

# oude kerk

giorgio andreotta calò

giorgio andreotta calò  
anastasis / ανάστασις

The Oude Kerk is the oldest building in Amsterdam and one of the youngest art museums in the city. Twice a year, an artist is commissioned to reflect on its heritage by adding new work to the ancient Gothic structure. This summer, site-specific work by artist Giorgio Andreotta Calò commemorates the transformation of the building from a Roman-Catholic consecrated church (from 1306 to 1578) to a Protestant church (from 15878 to this day).

By placing an inactinic filter on the windows (with a surface of more than 1600 square meters) the church colours red. The red light that shines inside the church has a physically all-encompassing and alienating effect. The colour has a strong symbolic value in art history. In the analogous printing process in the darkroom it has a protective function, so that light can no longer exert influence on the photographic paper and thus on the image.

The work refers to the absence of images and is a direct reference to the Iconoclasm of 1566 that took place on this site. In addition, it reflects on the destruction of images in a broader contemporary context.

until September 23, 2018  
oudekerk.nl

# anastasis / ανάστασις

Rome, 7 May 2018, 2:10 – 4:50 p.m. A conversation between artist Giorgio Andreotta Calò and curator Jacqueline Grandjean takes places on a terrace in the Trastevere neighbourhood.

**JG:** *Anastasis* | *Ανάσταση* is most commonly referring to the Resurrection of Christ in ancient Greek it literally means Resurrection, but also sunrise and revival. In Christian culture, this term designates Christ's Resurrection as well as the final resurrection of all the dead and, as an extension, the Holy Cave of Christ's Sepulchre. Curiously, secondary meanings of the Greek term are departure, expulsion, banishment, and destruction, which open the exhibition's title to new and deeper readings compared to the dominant theme of Iconoclasm. Multiple meanings, of an almost forgotten word. Could you explain the title, *Anastasis* / *Ανάσταση*?

**GAC:** The title *Anastasis* has various meanings. I decided to expand the title by using the Ancient Greek word, *Ανάσταση*. Ancient Greek marks the origin of Western culture and of Christianity, which is associated with it. The meaning of *Anastasis* is paradoxical. The commonly accepted definition is the Resurrection of Christ, but it can also mean departure, expulsion and destruction. With this meaning of devastation, the title alludes to the period of iconoclasm that took place in the Oude Kerk between 1566 and 1578.

The Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, on the north side of the church, attests to the destructive impact of the iconoclasm. This chapel was built in 1515, based on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The room features a baldaquin, a decorated canopy under which you would expect to find something. In the sixteenth century a group of statues stood here, depicting the moment Christ is taken down from the Cross – the Lamentation of Christ. Various sources indicate that the group of statues was removed during the *Beeldenstorm*, the initial campaign of iconoclasm in 1566 – or in the years that followed. Today the baldaquin alludes to the absence of the image. In the work *Anastasis* I draw a connection with the visibility of absent images.

## iconoclasm in the oude kerk

Giorgio Andreotta Calò's site-specific intervention is inspired by the violent conversion from the Catholic to the Protestant faith which took place on August 23, 1566. This event is known as the *Beeldenstorm* (literally, 'storm of images', iconoclastic fury) and was followed by a gradual reformation (*Alteratie*) in politics, religion and public life in Amsterdam and Northern Europe, a process that concluded in 1578. This transformation is still visible in this church today: the symbolic and decorative framework of the building was 'cleansed' of Catholic references. The text on the choir screen is a reference to this transformation. In the High Choir, empty spots can be seen on the pillars where statues of the twelve Apostles once stood. In the vaulted ceilings and stained-glass windows in the Lady Chapel, the Chapel of Saint George and the Lysbeth Gaven Chapel, an attentive observer can still detect Roman Catholic images or fragments thereof, resurrected by previous restorations.

