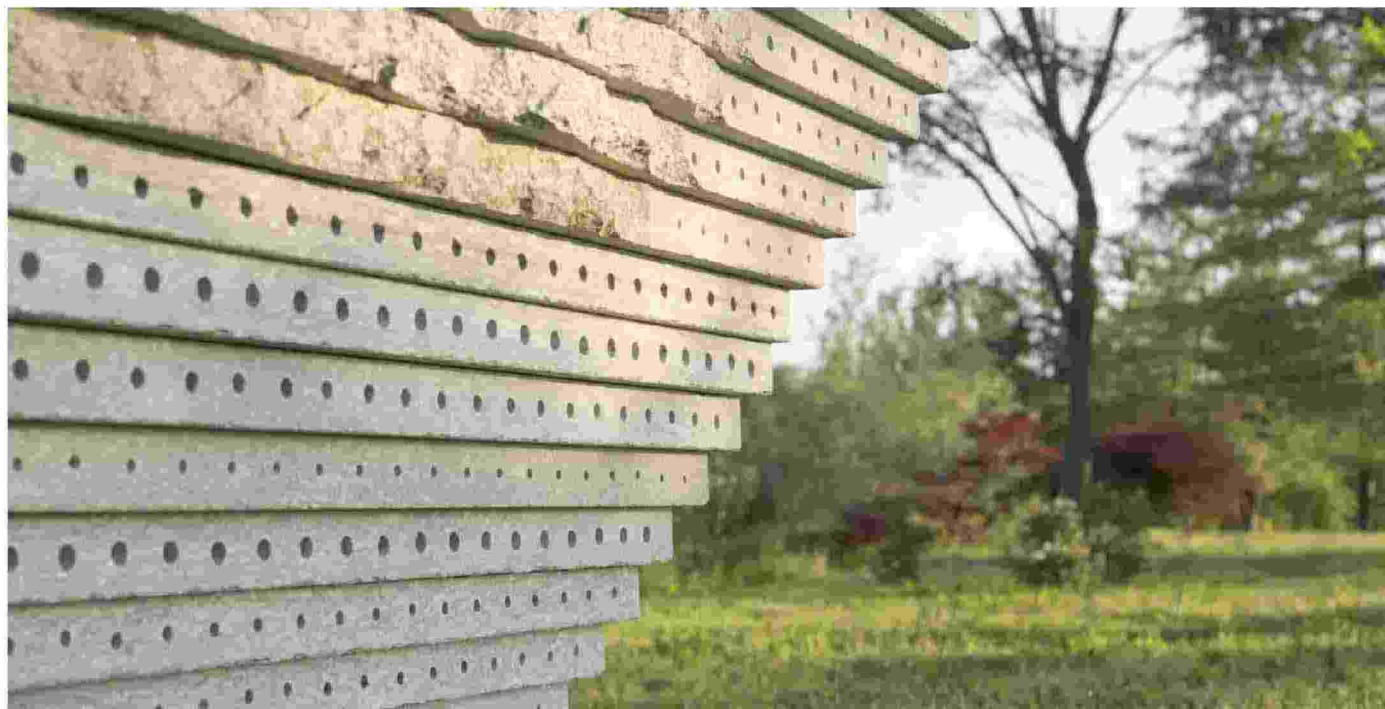


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ADRIEN MISSIKA
Palazzo delle Api

curated by Ilaria Bonacossa

[Fondazione La Raia, Novi Ligure](#)

