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Antichi e nuovi percorsi
della pietra trentina

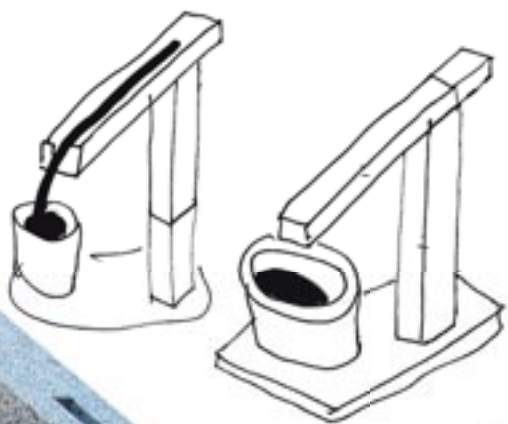
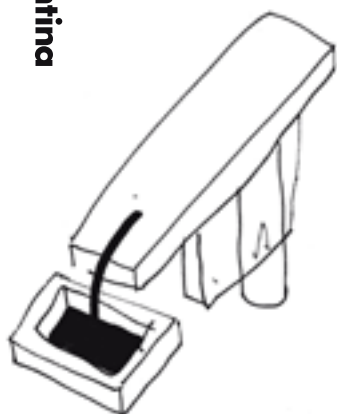
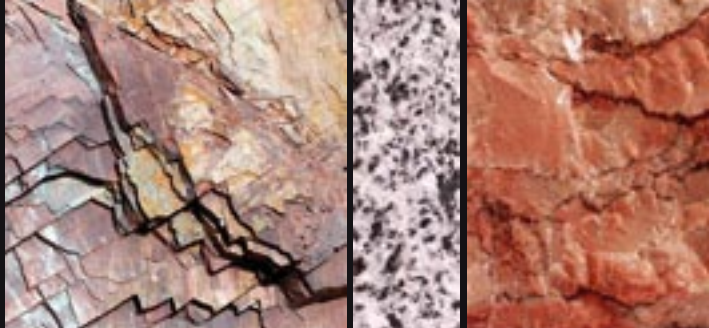
Men and Stone

nature and artefact
among landscape and design

Trento, Palazzo Roccabruna
23rd May – 29th June

The exhibition develops along an enchanting path, examining the theme from different perspectives – from the main local types of stone to the tools used by the stone workers and layers, from industrial processing to the exploitation of the extraction sites, from the fountains designed by the great masters of contemporary architecture to the stones used to construct the city monuments.

The visitors are guided on a fascinating tour, discovering a 1000 year-old tradition, which still plays the role of an effective window on the contemporary age.



Italy is a territory rich in traditions, natural landscapes and realities which speak the language of history and nature.

Trentino is part of this territory — in particular, Trentino stones and the men who work them, transforming nature into artefact, represent a unique heritage which has resisted the standardizing effects of globalization.

The exhibition, “**Men and Stone: nature and artefact among landscape and design**”, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Trento and by the Autonomous Province of Trento, is to be held in the extraordinary Palazzo Roccabruna, located in the historic town centre of Trento. The exhibition develops along a cultural and architectural path, revealing the tools and a series of “age-old” materials, which still have a relevance today, and in particular the results recently achieved with the implementation of construction projects and cultural initiatives which have involved the “men of stone”, architects, designers, University students from all over the world, and photographers. For a couple of years, the Trentino stones have been the focus point of a system of design projects which has enabled the territory to express the modern world with languages *par excellence* - design, architecture, and visual communication.

It is the project which enhances the materials.

The exhibition presents the different stone types specific to the Trentino territory, the natural landscapes, the tools and the great artisans who have transformed nature into artefact: knowledge as the engine of change.

Knowledge, in this case, represents, above all, the contributions made by the following architects and designers: **Michela Baldessari, Mario Botta, Pierluigi Cerri, Alessandro Guerriero, Michele de Lucchi, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Ettore Sottsass Jr**, who were invited to interpret a typical element of the Trentino landscape, the fountain, and therefore the water as an irreplaceable resource of this territory that represents contemporary reality without relinquishing its historical role.

Secondly, memory means also to represent the stony landscape through the eyes of two illustrious photographers, **Mario De Biasi** and **Enrico Minasso**, who have visited the quarries, towns and urban spaces created by stone.

It is no coincidence that the fountain, considered a symbol of Trentino Stone, designed by Ettore Sottsass, is located in front of Palazzo Roccabruna: it reminds visitors of the real significance of the optimizing of the utility of a given material, maintaining the form and function which the object, in this case the fountain, has been effecting for centuries.

A further step in the logic lying behind the exhibition, was taken by inviting the noted architect **Luca Scacchetti** to embark on a particular journey through the Trentino landscape where the stone comes from, and by having him describe through his watercolours who we are and

where we come from. A “*plein air*” cultural project, consisting of the visual impressions of an “ancient traveller” on one hand, and by the ability, on the other, to draw imaginary architectures, already present in nature but reborn from the ancient techniques of the 19th century painters.

The exhibition, “Men and Stone”, is addressed to the local inhabitants and in particular to the “wayfarers” who are coming to Trento in an attempt to identify from among the stone materials, the tools and the “men of stone” (quarry workers, stone-cutters, designers, architects, future Italian and foreign planners) those skills that create, in full respect of nature, the languages, constructions and artwork that are characterised by a quality unparalleled elsewhere.

“Men and Stone: nature and artefact among landscape and design” is an exhibition oriented towards the future of the Trentino stone. This material is destined to resist any attempts to be imitated or artificially duplicated because the men implementing the stone project are unique and inimitable, just as is the territory they were born in.

Walter Benjamin’s postulation: “the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction” is not applicable to Trentino stone; it will never be duplicated because each stone and each object made from stone will always be different from any other; always new and innovative, within an endless chain, where nature offers men the possibility to express “the spirit of their time”, while maintaining its own symbolic and cultural autonomy.

The “Men and Stone: nature and artefact among landscape and design” exhibition tells a modern-day story, in the equilibrium between nature and artefact, the infinite and the finite, the aesthetic dimension and the history of man’s creations.

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