant landscape of the mountains during his explorations of the region. His series, titled *Céleste*, consists of six etchings, including five heliogravures and one drypoint. These artworks offer fresh perspectives on the rugged peaks, depicting unprecedented angles and views. The title pays homage to the dancers of Monte Verità, particularly Sophie Taeuber, to whom Mengoni dedicates the series, and references Hans Richter's phrase "If the Odeon was our earthly headquarters, the Laban dance school was our heavenly headquarters".

Mengoni extends his artistic expression with a floor installation featuring a bed of ceramics shaped like a fist clutching a clod of earth, symbolizing an invitation to defy conformity, inspired by Kropotkin's anarchism.

Additionally the photographs by **Giame Meloni**, created during his residency at Monte Verità in 2023 in collaboration with MAN, further explore the communion between nature, history and architecture. According to Meloni, "these places serve as portals to unique experiences, bridging the gap between nature and culture".



Giaime Meloni, *Hotel Monte Verità #0250*, 2023. © Giaime Meloni



Giaime Meloni, *Hotel Monte Verità #0256_8*, 2023. © Giaime Meloni

Swiss artist **Lisa Lurati** explores the theme of memory through a large-format tapestry that evokes primitive rituals celebrating the arrival of spring. She juxtaposes natural and imaginary elements; her installation of spiral elements evokes *curupira*, the guardian believed to exist between natural and human forces.

Maya Hottarek explores the theme of being present through research that focuses on meditation and the connections between personal and collective consciousness using cyanotype. Produced during her residency in 2023 in collaboration with MAN, Hottarek printed on linen and recycled cotton. These works featured shamanic elements such as "palo santo" (a sacred South American wood), and objects found in Monte Verità. The result is a "patchwork of coexistence", resembling an altar that invites us to be here and now.



Maya Hottarek, *OGGI 2.* 2023. Courtesy : Maya Hottarek

At the top of the stairs, the video installation by Swiss artists **Johanna Gschwend** and **Moritz Hossli** was created at Monte Verità in 2019 during the pandemic. The film and sound piece portrays the site devoid of any human presence. Showcasing the refined, linear architecture nestled in nature, finally uncontrolled and triumphant, the artists play an imaginary game of tennis on the deserted court. The rhythmic interplay of light and sound caputures the encounter between artifice and nature. For a few months, nature reigns over the hill once more. The magical, poetic ambiance of this suspended moment acts as a liberating breath of fresh air.

MADNESS AND FREEDOM

The exhibition continues with an intergenerational dialogue among several women artists who, bound by their shared quest for emancipation, celebrate freedom, the sensuality of the body and empowerment. The *Vergini folli (Mad virgins)* by **Marianne Werefkin**, the Russian Expressionist painter closely associated with Vassily Kandinsky, stands as a symbol of the 1920s avant-garde movement. Werefkin played a significant role in Monte Verità, helping Baron Eduard von der Heydt in repurchasing the hill in 1926. Her works contrast the exploration of the body and its liberation by the **Fattucchiere** collective (Marta Margnetti & Giada Olivotto), who present an installation that aims to reconstruct an exquisite reality, envisioning a realm inhabited by dreams, iridescent bodies, powerful perfumes and artificial beauties.



Marianne Werefkin, *Le vergini folli*, 1921. © Fondazione Marianne Werefkin, Museo Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Ascona



Fattucchiere, *Cuore mangiato, guscio di fiore*, 2023. © Photo : Anna Maysuk
Courtesy : Fattucchiere and Kulturfolger

Ingeborg Lüscher, Harald Szeemann's life partner and Una Szeemann's mother, is a multi-disciplinary artist who has been exhibited all over the world. Her strong commitment is tinged with subtle irony in the two works on show, as she aptly puts it: "Only madness can give a new form and a new life to ideas that impose themselves".

In a hypnotic video titled *La pupa proibita*, a mannequin resembling a "pupa", a female figure from Abruzzo folklore, spins on a scrap metal merry-go-round, illuminated by fireworks. Additionally, *The Shirt / Das Hemb* is a rare piece commissioned by Harald Szeemann in 1981, on loan from the Museo Casa Selma in Monte Verità. It is modelled after shirts worn by the hill's first inhabitants and bears text by Ida Hofmann, one of the colony's founders, taken from "How can we women achieve harmonious and healthy living conditions?" The text, presented as an open letter to the author of *Aine Mutter für Viele*, humorously discusses the futility of ironing with rags.