In a certain sense the absence of images also reflects places around the world where iconoclastic campaigns took place, like Palmyra and Afghanistan. *Anastasis* is a historical reflection on iconoclasm and engages in a dialogue with a broader contemporary context. The paradox of the title *Anastasis* also recurs in the idea that light can create an image as well as destroy it. By covering the stained-glass windows with the red filter, the church temporarily changes into a darkroom. In analogue photography, the red filtered light makes it possible for an image to be latently present, even before it has been photographically developed. The inactinic filter absorbs the light rays that can affect and therefore over-expose the photo paper. Red light

protects, as it were, the image that is not yet visible, but is present on the paper. The red light in the work *Anastasis* symbolizes and marks this absence, the void.

**JG:** What aspects of the history or architecture did you take into account?

**GAC:** The Oude Kerk exudes a *senso temporale*, a sense of time. The natural passage of time is strongly visible here, because the light enters the church through the high windows from the east and revolves around the church via the south as the day goes by. When the sun comes up, it shines first through the eastern window, where the Catholic altar used to stand. You can see the church as a monumental sundial.

The movement of the sun progresses in a circle; this also recurs in the work: the filtering of the windows follows the natural course of the sun from east to west. The window in the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre is the last one that will colour red this summer.

**JG:** How did you approach the Oude Kerk?

**GAC:** It was immediately clear to me, during my first visit, that the Oude Kerk is a place that already works by itself. What the church needed was an extra layer to change the public's perception of the space.

My first idea was to hang long pendulums with incense, which would spread the fragrance throughout the space. I wanted to add something that historically belongs to the church; incense is used in the Catholic mass. The smoke and the movement would accentuate the volume of the space. The smoke would create a fog that would alter the angle of the light. Even though I made an entirely different work in the Oude Kerk, the conceptual idea survived. Something that was present was reinforced.

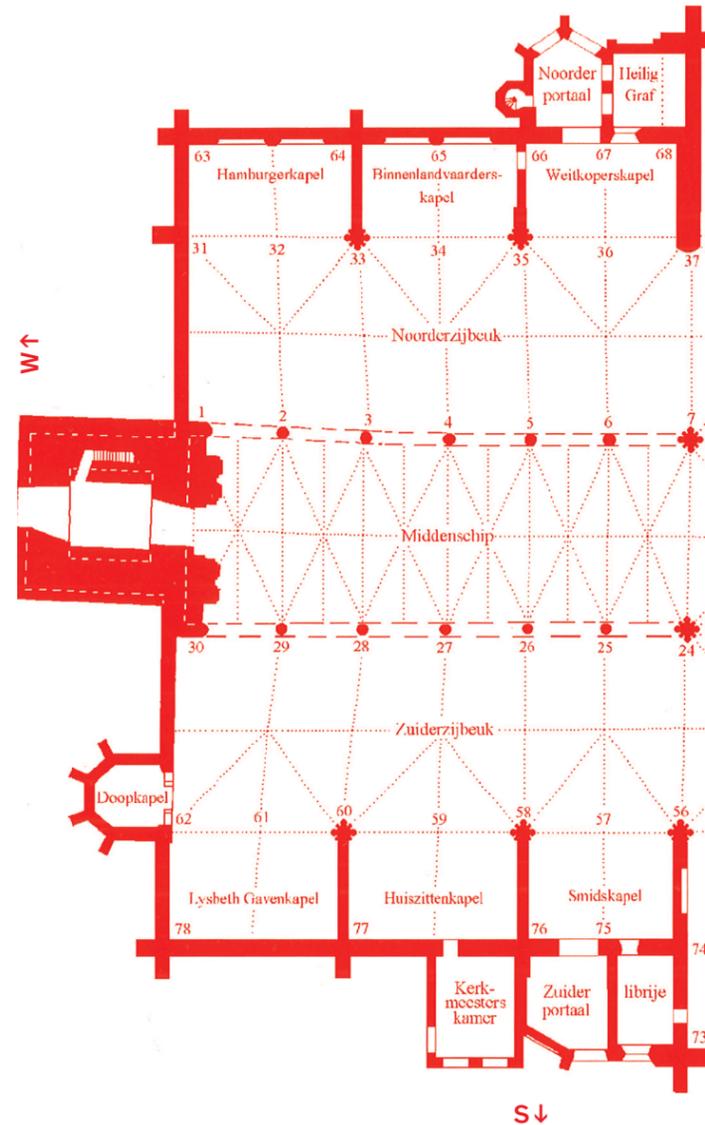
**JG:** Why is the time of year, the summer, of importance?

