

THE STOLEN PARADISE

01-06-2010



For the opening of Rome's MAXXI National Museum of 21st century arts West 8's site-specific installation 'Il Nascosto Paradiso' (The Stolen Paradise) was mounted within the inaugural exhibition SPAZIO (Space) which features the works of artists and architects. It was substantially removed by the curators shortly before the opening at the request of several prominent international artists. What remains of the installation for the exhibition consists of half the exterior elements (corten steel tree trunks in grass at the entry).

With this contextual work West 8 introduced the narrative of a 'stolen paradise' consisting of two elements: outdoors the illusion of tree trunks fabricated of rusted corten steel, evoking layers of meaning associated with death, destruction and absence. Indoors the lightest, thinnest possible sheets of transparent fabric shaped in 60 large scale tree silhouettes suspended under the gallery's extensive skylights created a heavenly, diffuse light experienced within a forest canopy. The cumulative experience of the exterior and interior in sequence was conceived of both as a comment on the use of natural resources, and as a broad reflection on the polarities of our existence – artifact and atmosphere, indoors and outdoors, birth and death.

MAXXI curators and West 8 have agreed that the work will be reinstalled in the months to come on the occasion of a forthcoming monographic exhibit dedicated to the work of West 8.