Ingeborg Lüscher, *La Pupa Proibita*, 2006, capture vidéo. © Ingeborg Lüscher / videoart.ch



Ingeborg Lüscher, *The Shirt/Das Hemb*, 1981. © The Estate of Harald Szeemann (on permanent loan at Museo Casa Selma, Monte Verità, Ascona)

Swiss duo **Maria Guta** and **Lauren Huret**, recipients of the Swiss Art Awards 2022 and in residence at Monte Verità in 2023 in collaboration with MBAL, introduce a new chapter in Iris, their fictional character, who serves as both subject and author of the works in the exhibition. Iris embodies a critique of media society, depicted as having purchased Monte Verità after experiencing burn-out, with the intention of establishing a center for eternal youth. Using AI, she creates three surrealistic paintings inspired by dreams, visions and rituals encountered in the Ascona area. A hybrid video installation revealing Iris's magical wanderings completes this dystopic narrative of a new digital reality.



Maria Guta & Lauren Huret, *Gestures of Ecstasy*, capture vidéo, 2024. Courtesy : Maria Guta & Lauren Huret

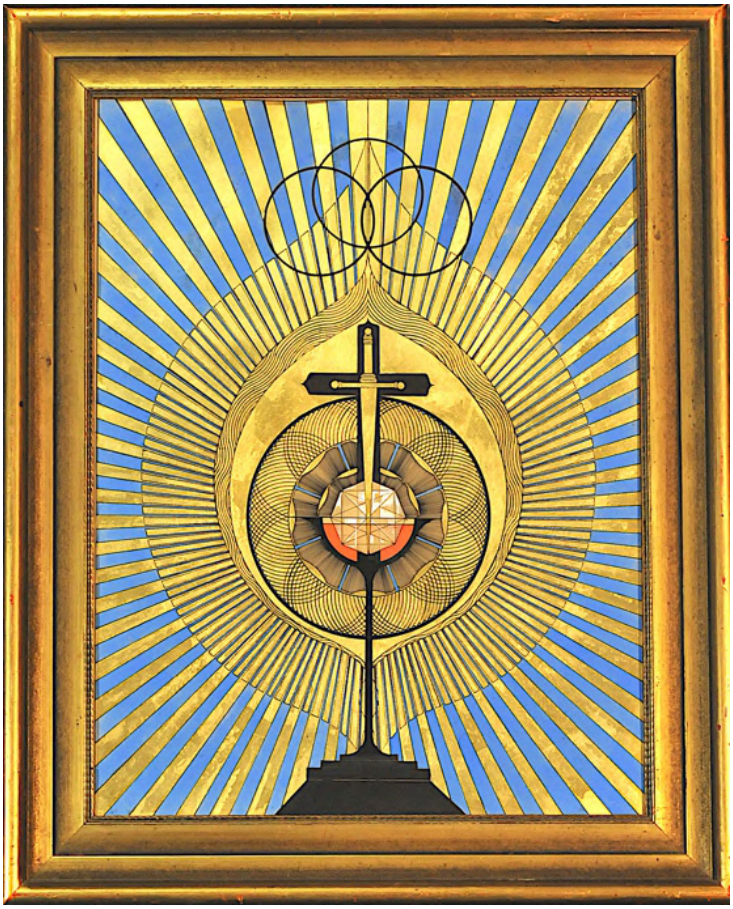




Maria Guta & Lauren Huret, croquis préparatoire n°2 et n°3 pour *The Eternal Youth Program series*, 2024. Courtesy : Maria Guta & Lauren Huret

BODY AND MIND

At the turn of the century, the search for alternative forms of expression and the exploration of the blurred boundaries between art and spirituality drew artists and visitors alike to Monte Verità. Among those who played a pivotal role in the journey to emancipation from capitalism was **Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn**. Following a stay at the Monte Verità sanatorium in the early 1920s, she settled permanently at Casa Gabrielle with her daughter. After studying Indian philosophy, practicing meditation and amassing an immense collection of symbolic images, she painted meditation tables, drawing inspiration from theosophy, and founded the renowned Eranos circle. Established as a place of conversation and relaxation, avant-garde intellectuals and thinkers such as Carl Gustav Jung mingled with the aim to explore global issues through the lens of psyche rather than material circumstance.

