

## **Aleksandra Mir, Stonehenge II**

### **Biografia Autore:**

Aleksandra Mir (1967) è un'artista contemporanea svedese-americana, conosciuta per le sue installazioni e progetti collaborativi. Il suo lavoro affronta tematiche quali il viaggio, il tempo, la natura dei luoghi, il linguaggio, il genere, l'identità, la località, la nazionalità, la globalità, la mobilità, la connettività, la performatività, la rappresentazione, la transizione, la traduzione e la trasgressione. È nota per i suoi progetti collaborativi su ampia scala e per il suo metodo antropologico, che comprende rigorose ricerche negli archivi, storie orali e indagini sul campo.

Ha esposto in musei e istituzioni quali Kunsthaus Zurich (2006), Tate Modern, Londra (2014), Tate Liverpool (2017), Modern Art Oxford (2017), Schirn Kunsthalle, Francoforte (2009), M – Museum Leuven (2013), Whitney Museum of American Art (2014), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (2007), MoMA, New York (2012), YUZ Museum, Shanghai (2018), Whitney Biennial (2004), Biennale of Sydney (2002), Biennale di Venezia (2009), and Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre (2015), Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong (2020).

### **Titolo:**

Stonehenge II

### **Anno:**

1998-2001

### **Abstract:**

*Stonehenge II* è la proposta di un'opera per lo spazio pubblico di Aleksandra Mir. Originariamente presentata alla commissione Artangel/Times Open nel 1998 (e successivamente respinta), la proposta prevedeva la costruzione di una replica di Stonehenge vicino all'originale, per ridurre il volume del traffico pedonale e salvare questo parte del patrimonio culturale da un'ulteriore distruzione. Per compensare la necessaria limitazione dell'accesso a *Stonehenge I*, *Stonehenge II* avrebbe consentito l'accesso completo e promosso un'ampia gamma di attività sul suo terreno. Il progetto è stato proposto una seconda volta agli studenti del corso di curatela del Royal College of Art, ai quali è stato chiesto di unirsi all'artista nella produzione del progetto durante l'estate del 2001 (anch'essa rifiutata). Il modello in scala è stato costruito nel 2002-03. Aleksandra Mir continua a perseguire la sua ambizione di realizzare quest'opera e spera di entrare in contatto con persone interessate che desiderino collaborare.

### **Descrizione del progetto:**

LONDRA - Aleksandra Mir presenterà un modello in scala di *Stonehenge II*, la proposta di un'opera per uno spazio pubblico. Originariamente presentata alla commissione Artangel/Times Open nel 1998 (e successivamente respinta), la proposta prevedeva la costruzione di una replica di Stonehenge vicino all'originale, per ridurre il volume del

traffico pedonale e salvare questo patrimonio culturale da un'ulteriore distruzione. Per compensare la necessaria limitazione dell'accesso a *Stonehenge I*, *Stonehenge II* avrebbe consentito l'accesso completo e promosso un'ampia gamma di attività sul suo terreno. Il progetto è stato proposto una seconda volta agli studenti del corso di curatela del Royal College of Art, ai quali è stato chiesto di unirsi all'artista nella produzione del progetto durante l'estate del 2001 (anch'esso rifiutato). Il modello in scala è stato costruito nel 2002-03. Aleksandra Mir continua a perseguire la sua ambizione di realizzare quest'opera e spera di entrare in contatto con persone interessate che desiderino collaborare.

Cristina Ricupero, 'Publicness', Institute of Contemporary Art, Press Release, London, 2003

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Proposta presentata alla commisione Artangel/Times Open nel 1998:

### *Stonehenge II*

La mia idea è quella di costruire una replica della formazione residua di Stonehenge a distanza di un giorno di viaggio dall'originale.

### HISTORY

"... The earliest farmers of Britain, entering the island in the late fifth century, flourished during the course of centuries of occupation. Their population grew apace as they tilled small plots of land and herded the cattle. Organized tribally, they built great hill forts, corrals really, where they gathered their cattle each year to celebrate seasonal festivals of the harvest and perhaps, on the other side of the year, to the coming vernal season. Out of this activity there arose the political institution of chiefdoms and also the tradition of celestial observation. Both have to do with the building of Stonehenge ..." <sup>1</sup>

### MYSTICISM

"... A more radical alternative, then and now, has been to abandon the settlers of Britain, and search farther afield for more distant and colorful architects. The further away they are, the less is known about them, and the more easily is the discrepancy between Stonehenge and a possible prototype evaded - for would not the shock of leaving its native land for the cold of the Salisbury plain modify any style of architecture? The ultimate personifications of this idea have been UFO-nauts, infinitely remote, infinitely mysterious, infinitely capable; an earlier suggestion has been the people of lost Atlantis..." <sup>2</sup>

### HERITAGE

“... Issues of peoples’ rights and responsibilities remain unresolved and there has been a troubled history of alienation and confrontation around this very ancient monument which is a World Heritage site and continues to resonate as a central point in the spiritual history and in the regional consciousness of identity for people in these islands. One only has to mention topics like The Stonehenge People’s Free Festival, Religious Rights of Druids and Pagans, The Stonehenge Exclusion Zone, or New Age Travelers to find oneself in a region of seemingly irreconcilable controversy...” <sup>3</sup>

