

CoV 10 at MADRE (Museum of Contemporary Art)

The volcano on the boundary between art and science

The great eruption that destroyed Pompeii occupies a special in the public imagination: the magnificent and terrible power of the natural phenomenon; the human drama of devastation and death; the unexpected recovery of the suspended city, crystallised at the time of the catastrophe by the thick layer of deposits... All elements of this epic story touch deep chords and evoke suggestions that are difficult to resist. Not surprisingly, Pompeii has stirred up the vivid and fruitful interest of intellectuals and artists for centuries. Even the interesting experiment proposed by the exhibit Pompeii @MADRE is the result of such strong interest.

But this eruption exerts its particular charm also on those who look at it from a scientific point of view, like the volcanologists who work with different methods to reconstruct the complex dynamics of the eruptive phases, and their impact on the populated land.

In this particular case, scientific knowledge, patiently accumulated, goes along with the profound emotion for an event that is masterfully representative of the relationship between the formidable, primordial forces that shape the planet, and the communities of people who live in it, enriching it with crops and roads, frescoes and words.

We thought that this knowledge and this emotion could be added to the artistic reflections that the MADRE Museum offers to its visitors about the theme of Pompeii.

We asked the researchers who work on Vesuvius to tell us something about the famous eruption, choosing a particular point of view, or an interesting aspect. The result is a set of short and diverse texts that we propose as a guide to the exhibit.

We like to think that they can offer an alternative key to interpretation of the materials on display and their artistic re-elaboration.

Open all days, MADRE (Museum of Contemporary Art), Naples