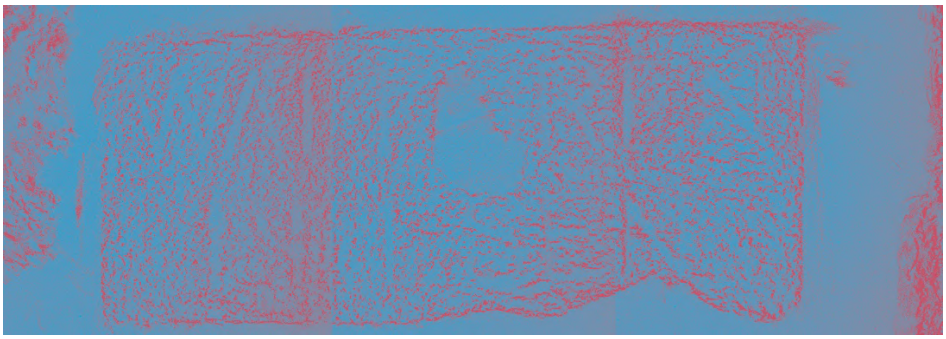


Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, *sans titre, série Tables de méditation*, vers 1926-1934.
© Archives de la Fondation Eranos, Ascona

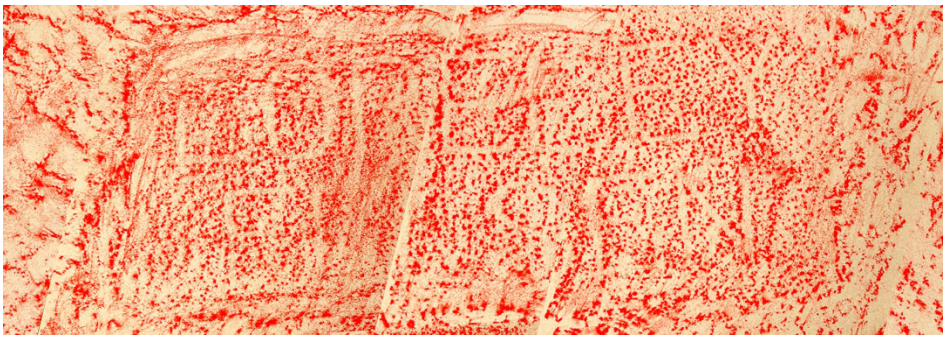
Following this spiritual legacy, the Italian duo **The Cool Couple** (Niccolò Benetton & Simone Santilli) present the outcomes of their residency at Monte Verità, organized in collaboration with

MBAL in 2023. Inspired by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, they create images interpreted by artificial intelligence, exploring the interplay “between graphic sign, gesture and psyche" in the artist's drawings. An immersive installation accompanies these creations.

Driven by their belief in the need for societal transformation, the duo invites the public to share in a moment of meditation in Gusto Gräser's reinvented cave. A hermit of the colony, Gräser secluded himself in a crevice in the mountain where he welcomed pilgrims. Lulled by the metallic voice of an AI reciting a meditation, the public is invited to lie down on yoga mats created by the artists. Dubbed the *Energy Mats*, they bear imprints from the region's energy points, including the Loreleyn and Valkyrien rocks of Monte Verità, and the Gusto Gräser cave. The session titled "Karma Fails" is dedicated to exploring deep time, forgotten alternatives and futures obscured by the passage of history.



The Cool Couple, *Energy Mat, Valkyrien*, 2024. © The Cool Couple

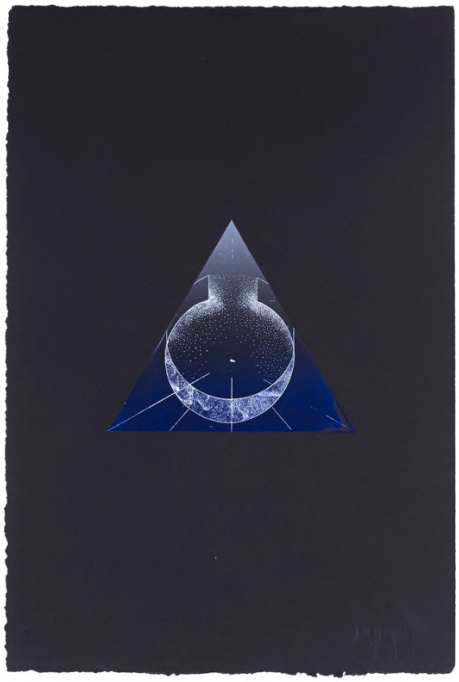


The Cool Couple, *Energy Mat, Loreleyn*, 2024. © The Cool Couple

Francesca Gagliardi brings The Eranos circle to life with her reinterpreted gong, used in lectures as a transitional object between mind and body, East and West. **Riccardo Arena**'s hypnotic concept map blends his research from the archives of the Eranos and Monte Verità Foundations, creating a dream-like choreography that transcends historical and geographical components, focusing only on the most universal aspects.

