

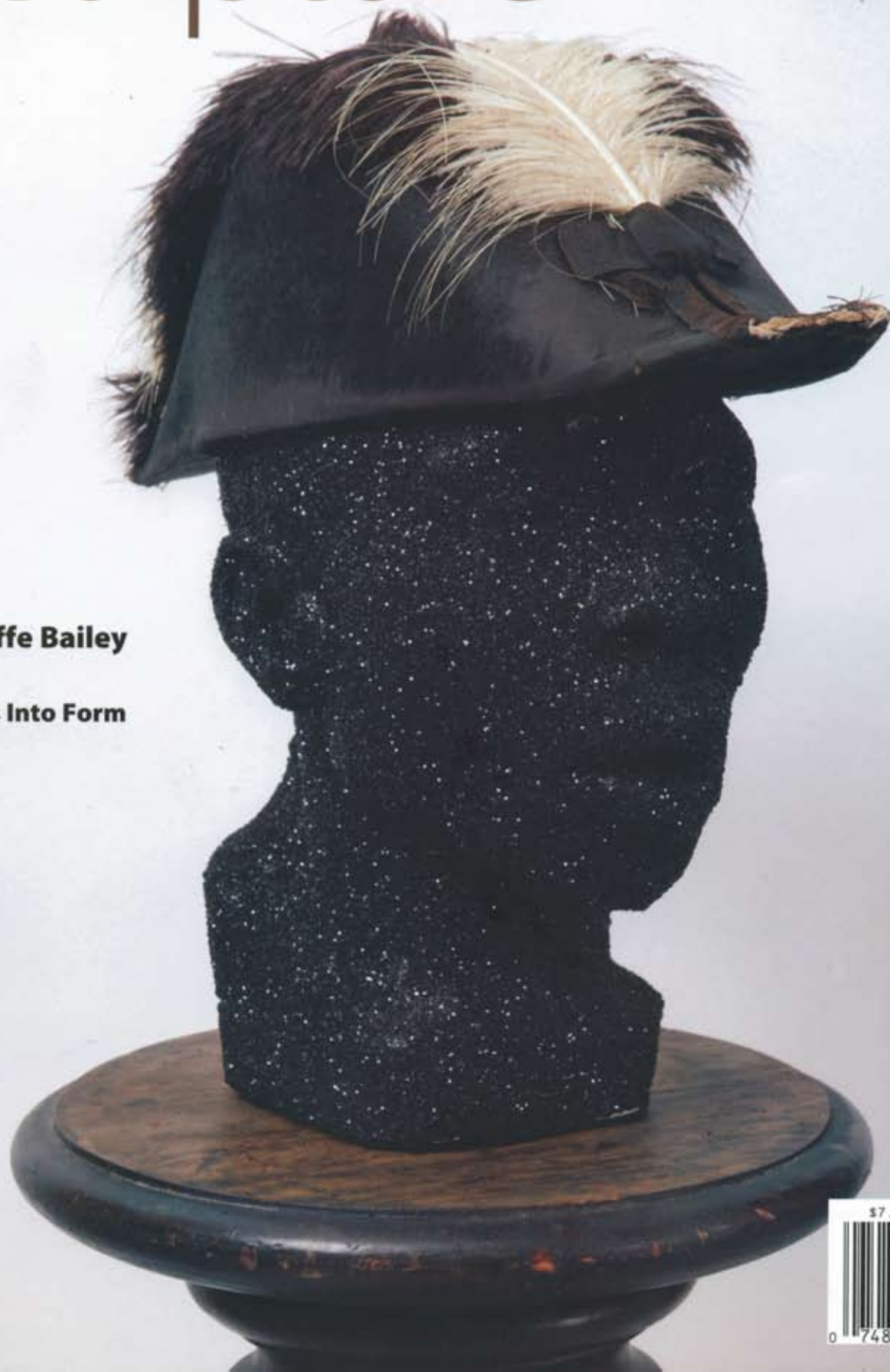
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Fattoria di Celle: 30 Years and New Beginnings

by John O'Brien



Since 1982, Giuliano Gori's Fattoria di Celle has been an essential destination for anyone interested in large-scale, site-specific contemporary art. The permanent works situated on the grounds and in the buildings of the extensive property span many generations and countries. Works are located in the villa, the nearby chapel,

and throughout an English-style park, an area of roughly 60 acres that includes a number of 19th-century follies such as an aviary, a tea house, two small lakes with crags, and a waterfall. The collection, which is remarkable for its size as well as quality, requires lots of time and energy to discover in its entirety, but it is well worth it.

