

## ugo rondinone brings human clouds, a gilded sun and colorful, burnt out candles to venice

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### UGO RONDINONE EXHIBITION DURING VENICE ART BIENNALE 2022

On the occasion of the 2022 Venice Art Biennale, Ugo Rondinone presents 'burn shine fly', a three-part solo show set inside the historic Scuola Grande San Giovanni Evangelista. Curated by Javier Molins, the exhibition brings together both iconic works by the Swiss artist as well as a new body of work created specifically for this occasion. 'burn shine fly' is installed within one of the oldest and most important Scuole in Venice, whose walls have housed treasures ranging from relics of the True Cross to works by renowned Venetian Renaissance artists such as Titian, Carpaccio and Bellini.

*'The sculptures in 'burn shine fly' aim to engender an altogether contemporary version of the sublime, one in which the smallest candle sculpture is of no less consequence than the overarching totality of the sun sculpture or the stellar marriage of the earthbound body with the waterfilled sky,'* notes Ugo Rondinone. *'The work should dazzle us and send us into a deep reflection about the marvels and mysteries of life.'*



all images: installation views, Ugo Rondinone, 'burn shine fly', Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista, Venice, 2022, courtesy the artist; Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich; Esther Schipper, Berlin; Sadie Coles HQ, London; Gladstone, New York; Kamel Mennour, Paris; Kukje Gallery, Seoul; unless stated otherwise

## 'BURN SHINE FLY' INSIDE THE SCUOLA GRANDE SAN GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA

Past an imposing, sculptural stone gateway designed by 15th-century Venetian sculptor and architect, Pietro Lombardo, Ugo Rondinone's gilded bronze sculpture catches the eye of passersby. The monumental piece is set in the middle of a street passage, which feels more like an intimate courtyard due to the historic complex of buildings that surround it. Marking the 'shine' in 'burn shine fly', 'the sun' is made from pieces of branches knotted together, cast in bronze and gilded. Rondinone made the first sun sculpture for 'voyage d'hiver,' an outdoor exhibition at the Château de Versailles in 2017. *'The sun sculpture is not only an investigation of the mutable potential of sculpture as both a physical medium and a site of rich cultural disclosure in art, but also a celebration of life; its seasons and rhythms, its plants and stones with which we share the planet and our own wild life,'* writes the Swiss artist.

This exhibition continues within the historic complex, which includes the church, as well as the Scuola's magnificent frescoed and painted rooms. As visitors step inside, they encounter a group of seven flying human clouds. Made from casts of nude dancers, their bodies are camouflaged as cloudy skies. *'In 2009, I made casts of 14 nude dancers in contemplative positions,'* the artist explains. *'The bodies were made with a mix of soil and transparent wax. The soil was sourced from all seven continents. Last year, I started a new video installation called 'burn to shine'. It shows 18 dancers dancing around a fire in the desert from sunset to sunrise. Similar to the Greek mythology of the phoenix, the immortal bird that cyclically regenerates, the dancers merge with the fire and obtain by sunrise a new life cycle.'*



'the sun' sculpture

The final part of 'burn shine fly' is a group of colorful, burnt out candles cast in bronze and placed directly on the floor. The candles belong to the group of 'still.life.' sculptures from 2013, where Rondinone casted small everyday objects in bronze and filled the hollowness of the bronze cast with lead. *'The notion of the lead reinforces the dense solidity which causes the candle to lock heavily onto the floor,'* he explains. *'Part of its sufficiency results from weight and scale; it looks distant rather than small. In establishing this distance, the candle literally puts a lot of ground between itself and the viewer, asserting its own presence, that of the empty and surrounding area, and that of the solidly horizontal place on which the candle rests.'* The exhibition is on view until September 17, 2022.



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human clouds









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