Contemporary dance was conceived and invented at Monte Verità by two artists: Rudolf von Laban, a Hungarian choreographer and researcher, and **Mary Wigman**, Laban's pupil, Despite societal norms, Wigman made the bold decision to become a dancer at the age of 30, breaking away from the constraints of classical dance. Her exploration led to the development of "expressive dance", inspired by movements from non-Western cultures and performed to percussive rhythms.

A pivotal moment in the evolution of contemporary dance and the trajectory of this discipline occurred with Wigman's anthological performance at Monte Verità in 1914, shown in the screening of *La danse de la sorcière*.



Marco Useli, Elisarion, *il chiaro mondo dei bea*ti, 1\20 issue de Gurudeva 2023.
Courtesy : Marco Useli.

Inspired by the Labanian icosahedron — an octagon inscribed in a spherical volume that Laban used to explore all directions and movements in space — **Marco Useli** created a series of hypnotic tableaux during his residency at Monte Verità in collaboration with MAN. Using etching techniques and printed on black cotton, Useli applied incisions to the unfolded grooves of the icosahedron, producing powerful, spiritually resonant imagery reminiscent of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's meditation tables.

Meanwhile Ticino artist **Pascal Murer**, fascinated by the iconic dancers of the Hill of Utopias, presents two charcoal drawings and a bronze sculpture, celebrating the lightness of being.

UNA SZEEMANN

"Monte Verità's magnetic anomalies sculpt interior landscapes while reframing the possibilities of alternative perspectives." - Una Szeemann, 2024





Una Szeemann, *The Birds Said You Move*, 2021-2023. Bronze. © Photo : Anna Maysuk

Swiss artist **Una Szeemann**, a prominent figure in the exhibition, holds a unique position in preserving the legacy of Monte Verità. Daughter of curator Harald Szeemann and exhibiting artist Ingeborg Lüscher, she was raised in Ticino. Her work is rooted in interdisciplinary research, drawing from fields such as psychoanalysis (particularly self-hypnosis), biology and anthropology. Her aim was to uncover the material traces of invisible phenomena.

She uses a variety of dead organic matter, such as leather, hair, plaster, copper, bronze, bones, ropes and dried plants. Like an alchemist, Szeemann attempts to materialize these traces of bodies, thoughts and the unconscious. Through poetic means akin to modern witchcraft, she seeks to preserve what, if left unattended, would fade into oblivion.



Una Szeemann, *Palm Spirits*, 2023. Bronze, patin au nitrate d'argent.
© Photo : Servizi Culturali Città di Locarno, Cosimo Filippini

In a room dedicated, Una Szeemann's universe is elevated by a powerful scenography that links the works and installations with nature and magic. *The Birds Said You Move*, a set of seven bronze sculptures made from dried banana blossoms, stands here after a long process of solidification. The title of the work is inspired by a Myanmar legend where men mimicked birds that used to eat bananas, originally called "It was the bird who told it".

The *Palm Spirits* sculpture showcases its timelessness, engaging in a dialogue with two works specially commissioned for the exhibition. These pieces evoke the ancestral rites and rituals of the Monte Verità hills, which are situated in a region rich in geological anomalies and subtropical temperatures, existing long before the arrival of the colony.

Furthermore, the sculpture *She Who Wanders at Night* alludes to the Greek mythological figure of Hecate, goddess of magic, witchcraft, the night, the moon, ghosts and necromancy. This piece also nods to the spirit of dancer Charlotte Bara, who, at her San Materno Theater near Monte Verità, created choreographies using sacred and mythical dances from all cultures in pursuit of a syncretic spiritual ideal. Suspended from the ceiling, three imposing leather figures, resembling a cave or a hollow body, with long braids undulating in every directions, evoke the spirit and movements of the dancer, as if transcending through matter.

