



Exhibition «The Trieste of Magris»
09/03/2011 – 17/07/2011

Straddling three worlds

Trieste is a border city. And, therefore, a city of transit. Travellers, immigrants, writers, people from everywhere and nowhere have passed through a city that straddles the Germanic, Balkan and Latin worlds. Claudio Magris is the writer who best represents the always difficult courtship between Central Europe and Latin Europe. Europe was incomplete until both of these worlds encountered each other again. And Magris traced the cultural paths of both of them before the vicissitudes of history reunited what revolutions, wars and utopias had separated. This is why Magris's work is so contemporary.

Michel Foucault said that philosophy was the ontology of the present. The key questions that can be asked in Europe today concern reflection on the cultural fractures it has experienced. And the fracture in Central Europe is one of the fault lines that have set European culture off balance. Magris based himself on literature in order to construct and reconstruct the links and bridges that barbarism has destroyed. If the destruction of the bridge at Mostar was one of the symbols of the triumph of ethnic hatred over cultural modernity, *Danube* by Claudio Magris is a symbol of the desire to reveal the cultural substrate shared by very different peoples, often without them knowing it.

Despite the many years Claudio Magris spent in Turin, which was his second city for many reasons, and despite his extensive travels around the world, he has always kept his home in Trieste, and it is the elements of the imaginary of this city that predominantly fashion the mindscape of his experiences. This is what this exhibition is about: those elements of the culture, literature, art, life and geography of this city that has had a decisive impact on shaping Magris's cultural universe; and the way Magris has reproduced them in the form of writing, after sifting them through his personal and literary experience.

The Trieste of Magris is a variant of the exhibition genre with a long-standing tradition at the CCCB. Dublin and Joyce, Lisbon and Pessoa, Prague and Kafka, Buenos Aires and Borges have become part of the cultural memory of the centre. However, one of the new aspects of the exhibition about Trieste is that this is the first time the experiment to find the imaginary of a city and the imaginary of a writer, while letting the effects of the clash between them flow, has been done through a living writer: Claudio Magris. Therefore, the exhibition isn't an exercise in creation based on documents and past testimony, but emerges from the piercing gaze of the writer, who has always lived with an eye on the people, the landscapes, the places and non-places of the city. The exhibition even includes a film produced especially for the occasion. Over the course of this exhibition adventure supervised by Claudio Magris and the director and musician Giorgio Pressburger, the idea emerged to make a film based on Magris's book *You Will Finally Understand*.

Trieste and its writers, guided by the hand of Magris on an imaginary journey, are the central figures in this exhibition. Italo Svevo, Umberto Saba, Rainer Maria Rilke, James Joyce are some of the characters; Trieste's wind, the stones of the karst plateau, the green waters (Marisa Madieri), the Caffè San Marco, the Libreria Antiquaria, are some of the places. However, along the way, he continues to weave a giant tapestry of European culture, through a city that has occupied a central position in making and unmaking the history of Central Europe. *The Trieste of Magris* is also an exercise in rebuilding the European cultural universe.