

PRESS RELEASE

SALVATORE ARANCIO

SHASTA

OPENING THURSDAY 17 FEBRUARY, 6.00 – 9.00 PM
18 FEBRUARY – 31 MARCH 2011

FEDERICA SCHIAVO GALLERY
PIAZZA MONTEVECCHIO 16 ROME

Federica Schiavo Gallery is proud to present *Shasta*, Salvatore Arancio's first solo exhibition in Rome. For the three spaces on the gallery premises Arancio has conceived of a new series of works. They follow his ongoing interest and investigation into ideas of nature and its merging with science, alongside the ability of myth and legend to introduce an exploration of the mystical.

In the first room scientific-geological found images playfully interact with the gallery's architectural structure. Manipulated and re-invented, they induce subjective reflections on natural phenomena following the artist's interest in apocalyptic representation.

In the second room the split screen video installation *Shasta*, originally shot on Super 8 film, takes inspiration from a Native American tribe's account of the creation of Mount Shasta in California. The timeless, epic, visual, and sound elements of the installation stimulate ideas of narrative and storytelling in order to create a sense of awe seen as a metaphor for human inefficacy against the forces of nature.

In the last room the large photographic print *Luffåh* reproduces a found image of a mandrake root with disproportionate dimensions. By creating a contrast with the same image recreated as a sculptural piece in the first room, Arancio seeks to question ideas of perception, authorship and reproduction. The root's lysergic powers and uncanny man-like shape have been the source for the creation of many myths through the ages.

Salvatore Arancio's artistic signature is photo-etching, but he works across a range of media such as sculpture, collage, animation and video. His main interest lies in the potential of images. Departing from their literal meaning, he creates new juxtapositions that are both beautifully evocative and deeply disquieting. He looks to nature and science for his sources of inspiration, while unsettling any hint of the sublime by re-framing the images and the viewer's experience. His constructed landscapes contain a sense of both the familiar and the unknown that enhances their symbolic readings and implications.

*The Chief of the Sky Spirits was cold in the Above World.
One day he used a rotating stone to drill a hole in the sky.
Once the hole was finished he pushed down snow and ice.
The snow and ice piled up and almost reached the sky.
Then, the Chief of the Sky Spirits stepped down to the Earth.
He created the trees, rivers, animals, fish, and birds.
He even brought his family down and they all lived in the mountains.
The sparks and smoke from their fires blew out from the hole on the top of their lodge.
When the Chief of the Sky Spirits tossed a big log on the fire sparks flew up even higher and the Earth tremble.
The Chief eventually put out the fire and returned to the Above World.*

from Dorothy Vitaliano, *Legends of the Earth*, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1973, pp. 170-171

Salvatore Arancio was born in Catania, Italy in 1974. He lives and works in London. He received his MA in Photography from the Royal College of Art and is currently a teacher at the London College of Communication. Recent exhibitions have included "Sentinel - PPS//Meetings#4", Palazzo Riso - Museo d'Arte Contemporanea della Sicilia, Palermo, Italy, 2011; "SI-Sindrome Italiana" at Le Magasin-Centre National d'Art contemporain de Grenoble, France, 2010; "An Account of the Composition of the Earth's Crust: Dirt Cones and Lava Bombs", Frame, Frieze Art Fair, London, UK, 2010; "Catastrophe? Quelle Catastrophe!" Manif d'Art 5, The Quebec City Biennial, Engramme, Quebec City, Canada, 2010; Prague Biennale 4, Karlin Hall, Prague, Czech Republic, 2009; "I giovani che visitano le nostre rovine non vi vedono che uno stile", GAM-Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Turin, Italy, 2009. Arancio won The Elephant Trust Grant, London, and The Art Omi Residency, New York, in 2011, the Premio 'New York' in 2009 and was selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries in 2006.