The sculpture series, *Incantarsi*, conjures the medicinal plants indigenous to the Ascona hills. Believed to be used by witches during rituals and ceremonies, the knowledge of their use has persisted through generations, despite condemnation by the magicians. Branches of birch, chestnut, ash and lime are cast in bronze and crowned with a head of palm bracteate. These sculptures, set amidst lightning bolts and witches' brooms, merge into a unified whole, blending ancient botanical wisdom passed down by women, the gravitational forces linking heaven and earth, and fantasies of metamorphosis. Additionally, the exhibition features two drawings of nude bathing women from the MBAL collection, chosen by the artist, to accompany this monteverde reminiscence.



Una Szeemann, *Virare al tatto*, 2021. © Photo : courtesy. Edition VFO, Zurich, Bernhard Strauss

Other works accompany this scenography, focusing on nature and magic. The series *Virare al tatto* explores the trace of movement through engravings. In the Welwitschia Mirabilis series, photographs showcase one of the world's oldest plant species. Lastly a collection of small bronze sculptures entitled *Le Benandanti -Diana, Rossa, Anna, Lucina-* unveil mysterious characters.

THE MYSTIQUE OF PLACE

The exhibition concludes on the third floor, where visitors are enveloped in a soothing sound bath by Locarno composer **Stéphane Mercier**. Mercier produced this immersive experience following his residency at Monte Verità, organized by MBAL. Nearby **Marco Cordero**'s mineral installation, created from a one-square-meter cast of the Lorelei rock summit, explores the imperceptible vibrations of this energetic focal point. This piece transcends physical replication; rather it embodies the natural elements around the rock: the sky, the wind, the rain and the steps. A year after its creation in 2020, it was installed directly above the section of the rock from which it emerged, elevated by about a metre. For three months, the work interacted with the elements and the panoramic views of the site, offering a dynamic experience now showcased in the exhibition.

Adjacent to Cordero's installation, **Tonatiuh Ambrosetti** searches for a lost mythology through instinctive sculpture. His work merges traces of human beings with those of animals, contemplating shared histories and narratives.



Tonatiuh Ambrosetti, *Il Signore dell'Impero Invisible*, 2023.
Courtesy : Tonatiuh Ambrosetti

INVITED ARTISTS



Fabrizio Dusi, *Utopia*, 2021, céramique et or de troisième cuisson. Courtesy: Fabrizio Dusi

MBAL COLLECTION
FONDAZIONE MONTE VERITÀ COLLECTION
TONATIUH AMBROSETTI
RICCARDO ARENA
JEAN ARP / SOPHIE TAEUBER
MARCO CORDERO
OPPY DE BERNARDO
FABRIZIO DUSI
FATTUCCHIERE
FILIPPO FILLIGER & DOROTHÉE THÉBERT
OLGA FRÖBE-KAPTEYN
FRANCESCA GAGLIARDI
JOHANNA GSCHWEND & MORITZ HOSSLI
MARIA GUTA & LAUREN HURET
MAYA HOTTAREK
LISA LURATI
INGEBORG LÜSCHER
GIAIME MELONI
LUCA MENGONI
STÉPHANE MERCIER
PASCAL MURER
ELENA MURESU
UNA SZEEMANN
THE COOL COUPLE
MARCO USELI
MARIANNE VON WEREFKIN
MARY WIGMAN

MONTE VERITĀ, HISTORY



Un policier et deux « monteveritanes ». © Fondazione Monte Verità, Fondo Harald Szeemann

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Ticino became a favored destination for a group of non-conformists who wished to escape a rapidly developing industrial society. Monte Monescia, a deserted hill near the town of Ascona above Lake Maggiore, became their sanctuary and the cradle of a community seeking to escape the ideologies of both capitalism and communism. The founders reflect a European bourgeoisie in crisis and in search of freedom, among them Henry Oedenkoven, son of a wealthy Antwerp industrialist, pianist Ida Hofmann from Montenegro, artist Gusto Gräser and his brother Karl Gräser, Romans from Transylvania. Inspired by theosophy and the German-speaking lebensreform (reform of life) movement, they immediately renamed the site Monte Verità (Mount of Truth). Dressed in "reform" clothes, replacing corsets and suits with outfits that let their bodies breathe, they cultivate the land, build wooden huts and follow the principles of eurythmy by soaking up the sun. Nature is their center, and they preach its purity, interpreting it symbolically as the ultimate work of art. Their social organization was based on a cooperative and autarkic system, aiming at the unity of body and soul. Over time, Monte Verità became a meeting place for theosophists, reformers, anarchists, communists, social democrats, psychoanalysts, writers, artists, dancers and emigrants from the two world wars. Personalities such as Hermann Hesse and choreographer Rudolf

