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Randall Weeks, *Landscape Intersection* (2010). Libros esculpidos, madera, hierro / books, wood, iron, 1,8 x3x3 m. Cortesía / courtesy of Federica Schiavo Gallery (Roma) / Foto / photo: Giorgio Benni.



Rosa Barba, *Outwardly from Earth's center* (2007). Pellicula de 16 mm transferida a video / 16 mm film transferred to video, 21'58". Cortesía de la artista / courtesy of the artist.

is worth it. Designed by Zaha Hadid, it's won two of the most prestigious architecture awards: the Stirling Prize (Royal Institute British Architects) and the World Architecture Festival (Barcelona, Spain). It was named "best building of 2010" for being "a building that connects in a dynamic way with the city's volumes. It's an unwound Guggenheim with ribbons of connective space. It's a building that will be talked about in architectural history for the next 50 years." Rome's art scene can be divided into two epochs: before and after MAXXI. Below I comment on other of Rome's principal actors: the artists.

There has been talk for some years that Rome could become Italy's contemporary art capital, which Milan and Turin have so far been, the former for its art market, the latter for the vitality of its institutions. For instance, they've both opened numerous galleries, foundations and art centers. It's not true that nothing happened in Rome prior to MAXXI; it's enough to recall the famous art movements that arose here, the *transavanguardia* and the San Lorenzo School; but the news is that the scene now seems more homogeneous and structured. It also probably has something to do with the new ways of creating and informing; the fact is, if you visit Rome today, not to see the Coliseum, The Trevi Fountain or the Vatican, but to enjoy its contemporary art, you have a lot of options, for the quantity and above all the quality of the projects.

It isn't the place to comment on MAXXI's program, nor that of Rome's other important museum, the surprising MACRO, run by the city. The new MACRO, also housed in an architecturally interesting building, features some local art, and wonderful works of contemporary Roman art can be seen there, while the rest is dedicated to a steady and very interesting program of recent national and international art. It's enough to mention the spacious Sala Terrena Hall, which, at 1.200 m² is one of Europe's largest (some say it's only surpassed by The Tate London's Turbine Hall). This "new" museum also organizes events which are very popular

among young people with a passion and hunger for the latest really genuine art. Maybe they feel a real need... you can't live on ruins alone!

For a number of years now Rome has also been home to The Road to Contemporary Art, a contemporary art fair organized by the same company which managed Artissima in Turin in the past. The fair's previous editions (it takes place in May) was spread about various venues, creating a certain amount of confusion. But the most recent, located in the Mattatoio (Slaughterhouse) was a total success. It took place in a unique and very original venue, and besides attracting very good galleries, created a relaxed and carefully tended atmosphere. I think it will soon become Italy's most important contemporary art fair.

In Rome there are numerous and very good collectors, and two of them have decided to open foundations: the Nomas Foundation, which will house the Sciarretta collection, and the Fondazione Giuliani, containing the collection of its namesake. They are distinct from traditional foundations in that they're not limited to simply displaying their collections, but also feature excellent programs with bold visions of the future. Nomas focuses on a program characterized by collaboration and flexibility; the term 'nomad', included in its name, indicates the experimental nature of its activities, and points to the fact that the collection remains subordinate to the program. The Fondazione Giuliani also subordinates the value and originality of its collection, regarding it as an enormous archive that can be viewed and modified according to circumstances, seeing it, for all intents and purposes, as material for research. In this regard, the presence of the e-flux video rental archive last spring and summer was significant.

Rome is the city of foreign academies, public institutions that contribute, besides the presence of numerous artists, an extremely interesting international cultural agenda. Their exhibitions are devoted to either young grant recipients (thus being a testing ground >