

Fondazione Antonio Ratti

Antonio's Dream: A Journey Through Art and Textile

10 October 2021 – 31 January 2022

Villa Olmo Villa del Grumello Villa Sucota
Kilometer of Knowledge
Como

Curated by
Lorenzo Benedetti, Annie Ratti and Maddalena Terragni

The exhibition traces the work, life, and passions of the Como entrepreneur Antonio Ratti: art, culture, and entrepreneurship returns to Como reactivating and enhancing a significant public space for the city

*Knowledge of the past generates new ideas
and creates new forms of beauty*
— Antonio Ratti

Como, 6 May 2021

Fondazione Antonio Ratti announces the opening of the exhibition *Antonio's Dream: A Journey Through Art and Textile* in Como, a project connecting the vision and history of the pioneer Antonio Ratti with his hometown Como, the city where his concept of entrepreneurship and trade culture developed, leaving a precious legacy that is still alive today.

The exhibition, curated by Lorenzo Benedetti, Annie Ratti, and Maddalena Terragni is hosted from 10 October 2021 to 31 January 2022 in the halls and parks of Villa Olmo, Villa del Grumello, Villa Sucota, and other city venues. The show establishes a dialogue with the marvelous historical Como landscape and the suggestive path known as the Kilometer of Knowledge.

Juxtaposing ancient textiles, contemporary artworks, and archive material, the exhibition traces the life,

work, and vision of the patron Antonio Ratti, one of the greatest entrepreneurs who, after World War II, reconstructed, with and through his company Ratti S.p.A., Italy's industrial sector inspired by a profound philanthropic and cultural vision.

The third exhibition dedicated to Antonio Ratti (following the two previous exhibitions at Palazzo Te in Mantua in 2017 and at the Baths of Diocletian in Rome in 2018), entitled *Antonio's Dream: A Journey Through Art and Textile*, explores the vision and history of the entrepreneur, expanding the project and relating directly with those places where Antonio Ratti lived and worked throughout his life. The exhibition itinerary explores public and private spaces of great interest as well as the headquarters of the Foundation created by Antonio Ratti, where his textile collection is kept today. Artworks realized specifically for the occasion, help to create a cohesive visual relationship between artistic research, ancient textiles, the story of Antonio Ratti's life, and the indoor and outdoor spaces of the exhibition venues.

Once again, this exhibition reaffirms Antonio Ratti's idea that experience and knowledge paired with art and experimentation are fundamental tools for understanding one's time and creating new value.

Starting point and heart of the exhibition is Villa Olmo, a few steps away from the city center, where contemporary artworks interact with ancient textiles set in the neoclassical framework of the villa overlooking

the lake. The story and vision of Antonio Ratti are revealed through the exhibition setup designed by Philippe Rahm architects and the graphic design of Wolfe Hall, weaving together textiles, documents, archive material, and works of contemporary art. This display highlights how textile and artistic productions are part of the same cultural vision built upon historical heritage, research, talent, and innovation.

The exhibition then spreads across the gardens of Villa Olmo, extending across the entire Kilometer of Knowledge, enriching the panoramic path with works created specifically for this landscape. Alongside Villa Olmo, are also included in the exhibition itinerary

Villa Grumello and Villa Sucota – home to Fondazione Antonio Ratti – which are part of the Kilometer of Knowledge. The Foundation's park – which since 2016 has been the setting for installations by the artists who have collaborated with the institution over the years – and its building welcome another section of the exhibition. Lastly, the exhibition reaches the city of Como in various locations across the historic center, such as Teatro Sociale, with artworks and performances.

Antonio's Dream: A Journey Through Art and Textile is an opportunity not only to tell the life and the story of Antonio Ratti, but also to embrace his very idea of spreading and sharing cultural values.

Antonio Ratti

Antonio Ratti, entrepreneur and patron from Como, creator of the homonymous company and Foundation, based his business on research and innovation with constant attention to the social context and the quality of the working environment. In his work, cultural and artistic activities have always been an essential element towards the creation of a high-quality product. Antonio Ratti's vision unfolds from the assumption that textiles are, in fact, a cultural product. In the pioneering complex designed by Tito Spini in 1958 for Ratti S.p.A., the Palazzina dei Servizi Sociali was used as a canteen during the day, and in the evening, it would host concerts, theatrical performances, courses, and debates open to the workers. The need to find inspiration for the creation of new textile designs led Antonio Ratti to collect antique textiles from all over the world. In 1985, his prestigious textile collection

became the heart of the cultural Foundation that still bears his name today. Here, in addition to the study and conservation of the textile archive and collection, the CSAV – Artists' Research Laboratory program is held every year, where young artists from all over the world have the opportunity to deepen their practices meeting the great masters of the contemporary art scene. Over the years, Fondazione Antonio Ratti has become a reference point for research, an idea incubator, and a place open to exchange and experimentation.



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