permanent site-specific work

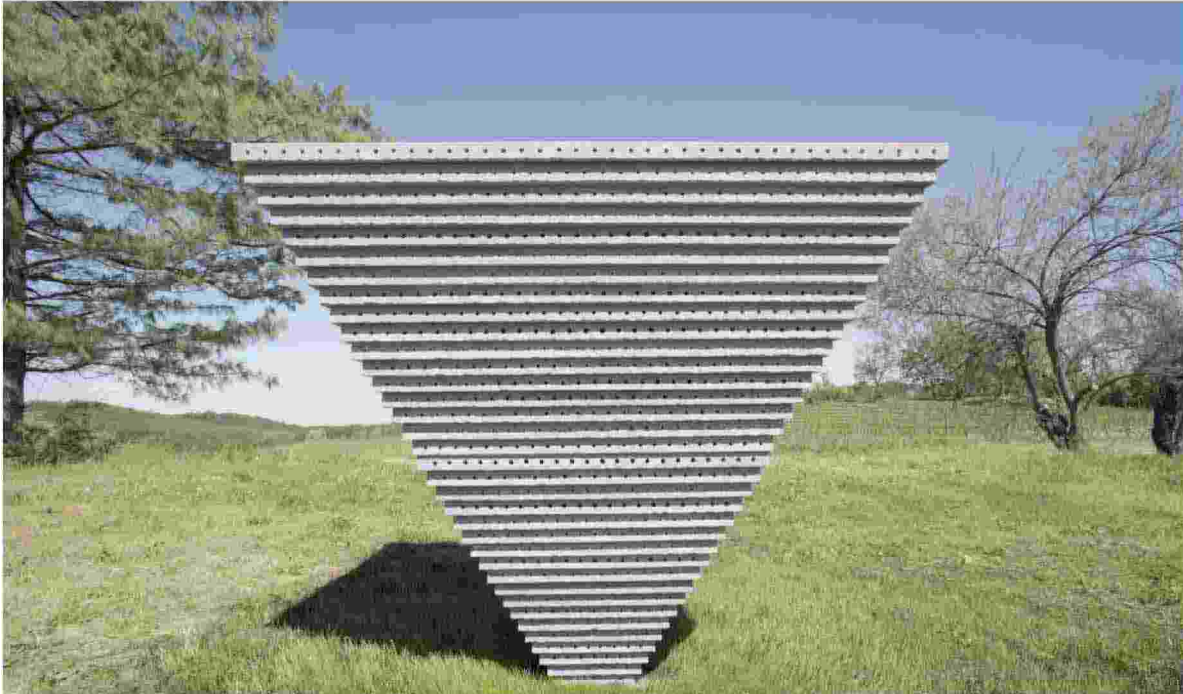
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Developing a line of research that began some years ago during a residency in Mexico, the artist has created a series of bee hotels, facilities designed to provide shelter for various species of nomadic pollinator insects, made with natural recycled materials to experiment with their adaptability to the animal kingdom. These refuges built in a variety of forms and sizes, depending on purpose and on the type of insects they are intended to host, are “modernist” structures. Similar structures are commonly used by gardeners and produce farmers to encourage insects to perform their vital activity of pollination. They are mainly deployed to offer a safe place for hibernation in the winter, as in the case of ladybugs, or as nesting places for solitary bees, bumblebees, certain types of wasps and other insects. To attract the insects, special holes are made in different measurements, where each animal – depending on its size – can deposit its eggs. The name solitary bees is applied to all those that do not produce honey and make nests, unlike bees that live in colonies with a queen.

With the aim of housing as many insect pollinators of different species as possible, Missika has created a sculpture with an overturned pyramid form in Luserna stone, a local gray granite, with over 2300 holes of various diameters cut into the stone blocks. The form, dimensions and material used for *Palazzo delle Api* are poised on the borderline between sculpture, architecture and environmental design. On the one hand, the serial array of inhabitable capsules suggests the structure of the buildings of the Japanese Metabolist movement in the 1960s, where form was based on science fiction imagery. On the other, the work addresses the urgent contemporary need to house and integrate populations forced to flee from countries torn by war. In this analogy with an exodus, the social aspect of the work is represented by the ecological necessity of protecting bees, which for some time have been threatened with extinction in spite of the fact that they are indispensable for our environment and its ecosystem, for the reproduction of plants and – as a result – the survival of the human race. The measurements and the material utilized by Adrien Missika are both functional and sculptural in nature, almost reminding us of a commemorative monument, an overturned Aztec pyramid, though every characteristic of the work has a precise role to play in the habitat the artist sets out to create with a socio-ecological objective.

“ADRIEN MISSIKA IS AN EXPLORER OF REAL AND FANTASTIC WORLDS, WHO SYNTHETIZES IN HIS WORKS, THAT ARE FORMALLY “FUNCTIONALIST” BUT CONCEPTUALLY POETICAL, ARTICULATED PROCESSES THAT ARE LINKED TO THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE WORLD SURROUNDING US,”

Ilaria Bonacossa, Art Director at Fondazione La Raia, states. "His project for Fondazione La Raia springs from his search for integration into the landscape achieved through a work that is related to the farm's activity, especially the production of biodynamic wine and honey. The artist designed a permanent bee and nomad insects' hive, an upside-down pre-Columbian pyramid inspired to Le Corbusier's housing units. *Palazzo delle Api* is a utopic sharing space for nomad bees (that naturally nest in walls, trunks or narrow openings) where the stone replaces the wax creating an anti-monument, an unexpected hive where geometry is still the focus but hierarchies, just like the pyramid, are upside-down offering a democratic cohabitation manner. The work, with its welcoming message, seems to ask us about our refuge politics for migrants.



CREDITS

Photos by Anna Positano