



the Moon  
in the Well

A project by

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Realized by

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A night long ago Hodja walked near a well when he felt the urge to look inside. Astonished, he saw the reflection of the moon in the water and exclaimed: "The moon has fallen into the well. I must save it somehow!" He looked around and picked up a rope with a hook, threw it into the well and shouted: "Grab the hook, moon, and hold it tight! I'll get you out." The rope caught in a rock inside the well and Hodja pulled it to him with all his strength. Suddenly the hook freed itself from the rock and Hodja ended up lying on the ground. He turned his eyes to the sky, and he saw the moon above him. "What an effort, but it was worth it, I managed to free the moon from the well," he said with a sigh of relief.

The narrative of the work is grafted to the ancient fable of the Turkish philosopher Nasreddin Hoca (XIII century).

The SPACE defined by the cylinder is a primordial architectural sign: it is marked, drawn, and it represents an essential FORM of demarcation that can be crossed. The cylinder is TRANSPARENCY penetrated by light, a skin made by glass that allows everyone to see through it, a dematerialized fence that lets the interior visible.

It is a phenomenal, structural transparency, which allows the simultaneous perception of the different positions in the space and the interpenetration of all the components in these fundamental dialectics between the reflection of the image and the existence of the matter. It is transparency as directness of meaning, which does not distinguish between form and content, between object and message: an artistic gesture that is directly identified with the synesthetic and immanent sensorial experience of the work.

The cylinder is the WELL, the threshold of passage, the door that connects two worlds: what is above the earth with what is in the bowels of the earth, passing from light to darkness, and vice versa. The Italian word *pozzo* derives from the Latin one *puteus*, and in Hebrew language it also means *woman* and *bride*: it is an access between earth and sky, a vertical alternation of ascent and rhythmic descent, symbol of transformation, fecundation and rebirth. Cyclic research and introspection with a purifying and initiatory function. In the well there is the life-giving water, that is a salvific element in all traditional iconography.

The water in the well is also a MIRROR: it is able to reflect the sky, it is a *stable* water and it is not rippled; the water is stabilized, fixed, and protected by the well. However, during some special nights, when the

MOON is very high in the sky, it can also reflect it: so the well will be a *mirror of the soul*, in the depths of the earth.

The moon has always been a symbol related to the water, the soul and its reflecting power and its cyclical and changeable trait. Even Pythagoras had a magic mirror that he presented to the moon before making his divinations.

And the calm water surface represents the first natural mirror that man has encountered. The first instrument to look at the image of himself: not the exact image, but the *symmetrical* one. The mirror has the ability to let live a world almost *identical* to the living one: it *overturns* the truth, and gives back a projected vision.

Therefore our true image could be just the one that we can see in the mirror, and not our pictures or portraits, which we have the habit of consider as the real ones. Mirroring ourselves, really knowing ourselves is scary. For this reason the image of ourselves in the mirror is often disquieting. We risk losing ourselves or finding ourselves again.

The historical vocation of San Servolo Island is here interpreted in the form of art; and it is just the work, through its ability to unveil the truth of existing reality, which offers the chance to find, behind the *imago*, also the truth of our unique human condition.

There is so much loneliness in that gold.  
The moon these nights is not the moon  
the first Adam saw. Long centuries  
of human sleeplessness have filled her  
with ancient tears. Look at her. She is your mirror.  
(Jorge Luis Borges, *The moon*)

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Totem Koala courtesy of Caimi Brevetti S.p.A.