



LA COMMEDIA UMANA

Ai Weiwei

25 Marzo – 3 Aprile • Terme di Diocleziano

**From 25 March the Museo Nazionale Romano
at The Baths of Diocletian**

La Commedia Umana by Ai Weiwei

**The monumental new artwork from the Chinese artist, activist, and
multifaceted conceptual author**

Press release

Rome, 11 March 2022 - From **25 March to 3 April 2022** the **Museo Nazionale Romano** (National Roman Museum) at **The Baths of Diocletian** will host the artwork **La Commedia Umana** by **Ai Weiwei**, one of the greatest contemporary artists who expresses his principles in the most disparate art forms, from sculpture to photography, from architecture to installations, to the publication of his autobiography and the stage direction of "Turandot," presented at the **Teatro dell'Opera** from **25 March** in conjunction with the exhibition event.

*"This magnificent and disturbing work of art, is both modern and highly topical," says **Stéphane Verger**, Director of the National Roman Museum. "In the largest bath complex in all of antiquity, the Baths of Diocletian, it stands in the same hall, where an ancient mosaic bears the inscription "γνώθι σεαυτόν" "know thyself", which admonishes and exhorts Weiwei's powerful message in La Commedia Umana, that speaks to us of death, reconfigured, to celebrate life in the same transfixing moment."*

Composed of more than two thousand pieces of hand-blown and fused glass by the glass maestros of **Berengo Studio** in Murano, *La Commedia Umana* is an enormous chandelier of colossal dimensions (more than 6 metres wide by almost 9 metres high) that with its four tons of weight descends from the ceiling of one of the halls of the ancient Baths: one of the largest sculptures ever created in Murano glass unveiled in the largest thermal complex in all of antiquity.

*"Glass is a material that continually performs its own mortality," **Adriano Berengo**, founder of Berengo Studio observes, "it is one of the reasons I think so many artists are now being drawn to the medium. Since I began Berengo Studio in Murano just over thirty years ago, in 1989, we've*

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seen a real renaissance in the world of glass. Contemporary artists are no longer afraid to experiment with all it offers as a material for sculpture. It has this unique quality, its own weighted symbolism. It has been an intensely personal journey for me to witness the germ of Ai Weiwei's original idea grow."

The exhibition is produced and organised by the **Museo Nazionale Romano** and **Berengo Studio** along with the **Fondazione Berengo**, and also welcomes the collaboration of **Galleria Continua** for its launch. The installation inside the Baths of Diocletian, one of the prestigious venues of the National Roman Museum, will be open to the public from 25 March till 3 April 2022.

The result of a three year collaboration, the artwork is a twisted monument, a cascade of bones, skulls and organs made from black glass. A manifesto which, as the artist observes, "attempts to speak of death in order to celebrate life." Indeed, in glass the sculpture reproduces the contents of a body unleashed from its skin, when it is stripped bare with its interiority exposed for all to see.

Through his work, Weiwei, whose artistic creations and political activity are inseparable, sends a clear message about the mutability of life and at the same time sends a warning to think of the future, to strive for something more for the legacy of humanity beyond the bones we shall leave behind.

Official press images can be downloaded from the following link > <https://bit.ly/34Klv3q>

Press Conference

March 24, 2022 - 12.00 noon, Baths of Diocletian

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Hours

From Tuesday to Sunday 11 - 18. Monday closed



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The ticket office closes at 17.

Tickets > Baths of Diocletian

Full price € 8 (+ € 2 online booking fee)

Reduced price ticket € 2 (+ € 2 online booking fee)

Combined ticket for access to all the sites of the National Roman Museum

One ticket allows one entrance to the Baths of Diocletian, Palazzo Altemps, and Crypta Balbi and two entrances to the Palazzo Massimo and will be valid for 1 week from the day of purchase.

Full price € 12 (+ € 2 online booking fee)

Reduced € 8 (+ € 2 online booking fee)