**GAC:** The filtering of the light in the church spans a single summer. Summer is the moment in which light fully manifests itself in all its intensity. It's a period that begins with Easter, and in that sense alludes to the Christian calendar; nature is changing and the days are getting longer. Sunlight is the protagonist of this exhibition and turns the monumental Oude Kerk a place for experience and reflection.

At the end of the summer a new mouthblown glass window will be unveiled in the Holy Sepulchre. This chapel is the synthesis of the whole operation that takes place in the church; this window is being made by Stef Hagemeijer and will thus continue to exist when the temporary aspect of the site-specific work is gone.

The choice of the permanent installation in the Holy Sepulchre is linked to the unique angle of light at this spot. The window in the Holy Sepulchre Chapel was built in such a way that the last rays of the sun at the end of the day illuminate the chapel. This is because the rib structure of the window was constructed diagonally toward the east. The last beams of the sun illuminate the baldaquin, which is now empty but where a group of statues once stood, depicting the Lamentation of Christ. The end of the day and the end of the sun symbolize the death of Christ.

Through my permanent intervention, around the Easter period – the Entombment, the Empty Sepulchre and the Resurrection of Christ – light shines on the empty baldaquin during the day



as well. This is because a mirror is affixed to the façade of one of the buildings in the alley behind the church. When the sun reaches a specific height, the light is reflected via the mirror through the red window of the Holy Sepulchre and forms a beam of light under the baldaquin.

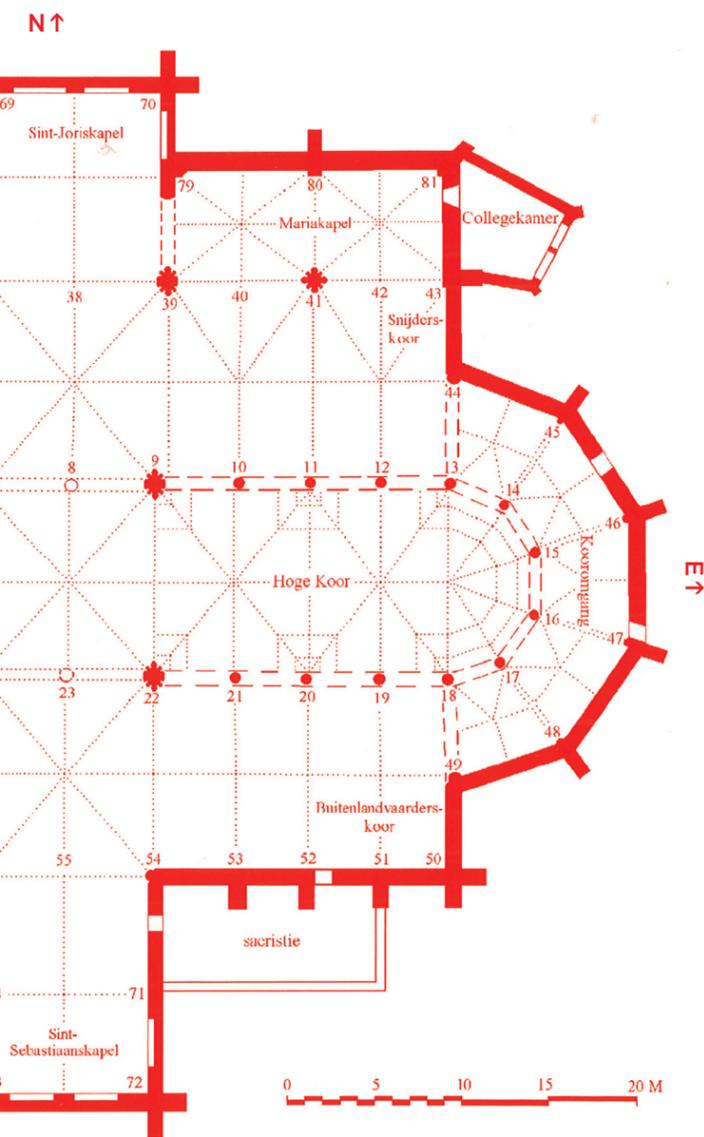
I see this intervention in the Holy Sepulchre as an event to be repeated every year, across time, the same way as liturgy and rituals. In principle, the space inside the Holy Sepulchre is constant, but with this intervention it changes during one period per year. This permanent intervention alludes to the emptiness of the church.

