

Introduction to 25th International Sculpture/Design Competition edition 2021

REBIRTH From the memory of the pandemic to a new world

At the beginning of each year Peano Foundation announces the publication of the call of its International Sculpture/Design Competition and, immediately after, starts to think about the theme of the following edition. In February 2020 the prevailing opinion was to honor the 25th anniversary of the Prize, in 2021, with the celebration of the seventh centenary of death of Dante Alighieri that would be, for sure, a rich source of inspiration for the students. The Poet and his Divine Comedy - which is one of the most translated books in the world - indeed marked the path of Italian literature and language.

But soon afterwards, an unpredictable disaster, the Covid-19 pandemic, hit the global population rapidly changing their daily life because of the social distancing imposed by the disease. Since February 2020, between hopes and relapses, more than a year has passed, during which the dominant theme, in everyone's mind, has been and still is that of the pandemic, with all its direct and indirect consequences, both individually and socially.

From these two inputs we decided to give the students the theme "REBIRTH – from the memory of the pandemic to a new world" which wants to focus on the optimistic evolution of the still current situation given by the progress of the vaccine campaign.

The arrival of the vaccine can be figuratively compared with the famous closing of the first Cantic of Dante's Divine Comedy, where, with memorable rapidity Dante represents, after the darkness of Hell, the appearance of light ("through a rounded opening I beheld some of the lovely things the sky contains") and the enthusiasm of the return to life ("thence we came out, and saw again the stars."). And he continues in the First canto of Purgatory with renewed hope in the future ("to run o'er better waters hoists its sail the little vessel of my genius now, that leaves behind itself a sea so cruel")

In his philosophical and religious vision of tomistic Aristotelianism, the Poet describes God as "the love that moves the sun and other stars", that is the motionless engine of the life cycle; giving to those who have the gift of an authentic faith the certainty of living forever.

But also for the fragile and lukewarm hopes of the agnostic and even for the hopeless certainties of the atheist, the cycle of life retains its continuity, if not in individual salvation, in the turn of history, which preserves indelible, generation by generation, the sign of those who have been part of it.

The last year has put us in front of an imminent risk of death, but human ability to react shows us the end of the nightmare and the hope of resuming our journey and interrupted sociality, as it had always happened in the history of humanity, when people had to go through plagues, natural disasters and wars.

The International Sculpture/Design Competition asks students to develop a project able to represent the historical moment we are living, with all its anxieties, uncertainties and frustrations inside, but also the hopes and perspectives of the after, in a world that is imagined renewed by the lived experience.

The artwork should express the synthesis of these feelings and experiences or it could be the proposal of a new area in the town that is a place of rest, aggregation, sharing, of meditation on the memory of what happened in the dramatic and alienating period of the pandemic, but also on what may be a more respectful future of nature in which man must be more in connections with other living beings. Our journey through the physical and moral suffering of the pandemic until the return to a new "normality" of life that reflects Dante's path in Divine Comedy, the rise from hell with his sufferings and the return to the world of man.