von Laban, dancers Mary Wigman and Isadora Duncan, artists Hugo Ball, Hans Arp, Marianne von Werefkin and Alexej von Jawlensky have stayed at the Monte. The Ascona hill was first home to a sanatorium, then became an artists' community around the 1920s, before being purchased by Baron Eduard von der Heydt, a German banker and art collector. The Monte Verità then became a modern hotel center with its iconic Bauhaus-style building, welcoming celebrities from artistic, political and cultural circles and many of the movement's masters such as Gropius, Albers, Bayer, Breuer, Feininger, Schlemmer, Schawinksy and Moholy-Nagy, all seduced and fascinated by the magnetism of a place where - as Ise Gropius put it - "our forehead touches the sky... ". On the Baron's death, Monte Verità was ceded to the canton of Ticino. Today, this multi-purpose institution houses a cultural and museum center, a hotel, a restaurant and a conference center. Its contemporary international reputation grew thanks to legendary Swiss curator Harald Szeemann's 1978 exhibition, *Monte Verità. Le mammelle della verità (the udders of truth)*, "a museum of the mind where every room is a utopia", which is now a permanent installation at the Casa Anatta Museum. The story of Monte Verità as a total art form continues to inspire generations of Swiss and international artists. Every year, a cultural calendar is proposed with exhibitions and meetings dedicated to art, philosophy, literature and current affairs.



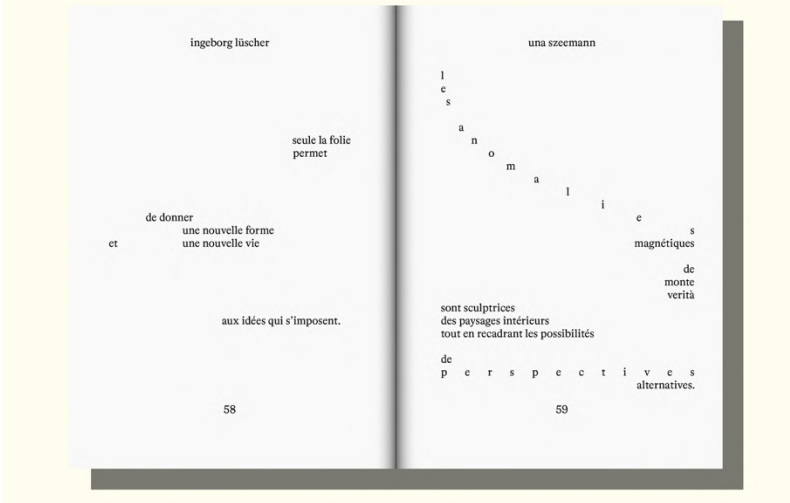
Photographie de groupe avec Mary Wigman. © Fondazione Monte Verità, Fondo Harald Szeemann

PUBLICATION



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Illustrated collection of quotations from the female figures of Monte Verità.
Design: Nicolas Polli - Mars 2024 - Quadrilingual (German, English, French, Italian) – 25 CHF, 25 €.
Paperback, 115 x 160 mm ; 257 pages ; 55 illustrations.

Book launch on Saturday 4 May at the 2024 edition of *Giardini in Arte* at Monte Verità (details in the Agenda below).
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monte verità:
a possible chronology

1869–1920
after a stay in le locle, the russian anarchist michail bakunin settles in locarno. from 1873 to 1874, he lives at the baronata in minusio and turns locarno into a meeting point and place of exile for anarchist theorists. three groups of anarchists can be identified in the area: the group that opposed marx and formed around bakunin and his friends from the jura area between 1869 and 1875, composed of italians and russians; the anarchist community of monte verità from around 1904; and the fontana martina experience of the 1920s.

1875
after years of travelling in africa, europe, america, and asia, the occultist helena petrovna blavatsky, along with colonel h.s. olcott, founds the theosophical society. in 1878 she and olcott move the society headquarters to india, where she herself settles for some time.