**JG:** The Oude Kerk used to be a Catholic church. Roman Catholic images were destroyed or removed during the iconoclastic campaign of the *Beeldenstorm* (1566) and thereafter during the *Alteration*. What does the fact that images were destroyed here mean for your work?

**GAC:** When I saw the Oude Kerk for the first time I thought the church was light, open and free. At the time I didn't know that this was a church where iconoclasm had taken place. If you found this church in the centre of Rome, you would think it was a church that had lost its original function as a house of worship and been deconsecrated. That is not the case at the Oude Kerk: a service is still held there every Sunday.

Once I read about the history of the Oude Kerk, it became clear that the emptiness here has a meaning. Not just the emptiness, but also the process that has led to this emptiness. The church may read as a Catholic church, but it does not present itself as such. In my work I reflect on how the church used to be, without adding objects but by emphasizing the emptiness. In their absence the images are present.

The idea that the sun moves in a circle around the church, in which the Holy Sepulchre is the end point (the sun gets as far as this) alludes to emptiness. When the disciples went to Christ's tomb they found no body. The tomb of Christ was empty. My work emphasizes the baldaquin, which makes



been true throughout the ages. The metaphor Spengler used is interesting in the context of this work. He described four phases of development of a culture like the four seasons of the year. In that sense he alludes to the progression of light along the year as a metaphor for our culture.

**JG:** *The work embodies a complex vision of the European cultural and political framework. Could you explain how?*

**GAC:** In this work I went in search of the identity and – in a certain sense – the antagonism of European culture; Protestantism has shaped our European community to a significant extent. The Roman Catholic faith, however, has never really gone away, and in Southern Europe it has remained pre-eminent. In what ways are the counterpoints of our culture engaging in a dialogue at the moment?

The work is also about my own life, and in that sense it is also autobiographical, because I live in two places. The two cultures – Dutch and Italian – now shape my own life as well and have altered my view of the world and of ‘universal’ values.

**JG:** *The site-specific intervention Anastasis also includes a photographic process. How does this relate to the rest of the exhibition?*

**GAC:** I’m using the Oude Kerk as an immense camera obscura, in which images are produced. The red filter over the windows function as an inactinic filter and absorb a certain level of light. This red light is the only light source in the photographic printing process that does not affect the photographic paper. In a certain sense, the red light therefore protects and preserves the latent images that are yet to be developed. The images are already projected onto the photo paper and therefore present, but not yet visible. All the windows are covered with this filter, so that the church as a whole functions as a photographic darkroom and preserves the image before it is developed.

This summer the three stained-glass windows in the Lady Chapel will be reproduced using direct impressions. In a direct impression the photographic paper is directly exposed to the light. Normally this would result in an overexposure, but because of the red filters in the church the impression on the paper takes place slowly. The images will be preserved before being developed in the laboratory of the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, where I studied from 2010 to 2011. The result of this photographic process consists of a number of large-size photos that will be presented in Italy in the coming year.

