

Aspen Art Museum
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Educator Notes



Installation view: Roberto Cuoghi, *da idā e piṅgalā a idā e idā o piṅgalā e piṅgalā*, 2015. Photo: Tony Prikrýl

Roberto Cuoghi da idā e piṅgalā a idā e idā o piṅgalā e piṅgalā

February 13–June 14, 2015

About the artist

Roberto Cuoghi was born in Modena, Italy, in 1973, studied at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan, and continues to live and work in Milan. Cuoghi makes videos, sculpture, paintings, and drawings, often working in a variety of unconventional media that expand on the possibilities of form and matter that make us question our perception and expectations. His work was first exhibited at the AAM as part of the show *The Residue of Memory* (2012).



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About the exhibition

For his exhibition *da iḍā e piṅgalā a iḍā e iḍā o piṅgalā e piṅgalā* at the Aspen Art Museum, Cuoghi explores patterns of transformation, identity, and the human psyche across time and in diverse cultures. The title features the Sanskrit words “iḍā” [lunar/feminine forces] and “piṅgalā” [solar/masculine forces], making reference not only to the ancient belief of two energy channels that wind through the body, but also larger themes of balance and duality. Cuoghi first heard these terms in a poem when he was thirteen years old.

Cuoghi’s exhibition also references Pazuzu, a hybrid creature described in Assyrian and Babylonian mythologies (from the eighth through the sixth century BC) as possessing the body of a man and the head of a dragon-snake. Pazuzu is recognized as both a dark spirit responsible for wind, drought, and famine, as well as a divine figure that could be called upon to serve as a shield from other evil spirits and misfortunes. The artist gained permission from the Louvre Museum to make a 3-D scan of a small, sixth-century BC amulet of Pazuzu from

their collection, which serves as the basis for many of the sculptures included in his Aspen Art Museum exhibition.

Cuoghi creates objects and scenarios where transitions and metamorphoses become possible through fantastic, visceral artworks. By excluding the materials he uses from the wall labels, Cuoghi opens up the opportunity for viewers to use their imagination when envisioning the work’s stories. This allows us to think about our own identities and experiences: are we open to realizing the endless opportunities that exist for transformation in our fluid, dynamic world?

Representations of Pazuzu in disparate materials, shapes, and textures reveal Cuoghi’s interest in human desire to find meaning and order in an unpredictable world. The manifestation of faith in objects such as amulets (including the Pazuzu amulet), lucky charms, or icons has given solace to civilizations for thousands of years in the past and continues today.



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Questions for discussion

- | What materials do you think the artist uses to create these artworks?
- | How many different textures can you find in Cuoghi's sculptures? What words can you use to describe how you imagine these sculptures to feel?
- | Cuoghi is interested in the way in which people have used amulets or charms throughout time and across diverse cultures. What is an object in your life that gives you a feeling of comfort or security?

Suggested activities

Personal Pazuzu

- | After reading the exhibition description to students, show images of the sculptures from Cuoghi's exhibition and discuss how the artist has represented Pazuzu in his work.
- | Invite students to create drawings or sculptures of their own representation of Pazuzu. Consider what textures, colors, and mood students can create in their artworks.
- | Can they make their own creations seem like they are from another time—either the past or the future?

For more information, please contact the Education Department at 970.925.8050 ext. 133 or email education@aspennartmuseum.org.

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