1885–1928
the german-born russian baroness antoinette de saint-léger becomes the owner of the brissago islands and her house a salon for artists and intellectuals. visitors include the writer james joyce and the painter filippo franzoni.

1889
countess constance wachtmeister, a close friend of blavatsky, and alfredo pioda, a national councillor and theosophist from locarno, with the german physician and astrologer franz hartmann, plan the foundation of the laic theosophical convent "fraternitas" on the monescia hill, later renamed monte verità. pioda, owner of the hill, is subsequently forced to abandon the project because of his role in the 1890 liberal revolution in ticino. theosophy's laws of karma were at play on the hill, then, even before the birth of the monte verità colony.

1899–1900
after meeting the swiss naturopath arnold rikli in a sanatorium in the summer of 1899, six young theosophists, followers of the *lebensreform* ("reform of life") and of tolstoy's ideas, buy the monescia hill from alfredo pioda in the autumn of 1900. they found the monte verità *vegetabiliana* cooperative, which soon becomes a sanatorium and nursing home.
ida hofmann, a piano teacher and feminist from montenegro, henri oedenkoven, the son of a wealthy industrialist from antwerp, the gräser brothers from transylvania—karl, a former soldier in the austro-hungarian army, and the artist gusto—the berliner lotte hattemer, and the singer jenny hofmann, ida's sister, sow the seeds of what is to become the hill of utopias. starting with the regeneration of the body, they aim for an overall ideal and social reorganisation of life: self-produced vegan food, heliotherapy and nudism, air-light huts, comfortable clothes made of natural fibres, feminist precepts, and the abolition of capital letters in spelling.

1904
a group of individualist anarchists and bohemians arrive in ascona through the anarcho-syndicalists and the doctor raphael friedeberg. the german writer erich mühsam hopes ascona will become a republic for all

helena blavatsky

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64

helena blavatsky

pronunciare una parola
significa evocare un pensiero
e renderlo presente:

la potenza magnetica della parola umana

è
l'inizio

di ogni manifestazione
nel mondo occulto.

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isadora duncan

i
was born
by the sea,
and i have noticed
that all the great events
of my life have taken place
by the sea.

my first idea of movement,
of dance,
certainly came from

the rhythm of the waves.

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olga fröbe-kapteyn

if we have
within us a vision that is too clear
of our work
and its evolution,

we often end up becoming
an o b s t a c l e
to ourselves.
we must therefore avoid drawing too sharp
and defined

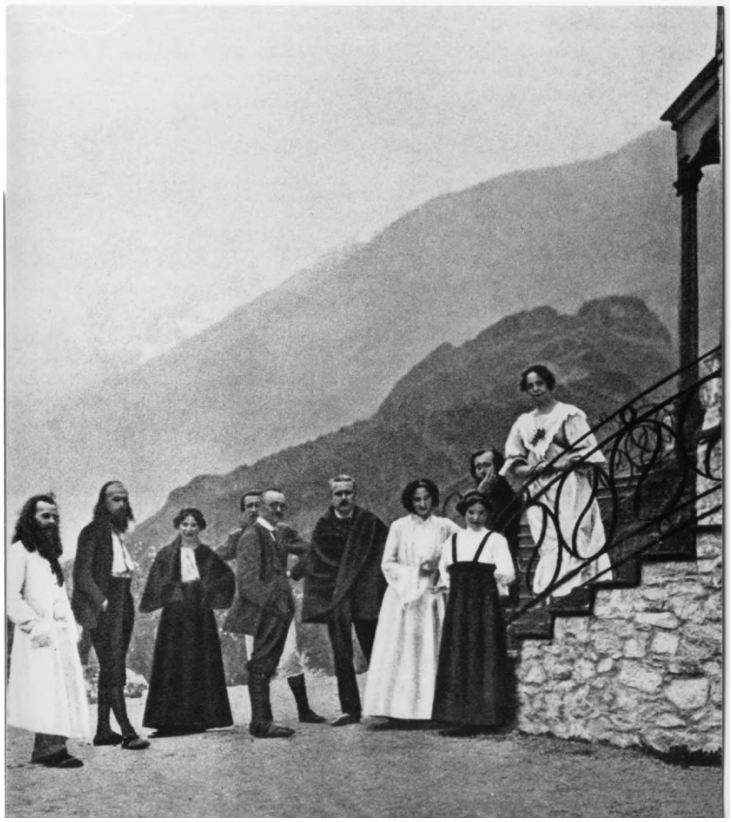
b o u n d a r i e s

and instead follow
the dynamic of the idea [...].

even in science,
our goal is life,
not immobility.