**JG:** *You regularly collaborate with others to expand the sculptural work (photographer Simone Settimo and the film-maker Hector Castells Matutano). How does this work relate to your artistic practice overall?*

**GAC:** I often need several people to complete the work. To achieve a congruent result, more than one discipline is often necessary – multimedia. The matrix of the work Anastasis is light, colour and space. These are immaterial, but they do have a physical presence, as if you could touch them.

As far as sculptural work goes, I follow the entire process from beginning to end, but in a monumental site-specific intervention I involve other specialists who can complement me. They work according to the directional line I set down. Like a film director, I define the internal logic, which I share with others. The circular progression in setting up the filters, for example, from the east

#### mariakapel

In the Middle Ages, the windows of the Oude Kerk were fully or partially fitted with stained glass, so that light illuminated the inside of the church in a myriad variations of colour. The exceptional glass panes in the Lady Chapel – albeit in an altered and restored form – are the oldest that survived to be admired today. The design of the two glass panes on the north side of the chapel are attributed to architect and painter Lambert van Noord (1520–1571). The first western pane depicts the Annunciation and the Visitation. The glass was commissioned and donated by the Van Hoppen family, depicted at the bottom of the first window. Jan Claesz van Hoppen II was mayor of Amsterdam in 1549. The window on the east side of the chapel depicts the Deathbed of Mary, attributed to stained-glass artist Dirck Crabeth (1501–1574). The glass was donated by the children of mayor Cornelis Brunt (who died in 1542). The glass in the window depicts the Assumption.

The radiant sun inscribed ‘IESUS’ was modified in the period after the iconoclastic campaign. The original image probably depicted a monstrance, a vessel, often made of gold, in which the consecrated host is displayed. Around 1634, several changes were made, including the removal of the image of God the Father in the clouds. The halos around the heads of the saints were also removed during this period, as this was a Catholic style of depiction.

Over the course of the exhibition, Giorgio Andreotta Calò will make impressions of the three Mary windows on photo paper. The red light will preserve the image and protect it from overexposure. The preparation and selection of the photographic image takes place in the work space in the Lady Chapel, and the images will then be developed in the laboratory of the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten.

the emptiness in the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre visible. The baldaquin covers the void and designates something that is not there (anymore).

#### heilig graf

In 1515, a new chapel was built on the north side of this church, after the example of the so-called Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Sepulchrum Domini, as the chapel was called by the Haarlem Diocese in the sixteenth century, refers to the original grave of Christ. A group of statues, mourning Christ’s death, are said to have stood under the canopy that is here today. After the Great Iconoclasm and the following Alteratie (alteration) of Amsterdam, the statues were removed. The canopy now refers to their absence.

The ribbed structure of the windows is finished in an arch towards the west. This solution allowed the light to come in around twilight at a time when the houses on the north side of the church had not yet been built. Around twilight the group of statues would light up shortly. The end of the day and the end of the sun metaphorically referred to the death of Christ. The new glass window by Giorgio Andreotta Calò, which will be unveiled on 23 September 2018, means to reverse the above-mentioned mechanism. Redirecting the light of sunrise with a mirror and lighting up the canopy symbolizes new life. According to the Bible, the Resurrection supposedly took place on Easter Day, the third day of the death of Christ, and the Holy Sepulchre remained empty.

