



On 23 June the Vatican Museums Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art will be fifty years old. An important anniversary and a fine achievement for the youngest of the Vatican collections. Its history began officially on 23 June 1973, when Saint Paul VI – the creator and driving force behind the entire project – inaugurated the “Collection of Modern Religious Art” in its first conspicuous exhibition arrangement, housed in the heart of the Museums: in the halls of the Borgia Apartment and along the itinerary that leads, on the lower floor, towards the Sistine Chapel.

Today the Collection consists of more than 9000 works, created in the most varied artistic languages – paintings, sculptures, stained glass, tapestries, works on paper, multi-material works, photographs, installations, video art and architectural models – of which around 450 are on alternating display. It is one of the largest collections of contemporary religious art on the international scene today.

To celebrate this special anniversary, the *Department of XIX Century and Contemporary Art* – in the persons of the curator **Micol Forti** and the assistants **Francesca Boschetti** and **Rosalia Pagliarini** – have created a “widespread exhibition”, arranged in the various sectors of the *Pope’s Museums*, with the intention of forging a dialogue between past and present, in the name of dialectical confrontation, synergy and contamination. Ten works are dispersed along the museum itinerary, selected from recent additions to the Collection and created by artists of international calibre: **Anatsui, Bravo, Fleischer, Giolo, Giuliani, Hadzi-Vasileva, Paladino, Ruffo, Strazza and Vukadinov**.

The *Rooms of the Borgia Tower* instead host a complementary historical-photographic exhibition. It reveals the faces of the personalities involved in the formation of the Collection, the leading artists, the history of the museum displays and exhibition events, and more generally the evolutionary path and the goals achieved during these first fifty years of activity, inside and outside the museum spaces.

The fiftieth anniversary is also commemorated by the publication of a new and substantial volume soon to be published by *Edizioni Musei Vaticani*: “Contemporanea 50. La Collezione Arte Moderna e Contemporanea dei Musei Vaticani 1973-2023. Origini, storia, trasformazioni” (Contemporary 50. *The Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art in the Vatican Museums 1973-2023. Origins, history, transformations*), edited by Micol Forti, with Francesca Boschetti and Rosalia Pagliarini.