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AGENDA



Portrait de groupe avec Hermann Hesse. © Fondazione Monte Verità, Fondo Harald Szeemann

FRI 22 March | from 6.00 pm
Vernissage + DJ set
Opening of *la scia del monte ou les utopistes magnétiques* in the company of the artists and curators. The evening will feature tours of the exhibition, followed by a vegetarian aperitif and DJ set "Rêvità" by DJ leMox.
Free admission.

SUN 7 April, 5 May, 2 June, 7 July, 4 August, 1 September | 2.00 pm
Guided tours
Guided tours of the exhibition take place on the first Sunday of every month.
Free admission.

SAT 27 April | 2.00 pm
Conversation with Una Szeemann + *L'hypnose du déséquilibre*
MBAL invites you to an in-conversation with artist Una Szeemann, moderated by Federica Chiocchetti. From 3:30 pm, join artist Lauren Huret for a special event that includes readings and hypnosis.
Conversation is 60 minutes, followed by a 45-minute performance.

Free admission.

SAT 4 May
Giardini in Arte 2024
Coinciding with the exhibition, celebrate the publication of *Les voix magnétiques*, as part of the 2024 edition of *Giardini in Arte* (3-5 May), an event that brings together nature, art and culture. The event will take place at Monte Verità (Strada Collina 84, 6612 Ascona). More info to come on monteverita.org

SUN 12 May | 2.00 pm
Celebrate your mum at the museum!
In honor of Mother's Day, moms are in the spotlight at MBAL! Bring yours to the museum for special events, including a guided tour and a creative workshop for the whole family.
Free admission.

SUN 19 May | from 11.00 am
Flash guided tours + Screening
Spend Museum Day at MBAL! Discover the exhibition *La scia del monte* all day long with flash guided tours, then immerse yourself in the history of Monte Verità with the documentary film *Freak Out!* (Carl Javér, 2014), which will be screened at the Ancienne Poste (Le Locle) at 5.00 pm.
Museum Day events. Free admission.

SAT 1st June | 11.00 am
Les états mentaux généraux
MBAL, in partnership with Club 44, invites various speakers for three roundtable discussions on mental health, meditation and shamanism. Organized by Federica Chiocchetti, Samuel Socquet (*La médecine et l'invisible*, RTS) and Marie Léa Zwahlen (Club 44).
A performance by The Cool Couple and a biodanza workshop by body therapist Elisa Ghiringhelli, in collaboration with the Guesthouse (Le Locle), will also punctuate the day.
Registration recommended.

SUN 2 June | 3.30 pm
Celebrate your dad at the museum!
In honor of Father's Day, dads are in the spotlight at MBAL! Invite yours to the museum for special activities, including a guided tour and a creative workshop for the whole family.
Free admission.

SAT 22 June | 2.00 pm
Hypnotic
Discover Ericksonian hypnosis in this special workshop led by hypnotherapist, artist and writer Marie-Luce Ruffieux.
Registration required.

SAT 27 July | 6.30 pm
Vernissage The Cool Couple
Located atop the hills of Ascona, discover the new site-specific installation by artist duo The Cool Couple at Monte Verità (Strada Collina 84, 6612 Ascona). More info to come on monteverita.org

THU 5 September | 8.15 pm
À l'est des rêves
Club 44, in partnership with MBAL and as part of the *États mentaux généraux*, invites anthropologist and essayist Nastassja Martin to share her research in this [hour-long] presentation/discussion.
The event will take place at Club 44 (Rue de la Serre 64, 2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds). Registration required.

SUN 8 September | 11.30 am
Yoga at the museum
As part of the European Cultural Heritage Days, delve deeper into the exhibition through a relaxing yoga session that combines mindfulness and slow looking.
Comfortable clothing recommended. Free admission, registration recommended.

Sun 15 September | from 11.00 am
Finissage
The day's program includes a guided tour, an introduction to a Tarot of Marseilles reading with artist and curator Delphine Bedel, a musical performance, and an aperitif to mark the end of the exhibition.
Free admission.

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Wednesday-Sunday: 11.00 am–5.00 pm
Free admission on the first Sunday of the month

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