**JG:** *Earlier you referred to the development of Western culture in relation to the Oude Kerk. As the starting point of this culture, churches are cited as the first signs of Western thinking. According to cultural philosopher Oswald Spengler (1880–1936) we’ve reached the dying days of this culture. According to his theory (The Decline of the West, 1918/1922) no culture in the world lasts longer than 2,000 years.*

**GAC:** The more a culture is under pressure, the more the need for preservation increases. I don’t know whether we in Europe attach more value at the moment to the preservation of images from the past – to me it seems something that’s

side of the church via the south, became a motif for everyone who is helping with the execution: for voor Finbar van Wijk and Sjoerd Tim and their team, who are installing the filters over the windows according to a pre-determined order, for film-maker Hector Castells Matutano who follows the process with his analogue film camera. And for photographer Simone Settimo, who after the installation will get on with developing the direct impressions of the stained-glass windows in the Lady Chapel.

Within this framework everyone has the freedom to move according to his own specialty and competence. Over time we’ve become used to one another and the others know how I like things to be.

**JG:** *What do you hope audiences will take from your work?*

**GAC:** I hope the initial experience works like an immersion. Like a feeling or a reflection that stays with you and you keep thinking about, even after you’ve left the building. I expect visitors will walk through the work and experience a moment of shock, change or maybe even doubt. My ambition is open up new perspectives on today’s society with my work and get the audience to reflect on the world around us. The filter over the windows works as a metaphor in this. A filter alters your gaze in some way; it offers a view of reality that’s never been shown before.

# public programme

## silence concert series

During its existence as a Roman Catholic church, the four bells in the tower of the Oude Kerk were named for Catholic saints: Salvador (Saviour), Petrus (Peter), Nicolaas (Nicholas) and Regina. In 1659 the bells were replaced, and the original names were also erased. New inscriptions were added, in line with Calvinist philosophy: awake, work and sleep daily, work in the eye of God. The concert series during Giorgio Andreotta Calò's *Anastasis* takes the church bells as the starting point for the first concert. The second concert features music by organist and composer Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, who remained a devout Catholic while serving as a city organist in the (Protestant) Oude Kerk in the period following the Reformation. The third concert explores the acoustic space of the Oude Kerk: is there such a thing as a unique acoustic colour? The silence concerts are curated by Jacob Lekkerkerker.

This summer you can enjoy four early-morning concerts in the setting of Giorgio Andreotta Calò's work. The concerts will take place in the four directions of the church – east, south, west and north:

1 June, sint joriskapel, mariakapel

A research project and concert by sound artist and composer Zeno van den Broek. With the help of the monumental transept organ, Van den Broek abstracts the sound of the Oude Kerk's bells.

6 July, hoge koor

Music by composer Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: 'Voicy le gay printemps' for four voices. In this concert, the F-note bell serves as a counter-element.

3 August, sebastiaanskapel

A concert by composer and sound artist BJ Nilsen in collaboration with Zeno van den Broek. For this concert, Nilsen and Van den Broek make use of the micro-surface sound of the bell for an improvised electronic experience.

7 September, doopkapel

*Anastasis – Resurrection* is the final concert, featuring major contrasts. You will hear the bells of the Oude Kerk in combination with ambient sounds. The transept organ as well as the Vater-Müller organ, still undergoing restoration, will be heard in a new composition by Claire M Singer and Jacob Lekkerkerker.

symposium: 21 June, 5-10 p.m.  
the resurrection of the lost image – *can the image re-appear after iconoclasm?*  
Iconoclastic Fury came to the Oude Kerk in 1566. The absence of images is still visible today; empty spots on the pillars in the choir remind us of the years of the Reformation – a schism in Western Christianity initiated by Martin Luther and continued by John Calvin and other Protestant Reformers in sixteenth-century Europe. The Reformation was not the result of some 'pure' theological debate about images, but of the rejection of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and its use of rituals, objects and visual propaganda.

