



"Building Bridges"
in Venice's Castello
District

Building Bridges

A timely celebration of the importance of bridging differences rather than building walls, Lorenzo Quinn's latest public sculpture is a must-see

Notoriously difficult to master technically, hands have proven a challenge for artists and sculptors for time immemorial. According to internationally revered Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn, this is because they, "have so many facets, so many angles, so many movements. Simply moving a finger in one direction rather than the other gives a completely different meaning." Yet the value of mastering this tricky form lies, for Quinn, in their universality. "I want everyone to be able to relate to my sculptures," he says, "hands are familiar, of course, but also acceptable worldwide, removing the issue of censorship and taking away the

element of race and gender. If I want to communicate with everyone, I have to do it through a universal language."

This is a language in which Quinn has become fluent, creating immediately accessible yet uniquely expressive public installations, which manage to convey



Italian
artist
Lorenzo
Quinn

the most intangible elements of human experience and communicate complex messages through a simple lexicon of gestures, touch and connection. His latest work, designed to be unveiled during the 58th International Exhibition of the Venice Biennale in 2019, is the monumental sculpture, "Building Bridges". Installed adjacent to the entrance of the Arsenale, a complex of 12th-century shipyards in Venice's Castello District, the piece is composed of six pairs of hands, each joined together in the middle to 'bridge' the glistening canal which they cross.

Each pair is designed to represent one of six human values—friendship, wisdom, help, hope, faith and love—providing a timely celebration of the

The striking piece is formed of a child's hands, reaching up surreally from the depths of the lagoon and appearing to hold the antique façade of the palazzo in place



power of forming connections rather than constructing walls and barriers. Though race and gender are intentionally absent from the piece, a range of ages was used to inspire the hands, including a child, Quinn himself and his 86-year-old mother-in-law, whose hands were chosen to depict 'wisdom'. The sculpture is white only to resemble Venice's distinctive marble and sit harmoniously alongside the city's historic architecture. Crafted from resin fibre, its vast scale—the hands stretch to 15 metres in height and 20 metres in width—means that this is Quinn's largest work to date. To coincide with the unveiling of the sculpture, an exhibition of Quinn's latest creations, entitled *Possibilità*, will be held at Halcyon Gallery's flagship space in London's Mayfair.

There could hardly be a more apt location for "Building Bridges" than Venice, not only because of the iconic beauty of its bridges and canals but also in light of the artist's particular affection for the city. He says, "I've seen it so often but every time I come here, I notice more of the incredible nuances. The precarious beauty and very delicate balance plays with your mind all the time: you're seeing stone and marble which are so heavy, yet they look so light because it's all floating on water."

In May 2017, Quinn stole the city's heart by installing a sculpture entitled "Support" in front of Ca' Sagredo palace on the Grand Canal. The striking piece



Above, from top: "Support", unveiled on Venice's iconic Grand Canal in May 2017; Lorenzo Quinn adds fine detail to his monumental resin fibre sculptures by hand

is formed of a child's hands, reaching up surreally from the depths of Venice's lagoon and appearing to hold the antique façade of the palazzo in place. Unveiled to coincide with the 57th Venice Biennale, the sculpture is a poignant reminder of the fact that the city is slowly sinking (albeit by a few millimetres per year) and a warning of the need to protect our environment.

Having worked with Quinn for over 20 years, Halcyon Gallery was first attracted to the artist's talent and, crucially, the synergy between his philosophy and their own. Udi Sheleg, CEO of the Halcyon Group, speaks of the masterful artist with great admiration. "Lorenzo does not rest. He is extremely creative with a very active

and playful mind. It's magical to witness him taking intangible, universal experiences and translating them into amazing three-dimensional pieces."

Alongside a wealth of content about his latest piece and the 'mammoth task' of constructing it, *Possibilità* will celebrate Quinn's wider creative output and debut several new works. Sheleg adds, "his inspiration is very varied and versatile, you never know what will be next, or when." On that enticing note, the exhibition, as well, of course, as "Building Bridges" itself, is a must-see. ■

Visit lorenzoquinnbuildingbridges.com. *Possibilità* will run at Halcyon Gallery, 144-146 New Bond Street, until June 30. Visit halcyongallery.com