PRESS RELEASE

Iranian artists Majid Bita and Hanieh Ghashghaei exhibit at *ZÀCA! Reality and Poetry Through Comics*

The exhibition *Peace Is Not Neutral. Images of Memory and Resistance from Iran* runs from 3 December 2026 to 9 January 2027 in Santarcangelo di Romagna

From 3 December 2026 to 9 January 2027, Santarcangelo di Romagna (Rimini) will host *Peace Is Not Neutral. Images of Memory and Resistance from Iran*, an exhibition featuring Iranian artists **Majid Bita** and **Hanieh Ghashghaei**. The exhibition is part of *ZÀCA! Reality and Poetry Through Comics*, a Letture Liminali project curated by **Gianluca Costantini** and **Giovanni Boccia Artieri** that explores how comics and illustration can document and interpret the world we live in.

"Drawing Peace, Navigating Conflict" is the central theme of the second edition of *ZÀCA!*. Through stories, personal accounts and images, the programme explores how comics and drawing can convey individual experiences and the contradictions of the present, offering fresh perspectives on realities that are often underrepresented.

Following the preview with **Gianluca Pagliarani** on Saturday 21 November, the main programme will take place on **3, 4 and 5 December**, with guests **Majid Bita, Hanieh Ghashghaei, Francesco Chiacchio, Viviana Gravano, Samir Harb, Pegah Moshir Pour, Siid Negash, Andrea Sestante** and **Elettra Stamboulis**.

"This year we have chosen to put peace at the centre of the programme. We see peace as something we can build by recognising differences, remembering injustices and listening to other people's experiences. It can be tempting to think of peace in the abstract, or to picture a reassuring world without conflict," explain curators **Gianluca Costantini** and **Giovanni Boccia Artieri**. "The discussions and works in this edition take us from Iran to Palestine, and from the legacies of Italian colonialism to contemporary forms of resistance. These stories ask us to question the present and the way we choose to represent it. Every image expresses a point of view and involves choices. It carries a responsibility for what it shows and what it leaves outside the frame."

The exhibition brings together **Majid Bita** and **Hanieh Ghashghaei**, two Iranian artists who live and work in Italy. Through distinct visual languages, they explore memory, identity and imagination. Their work invites us to consider how collective history becomes part of our lives, our memories, our emotions and the ways we try to tell our own stories.

For **Majid Bita**, drawing is a way of making sense of personal experience and engaging with memory. Born in Iran, Bita moved to Italy in 2014. In his visual narratives, his relationship with his roots is bound up with shifts in identity and the search for new forms of belonging. From *Nato in Iran* (*Born in Iran*) to *L'autobus incantato* (*The Enchanted Bus*), his storytelling moves between autobiography and imagination. Memories become material through which he continues to interpret the present. Drawing creates a space where individual lives and collective histories can meet while retaining their distinct contours.

In **Hanieh Ghashghaei's** work, memory and imagination come together in dreamlike scenes populated by female figures, elements of the natural world and recollections of childhood.

Vulnerability, loss and war find expression in a poetic language that makes room for dreams, metamorphosis and inner life. Her images explore the emotional afterlife of events, what stays with people and continues to inhabit their imaginations. Her work reminds us that even our most intimate experiences are shaped by the social and political world, and that imagination can help us process those experiences and become a form of resistance.

Bringing these two bodies of work together opens up different ways of telling the story of a country, conveying a memory or expressing a sense of belonging. The Iran that runs through both artists' lives is more complex than news coverage or familiar accounts of conflict can convey. Their work makes room for a range of perspectives and sensibilities. Behind every collective representation are individual lives, worlds of imagination and stories that exceed any single definition.

The exhibition also features drawings made during the workshop led by **Victoria Lomasko** at the previous edition of *ZÀCA!*, alongside two works dedicated to Santarcangelo di Romagna, one by **Victoria Lomasko** and one by **Pietro Scarnera**. These drawings explore the relationships between artists, the town and the people who live there. They record encounters and shared experiences that invite us to look again at familiar places. Through work like this, *ZÀCA!* seeks to build a lasting relationship with Santarcangelo, making drawing part of the town's cultural life and contributing to a shared visual memory.

The exhibition brings together different ways of seeing and telling stories, grounded in the belief that comics and illustration can help us understand the present in all its contradictions. Images can change how we relate to others, what we are able to recognise and which questions we choose to ask. Their power lies in these shifts in perspective, while changing the course of history takes collective action.

Peace, then, is still to be drawn. A different future takes more than imagination, but it can only begin to take shape if we retain the ability to picture it, discuss it and build it together. *ZÀCA!* continues to find its purpose in the space between the responsibility of looking and the freedom to imagine.