Speakers on this symposium are: Giorgio Andreotta Calò, Lorenzo Benedetti, curator Kunsthalle Sankt Gallen (CH), Marcel Barnard, professor of Practical Theology at the Protestant Theological University (Amsterdam, the Netherlands), Marc De Kesel (PhD in philosophy), senior Researcher at the Titus Brandsma Instituut, Dr. Lieke Wijnia, art historian and religious scientist. Moderator: Jacqueline Grandjean

Admission is free for students. Reserve your seat via [info@oudekerk.nl](mailto:info@oudekerk.nl)

## public art amsterdam – routes

The public programme *Images in/of Public Space* will explore the layered social reality of the neighbourhood around de Oude Kerk: *de Wallen*, or Red Light District. Guided walking routes through de Wallen will illustrate the creation, preservation and destruction of particular images in and of public space. Each route will focus on a specific theme or perspective that exemplifies the tensions inherent in public spaces. The programme draws attention to the fact that there is never one, homogenous public space, but various conceptions and practices that struggle to coexist. De Oude Kerk believes that these multiple layers of meaning form the avenues for future collaboration.

This public programme is part of the city-wide Public Art Amsterdam: Pay Attention Please! manifestation. Detailed programme and routes are announced on [oudekerk.nl](http://oudekerk.nl).

## education

The Oude Kerk is happy to help you with a specific customized programme for children, families and schools. Contact [educatie@oudekerk.nl](mailto:educatie@oudekerk.nl) for more information.

## biography

Like an archaeologist, Giorgio Andreotta Calò (Venice, 1979) researches layers of time in deserted buildings or at monumental locations. The passing of time, where light is a visible phenomenon, plays an important part in his immersive installations. Andreotta Calò brings a new perspective to the church with his work. It incites reflection on the relationship between life and death, emptiness, the protection of images and the history of the Oude Kerk. Light as an intangible quality is the main focus of his work.

Giorgio Andreotta Calò studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia (1999–2005) and continued his studies at the Kunsthochschule Berlin (2003–2004). Since 2008, he has been living and working in Venice and in Amsterdam, where he was a resident at the Rijksacademie van beeldende kunsten from 2009 to 2011. In 2011, his work was presented at the 54th International Venice Biennale. In 2012, he won the Premio Italia award for contemporary art, through the MAXXI Museum in Rome. In 2014, he won the Premio New York award and was nominated for the Volkskrant Beeldende Kunst Prijs. In 2017, Giorgio Andreotta Calò was one of three artists in the Italian Pavilion at the 57th International Venice Biennale with the exhibition *Il Mondo Magico*.

## colophon

*Anastasis / Ανάσταση* is a project by the artist Giorgio Andreotta Calò, curated by Jacqueline Grandjean, and initiated by Oude Kerk, winner of the second edition of Italian Council 2017, a competition ideated by Directorate-General for Contemporary Art and Architecture and Urban Peripheries (DGAAP) – organ of Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, to promote Italian contemporary art in the world.

The project is supported by the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts and the Mondriaan Fund. Amsterdam Fund for the Arts (AFK) invests in art that enriches the experience of life in the city of Amsterdam. The Mondriaan Fund is a publicly financed fund for visual art and cultural heritage. It supports innovative projects on relevant Dutch visual art and heritage in The Netherlands and abroad. The Rijksacademie van beeldende kunsten is a higher art education in Amsterdam. As an international platform for starting artists, the academy has a postdoctoral status since 1982. Giorgio Andreotta Calò is an alumnus of the Rijksacademie van beeldende kunsten (2010/11).

**AFK** amsterdam's fund for the arts  
**AM** amsterdam museum  
**RIJKSACADEMIE VAN BEELDENDE KUNSTEN**  
**ITALIAN COUNCIL**  
**LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA**

special thanks to: head of education Mirjam van Belzen, filmer Hector Castells Matutano, Kirsten de Graaf (studiomanager GAC), glass studio Stet Hagemeljer, graphic designer Chantal Hendriksen, curator music Jacob Lekkerkerker, photographer Gert-Jan van Rooij, communication officer Laurence Ostlyn, project leader Richard Peijgrim, photographer Simone Settimo, Finbar van Wijk and Sjoerd Tim and their team for making *Anastasis* possible.