This year, the Collezione Gori celebrates its 30th anniversary and begins a new phase of activity. At least for the immediate future, there are no plans to add to the collection of permanent, site-specific outdoor works. Those in place will remain, but attention will now focus on restoring the historical buildings, which house parts of the permanent collection, in order to accommodate temporary exhibitions. Gori continues to commission artworks, but for a different setting, Pistoia Hospital, where the new works expand on the collection's prescient fusion of landscape and art and apply the idea of site-specificity beyond its borders.

Since 2001, several new outdoor works have been installed. Jean-Michel Folon's *The Tree of Golden Fruit* (2002) is situated inside the aviary. The large cast tree, with seven arms and cupped hands offering food and water to the birds, transforms the small building from a cage

into a sanctuary. Birds are free to come and go from the open structure, and they can eat and rest before resuming their peregrinations. An existing boxwood tree, already growing within the aviary, is enhanced by this generous, artificial *doppelgänger*.

Daniel Buren's *La Cabane Éclatée aux 4 Salles* (2005) is located in a clearing and not immediately visible to visitors. Partially surrounded by a fence and entirely obscured by vegetation, this very large geometric structure sits open under the sky like an abandoned house. The structure would probably appear bigger if the exterior walls were not completely covered with mirrors, but these highly reflective planes make it almost disappear into the natural surroundings. Inside, the space is divided into four equal spaces or rooms, each with two mirrored walls and two different, brightly colored walls. A door-like opening in each room interrupts its exterior wall, and the volume of what would be the door appears as a solid rectangle placed directly in front of the opening. Seen from "inside," these rectangular plinths (the title describes them as "explosions") take on the colors of the walls, while their exterior faces are mirrored. Though complex to describe, the play of light, color, and optical illusion in this work magisterially informs and confounds perceptual orientation, as a highly ordered set of physical constructs seems to add up to a non-place or multiple superimposed places.

Indoor works have been commissioned recently as well. Anselm Kiefer's *Cette obscure clarté qui tombe des étoiles* (2009) is located in two adjoin-

Above: Jean-Michel Folon, *The Tree of Golden Fruit*, 2002. Detail of aviary installation. Below and detail: Daniel Buren, *La Cabane Éclatée aux 4 Salles*, 2005. Mirrors, paint, and marble, 4 x 8.75 x 8.75 meters.





Above: Anne and Patrick Poirier, *The Death of Ephyialtes*, 1982. Bronze and marble, head: 2.4 x 3 meters. Right: Claudio Parmiggiani, *A Mosaic for a Hospital*, 2005. Marble, 94 square meters. Below: Hidetoshi Nagasawa, *Garden with Stones*, 2005. Marble and stone, 7.4 x 4.7 meters.



ing rooms—a large one below and a smaller one above. His monumentally scaled installation takes its title from a verse in Corneille's "Le Cid," meaning "The dark light that falls from the stars." This is a reference to Kiefer's relationship with France, which offers him respite from the weight of German history. The two large paintings depict celestial maps

in which the dark sky is crisscrossed by the geometry of constellations and marked with the alpha-numeric system used by NASA to identify stars. Below, astronomical observatories are sketched in paint, and other geometries are visible on the ground, thus inverting and confounding the traditional relationship between earth and sky. The smaller, upstairs room con-

tains a heap of lead books surrounded by fragments of a broken terra-cotta vase. The Hebrew phrase "Shevirah hakelim" is written on the wall, signifying "the breakage of the receptacles." Kiefer appears to be commenting obliquely on the chaos of creation, whether in a geophysical/metaphysical event or in the making of art.

Claudio Parmiggiani's *An artwork for Celle* (2001) consists of a small chamber divided into four parts by four lances suspended perpendicularly from the floor, ceiling, and walls. At the cross-shaped nexus, which occurs in front of a window with a view of the surrounding countryside, a cast iron heart is held up in space. Parmiggiani removed the shutters from the window so that the outdoors can never be entirely shut out; the metal heart is always framed against the backdrop of the Italian countryside. Both an homage to and a critique of the durable iron ore drawn from the surrounding land and transformed into instruments of war, it is also a monument to beauty.

In a very personal contribution to public art in Tuscany, Giuliano Gori worked with the studio of architect Gianni Vannetti in situating a number of new site-specific works at the Dialysis Pavilion of Pistoia Hospital, where his wife was treated. Here, art functions as a humanizing element and a cultural bridge between the hospital and the city. A wall work by Sol LeWitt and modified floors by Claudio Parmiggiani, as well as sculptural/architectural interventions by Robert Morris (a curved metal entrance gate, covered with wisteria), Daniel Buren (a series of dividing walls and doors), and Hidetoshi Nagasawa (bridges over three interior Zen gardens) enhance the environment. This remarkable hospital project marks quite a shift from commissioning art on private property. What is wonderfully striking about Giuliano Gori's passion is how it has morphed over time, maintaining a relationship with grandness while seeking stability in a humble, direct connection between people and places.

