



Ventique art gallery announces the installation of “One Million Queen” sculpture in Park Lane, London

Ventique gallery is delighted to announce that the One Million Queen sculpture by Matt Marga has been installed on Achilles Way, Park Lane.

Matt Marga is an Italian artist based in London working from his studio in Chelsea. When looking for a universal symbol representing the city he chose one of the most recognisable profiles, the one of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. With his piece he wants to celebrate the life and legacy of one of the most influential figures in modern history and Head of the Commonwealth as a union of nations. The One Million Queen marks the first public exhibit of Marga in London.

The temporary sculpture has been commissioned by Ventique art gallery together with Westminster City of Sculptures. This celebratory artwork wants to be homage to the World's longest reigning Monarch and a symbol of the United Kingdom.

The sculpture

Her Majesty the Queen's profile is created by the composition of 999.999 crystals embedded in a monolithic optically clear sheet of glass measuring 2.95 m x 5.5 m height.

The handmade diamond-cut crystals, which are approximately 2.5 mm in diameter, are partially coated with gold foil to increase the diffraction of light.

Among the 999.999 crystals, 53 real diamonds - carefully placed at the centre of the crown's cross - represent the 53 member states of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The number is also a nod to the coronation of Elizabeth II which took place on 2 June 1953 at Westminster Abbey, London.

The glass weighs 2500 kg and is held by a steel frame in the ground of 800 kg. The engineering difficulties of installing such an imposing object required months of planning and calculations to ensure the final effect would have the visual impact the artist intended to achieve at the best level of stability.

The location - Park Lane

Many reasons have led to Park Lane as the perfect choice in terms of position. The site has been designated by Westminster City of Sculpture programme as a suitable location to promote public art for everyone to enjoy. Essential part of the concept for the sculpture was for it to always be visible by the public and kept on an outdoor location, not held behind closed doors in a private collection.

Marga has developed the attributes of the perfect location through an accurate study. The sculpture is set into an open plan receiving a fair amount natural sunlight throughout the day. The glittering effect of the profile emerges from a combination of light and movement, hence the proximity to a road. Passengers and passers-by can enjoy the moving light reflected and scattered by the 999.999 crystals while approaching the roundabout. The particular angle of the glass and the flow of the cars from north to south prevent the presence of any type of glare that would concern the vehicles.

Park Lane is a major London road that runs from Marble Arch to Hyde Park Corner, tracing the line between the park and Mayfair. Achilles way, where the sculpture is located, is the southernmost traffic island of the street and touches the southeast corner of Hyde Park.

At the same time that One Million Queen will find its place in Park Lane, an exhibition by the artist will be inaugurated at Ventique Art Gallery in Lots Road, Chelsea - where he had previously brought the London Geodes exhibition in September 2017.

The entrance to the exhibition will be free of charge and an unmissable occasion in order to be able to see the crystals from a closer perspective and get a better glance on how they are suspended in the glass.

The Artist

Matt Marga is a London-based Italian artist. As a child he would go out in the Italian Alps hunting for crystals. He now brings the wonders of his childhood in London's chaotic, sophisticated, hectic environment.

His structural knowledge allows for the creation of highly technical sculptures supporting eye-catching, shimmering surfaces. Experimenting with crystals, multi-dimensionality, textures and light, his works have the power to hypnotize the viewer in fascination and curiosity.

Matt Marga values his privacy and keeps his identity hidden because he wants the attention of the public to be focused on his artworks and not himself. He believes it is the artwork that has to be enjoyed by the people, not the artist's private life.

In a world of social media where privacy is not contemplated, Matt Marga wants to go against the flow. He doesn't attend openings of his exhibitions or unveilings of his public sculptures.

In the past few years Marga has been exhibiting in the UK, Italy and the UAE but spent the majority of his career creating sculptures for private commissions for ultra high-net-worth individuals around the world. Since all this work has been created and exhibited behind closed doors on non-disclosure agreements, Marga is now concentrating his efforts between the creation of public sculptures and exhibitions.

One Million Queen, a public sculpture unveiled on 29th November 2018 in Park Lane is his most famous example of art created for the public to enjoy.

