

Horti of the Almo Collegio Borromeo

46 Lungo Ticino Sforza Avenue, Pavia

The sculpture “Origine” by Maria Cristina Carlini in the permanent collection of the Horti

sculpture from 2019, 7 stoneware columns, mixed media
height from 340 to 230 cm, base 230 x 150 cm

press release, 6.07.26

Great success for the inauguration of **Maria Cristina Carlini**'s artwork *Origine*. An enthusiastic crowd welcomed the new monumental sculpture as it joined the park's permanent collection, where it blends harmoniously with the environment and nature. The seven polychrome stoneware columns, standing over three meters tall, soar toward the sky through a succession of hundreds of ceramic discs, modeled one by one using mixed media by the artist's own hands.

The artwork, generously granted on a loan-for-use basis through the **Maria Cristina Carlini Foundation ETS**, is located near the entrance of the Horti in the heart of Pavia, at a central crossing and gathering point for visitors.

During the inauguration, the speakers' speeches conveyed the founding values of the sculptor's philosophy, thanks to the addresses by Alberto Lolli, Rector of the Almo Collegio Borromeo and Director of the Horti; Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico, Artistic Director of the Maria Cristina Carlini Foundation ETS; Maria Cristina Barbieri, City Councillor for Culture of Pavia; and Maria Cristina Carlini herself. The Rector emphasized the significant cultural, human, and artistic contribution of the majestic sculpture, highlighting its profound harmony with nature and with the ethical and social vocation of the institution.

«The work of Maria Cristina Carlini, which was meticulously selected» comments **Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico**, «is wonderfully integrated into the outdoor exhibition spaces of the Horti, in complete harmony, creating an original eth-aesthetic dialogue between the *retentissement*, the reverberation of the observer, as Bachelard would say, and the ancestral resonance of the artworks, monuments and landscape».

In the sculpture *Origine*, the vibrant surface of the material, crisscrossed by subtle nuances and color variations, evokes a totemic and primordial dimension. The upward tension, the earthy physicality of the material, and the modular rhythm of the columns evoke an idea of origin understood as a universal, shared experience, deeply bound to the history of humanity.

In **Maria Cristina Carlini**'s artistic exploration, matter preserves the traces of time, ancestral memories, and symbolic stratifications that engage in a dialogue with the present. Having always been attentive to the themes of nature, balance, and environmental preservation, the artist favors natural and reclaimed materials, transforming them into sculptural presences charged with energy and memory.

Indeed, memory is one of the core pillars of Maria Cristina Carlini's artistic research, prompting her to ask: «What would we be without memory?» This tension permeates her entire body of work, translating into a continuous attempt to return to the origins of existence through matter.

Alberto Lolli welcomes the artwork with these words: «*Origine* breathes earth, fire, and spirit, in a breath that traverses ancestral times: distant, yet never concluded. In the Horti – a suspended place, an other space – the artwork becomes the presence of a different time, where the encounter between the human and the natural occurs just as it does in ceramics: in the earth that receives the gesture, in the water that makes it possible, in the fire that transforms it. A slow and necessary time, made of deliberate gestures and light caresses. Fire protects and alters, fixing memory within the material,

leaving behind traces, fractures, and unrepeatable gleams. It is a process of making that settles over time, retaining its signs and continuing to flow without seeking a destination. “Origine” calls to us, in silence, to remember the very matter we are made of.»

The installation is positioned at a key nexus between the cardo - the main axis traversing the park - and the pathway leading from the urban gate to the Garden of Aromas (Orto degli Aromi), allowing visitors to observe the artwork from multiple perspectives.

The artwork thus enters into a dialogue with the landscape, with the other installations in the park, and with the ethical dimension that characterizes the Horti project, a place where contemporary art, social inclusion, and community care intertwine in a shared vision.

A leading figure in contemporary Italian sculpture, **Maria Cristina Carlini** has been active since the 1970s. Following her early beginnings in ceramics in Palo Alto, California, she developed a sculptural exploration centered on the use of materials such as stoneware, iron, Corten steel, and reclaimed wood, crafting a visual language focused on the dialogue between matter, memory, and transformation. Her works have been exhibited in prominent public and private institutions across Europe, the United States, and Asia, where numerous monumental installations are on permanent display. In 2026, several of her sculptures were selected for SUSTART 2026 at the Chamber of Deputies in Rome, as part of an international forum dedicated to the relationship between contemporary art, culture, and sustainability. From July 10 to August 30, 2026, the Palazzo Reale in Milan will host the exhibition “Materie viventi” in its Courtyard of Honor and Garden, where her monumental works can be admired.

The **Horti dell’Almo Collegio Borromeo** is a natural oasis overlooking the Ticino River, proposing a new model of living and building community. It originated as a “Third Mission” project of the Almo Collegio Borromeo, the oldest university college of merit in Italy. Subsequently, a reorganization process led to the creation of the **Horti Foundation ETS**, whose goals are to protect the environment, safeguard plant and avian biodiversity, combat cultural poverty, support artistic creativity, encourage social responsibility and solidarity, foster social inclusion and community gathering, and promote the vision of a multicultural reality open to diversity. To this end, the Horti Bistrot was established to bridge social divides, create new job opportunities, and offer professional training paths dedicated to vulnerable individuals.

To promote the dissemination and understanding of contemporary artistic languages, the Horti hosts a collection of works by **nationally and internationally renowned artists**: *Accademia di Aracne, Sergio Alberti, Ferruccio Ascari, Nicola Carrino, Salvatore Cuschera, Giovanna Fra, Alberto Ghinzani, Ivan, Jannis Kounellis, Marco Lodola, Luigi Mainolfi, Giulia Mangoni, Gianfranco Pardi, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Costantino Ruggeri, Mauro Staccioli, and David Tremlett.*

Visitors can thus admire, reflect on, and engage with the contemporary pieces that make up the permanent art itinerary, which transforms the Horti into a predominantly open-air exhibition of **monumental sculptures and wall drawings**.

Event details

Title The sculpture “Origine” by Maria Cristina Carlini in the permanent collection of the Horti

Venue 46 Lungo Ticino Sforza Avenue – Pavia

Inaugurated on Sunday, June 21, 2026

Opening hours available on the website www.horti.it

Free admission

Visitor Information www.horti.it – info@horti.it

**Press Office for the Maria Cristina Carlini Foundation ETS
IBC Irma Bianchi Communication**

Via Arena 16/1 – Milan

Irma Bianchi mob. +39 335 8315232 – tel. +39 02 8940 4694

info@irmabianchi.it – www.irmabianchi.it

Maria Cristina Carlini Foundation ETS www.fondazionemariacristinacarlini.it

Press Office for Horti of the Almo Collegio Borromeo

promozione@horti.it