

Prison inmates and artist Marinella Senatore create light installation for Vatican Jubilee Year

The Holy See will launch a series of contemporary art projects at prisons next year



Pope Francis in conversation with the artist Marinella Senatore, Cardinale José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefetto del Dicastero per la Cultura e l'Educazione, and three curator Cristiana Perrella. Marinella Senatore, *Io contengo moltitudini* (2024). Photo credit: Vatican Media.

The Vatican has unveiled a sculptural light installation on the outskirts of Rome made by the Italian artist Marinella Senatore in collaboration with prisoners at Rebibbia prison as part of the 2025 Holy Year Jubilee celebrations. Senatore's *Io Contengo Moltitudini* (*I Contain Multitudes*) has been installed in the square in front of the Rebibbia prison church where it will remain on view until 21 February.

Senatore's piece is "a firework-like structure with luminous phrases in various languages and dialects, chosen by the male and female inmates during workshops led by the artist", says a statement from Mazzoleni gallery which represents Senatore. Structurally, the work evokes the machines used for firework displays during Roman Baroque festivities, says the artist. Pope Francis opened the second Holy Door at Rebibbia Prison 26 December.

"These phrases were chosen from those written by male and female inmates during a workshop with approximately 60 participants, where the artist and the curator [Cristiana Perrella] presented the project, explaining its purpose and goals while introducing the theme of the Jubilee 2025—Hope," says a Vatican statement.

Senatore has also designed this year's official Christmas card for the Holy See's Dicastery for Culture and Education. For the Jubilee year, the dicastery has also commissioned artists to create installations at other prisons in Italy, according to the Catholic wire service OSV News. The project, entitled *Le Porte della Speranza* (*The Doors of Hope*), will be entrusted to renowned artists who will work in collaboration with inmates to create artworks displayed outside prisons, adds the Vatican.

Earlier this year at the 60th Venice Biennale, the Holy See launched its pavilion in the Giudecca Women's Prison featuring works by artists such as Maurizio Cattelan, Bintou Demélé, Simone Fattal and Claire Fontaine. Many of the works on show were created in collaboration with the detainees.

"Art is once again called upon to give voice to the invisible, those living on society's margins, and to shed light on an urgent issue—so dear to Pope Francis—that receives little attention in public discourse," adds Perrella in a statement.

Perrella will also curate the 2025 programme for the Dicastery's new exhibition space, named "Conciliazione 5" which will remain open for 24 hours a day on Via della Conciliazione in Rome. The first artist invited to show in the space will be Yan Pei-Ming, whose practice encompasses figurative, topical works that look to the Old Masters; in 2009, he was commissioned to reinterpret *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci (around 1503), depicting the Renaissance icon with streaks of paint running down her face.

Yan Pei-Ming will produce a new body of work focused on the Regina Coeli Prison which is due to be unveiled during the Jubilee of Artists (15-18 February).