His own body of work, which he started to create relatively recently with respect to the totality of his years of activity, is entirely inspired by nature. Marga looks at the beauty that is in nature and tries to capture it with contemporary shapes and techniques in an effort to interpret its wonders. His favoured media are crystals, metal and glass, conducting a continued study on how to best represent rocks, stars and galaxies.

He is mostly fascinated by the ability of crystals to diffract light in different colours.

A crystal is transparent, but when light shines onto it, it sends back colours that are not present in the material and otherwise one cannot physically see. Metal has also got a similar kind of effect in terms of reflecting the light back to the viewer. No two viewers are able to see crystals in the same way and in the same moment, because the light that hits them bounces back differently each time - translated depending on the viewer's position.

His work is unique because it embraces concepts from art, philosophy, technology, structural engineering, architectural planning, craftsmanship and 3D software proficiency.

Marga also employs his geological knowledge and principles from chemistry as he uses a cold casting technique to cover his sculptures in metal. This technique allows his work to be more ecologically sustainable, saving on the great amount of energy that would be necessary to melt metal - using the powder as it is. On the other hand, this technique requires a substrate for the metal to be laid on and this results in a final piece which is unusually light weight for its kind and completely unique. Marga's pieces are one-off and not easily replicated.

Marga's inspiration comes from how crystals are commonly formed in nature, and his creation process starts with the will of reproducing geodes - hollow cavities of stone that contain crystal formations. The destruction and the consumption of mountains is necessary in order to extract minerals and crystals. By doing so, miners remove the settings, the contest in which these precious stones have developed and turn them into sellable goods. Marga's intent in his London Geodes body of works is to recreate the mountains, the peaks and valleys that used to host these shiny stones.

The other section of nature he studies is the loss of the night sky. Light pollution does not allow for a complete, unspoilt view of the dark sky and its stars and galaxies.

The light of a star travels for millions of years before reaching the Earth's surface, but artificial lights block the last part of the journey, killing it in the last few seconds.

Ventique Art Gallery

Ventique is a contemporary art gallery based in Chelsea, London, UK. Opened in 2014 the gallery went from exhibition space, to a reference point for artists, interior designers, and collectors.

The venue has hosted Marga's "London Geodes - the beauty inside" exhibition in September 2017 and is currently displaying pieces from both the Geodes and the Galassia collection. The One Million Queen sculpture itself belongs to the latter.

The message

Crystals are a recurring motif in Marga's work. Attracted to this fascinating material, his activity as an artist consists in the process of trying to put them back into their original environment.

While with the London Geodes series he recreated rock walls and hide crystals back into the cracks, with the One Million Queen and the Galassia's pieces, glass is the new material that serves as context for the gems. The product of this approach is a different frame, aiming to bring out a hidden beauty and showcase it in its purest form.

The transparency of the glass is the necessary mean to valorise the profile and make it look suspended in mid-air.

The original subject of the Galassia collection were abstract conformations of crystals that symbolize dark skies filled with stars. With this work instead we see the subject change and develop from an abstract imagery to a more recognizable subject.

All transportation needed for the making and installation of the sculpture apart from the heavy loads have been carried out by bicycle and with the aid of bicycle trailers. The artist wanted to reduce the carbon footprint of the artwork and encouraged his collaborators to act in the most environmentally responsible way.

The artwork itself is lit up only by two LED lights, one at the front and one at the back that concentrate only on the profile of crystals.

Collaborations

In the realization of the sculpture Ventique has collaborated with

- **Arbo** - Construction and Industrial Sealants
- **Ideaworks** - Lighting studies
- **Price & Myers** - Consulting Engineers
- **Prodmix** - Artist Management

The event

The One Million Queen Sculpture has been unveiled by a person cherished by Marga, the artist. The unveiling ceremony took place on 29 November 2018 from 5.30 to 6.30 pm.

The sculpture will be on sight everyday on the southernmost traffic island of Park Lane, next to the Intercontinental Hotel, in front of the Mayfair Car Park - and will remain there for a minimum of 12 months.

The closest underground stations are Hyde Park Corner, Knightsbridge, Green Park and Marble Arch

The admission to the exhibition at Ventique art gallery is free of charge and open Monday to Friday from 9.30 to 17.30.

Contacts

You can follow Ventique Art Gallery on

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