## ECONOMY

“... Ten years ago, three different opinion polls showed significant majorities in support of a Stonehenge Festival renewal. The F86 petition, from people residing within three-and-a-half miles of Stonehenge, was presented to the English Heritage and National Trust representatives. This petition included signatures of Amesbury business people who felt they were being denied their boost in trade, to which they had become accustomed to each June. Other local traders in support were those who did a lot of business on the site, such as in dairy and food products, chips and burgers, hardware, etc. They had all benefited considerably from the huge increase in spending money brought into the local economy...” <sup>4</sup>

## TOURISM

“... There is to be a performance of a Midsummer Night’s dream at the Stones on midsummer’s day. English Heritage pointed out that the £300 tickets were for a two-day holiday including the play, and that EH members would be offered some tickets at £15. The play is part of a trend. More and more, English Heritage is using its sites as venues for moneymaking historical theme events. Some of these seem harmless enough; at the Stones there will be, at normal prices: ‘Aubrey on Druids’, ‘Stories and mask making’, ‘Legends of King Arthur’, and ‘The History Man’. Then there are opportunities, at £12, to take photos in the Stones, or have a Sundowner drink...” <sup>5</sup>

## ACCESS

“... English Heritage intends to lift the four-mile exclusion zone for 100 Druids. The 10,000 other people expected for the solstice will still be excluded. The proposal to allow the Druids on the site was agreed at a meeting last week between the various religious groups, the police and English Heritage. It will go before Salisbury District Council for approval but the Home Secretary has a final say. Other quasi-religious groups that claim access were disappointed. Clew Everard, in charge of Stonehenge, appealed for all groups to accept the compromise. She said: ‘We are looking for a way in which we can allow access for all who want it’ ” <sup>6</sup>

## AUTHENTICITY

“... In our more divided and diverse times, a growing range of views about Stonehenge compete and overlap. One can see in them not just the spirit of a confused age, but the backgrounds and the personalities of the individuals who propagate them. Standing back from that old Stonehenge and the separate New Stonehenge, looking at the spot in a wider landscape and a wider society, one must think also of a Before Stonehenge, an After Stonehenge and - many centuries later - a Discoverer of Stonehenge. Remembering that the word ‘Stonehenge’ is not the original lost name, but a creation from the time of Discovery, one might prefer to call this event, of which we are ourselves a late part, an Invention of Stonehenge” <sup>7</sup>

## REPLICATION

“... It took an American, Col. Samuel Hill, to do the job properly with his full-size concrete Stonehenge, built by the River Columbia at Maryhill, Washington, in the Pacific USA, 1918–29, as a memorial to the thirteen war dead of Kickitat county” <sup>8</sup>

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1 - Leon E. Stover, *Stonehenge the indio-european heritage*, Nelson-Hall, Chicago, pp. 181, 1978

2, 4, 5 - *The Stonehenge Newsletter*, 7/98

2, 7, 8 - Christopher Chippindale, *Stonehenge Complete*, Thames and Hudson, pp. 62, 264, 179 1983, 1994

6 - Simon de Bruxelles, *Druids allowed back for solstice at Stonehenge*, *The Times*, pp. 9, April 15, 1998

<https://aleksandramir.info/projects/stonehenge-ii/>

## **Descrizione della documentazione del progetto:**

2004\_Stonehenge\_w.jpg

Fotografia del modello in scala, 2004

Mir\_Stonehenge1\_w.jpg

Mir\_Stonehenge2\_w.jpg

*Stonehenge II (model)*, mixed media, 'Publicness', ICA, London, 2003

Mir\_Stonehenge3\_w.jpg

Mir\_Stonehenge4\_w.jpg

Mir\_Stonehenge5\_w.jpg

Mir\_Stonehenge6\_w.jpg

Mir\_Stonehenge7\_w.jpg

Mir\_Stonehenge8\_w.jpg

Installation view, *Stonehenge II (model)*, mixed media, 2002-3; *First Woman on the Moon*, video, 1999, 'Publicness', ICA, 2003

### **Committente e ulteriori informazioni sul progetto originale:**

*Open* è una call aperta, promossa da Artangel dal 1999, che invita gli artisti a condividere le loro idee più ambiziose di arte su, in o per un luogo insolito. Da un serbatoio di idee per una vasta gamma di luoghi possibili – e anche alcuni impossibili – sono stati selezionati alcuni artisti che hanno poi realizzato i loro progetti.

Il bando originale è stato lanciato nel 1999 e gli artisti selezionati sono stati Jeremy Deller e Michael Landy. Entrambi i progetti sono stati realizzati nel 2001. *The Battle of Orgreave* è stato il re-enactment da parte di Jeremy Deller di una battaglia cruciale degli scioperi dei minatori degli anni Ottanta nello Yorkshire, mentre *Break Down* di Michael Landy è consistita nella distruzione sistematica e pubblica da parte dell'artista di ogni singolo oggetto di sua proprietà in Oxford Street, a Londra.

La giuria comprendeva gli artisti già premiati come Brian Eno e Rachel Whiteread, lo storico dell'arte Richard Cork e i co-direttori di Artangel James Lingwood e Michael Morris. Artangel è un'organizzazione artistica londinese fondata nel 1985 da Roger Took. Diretta dal 1991 da James Lingwood e Michael Morris, ha commissionato e prodotto una serie di importanti opere site-specific, oltre a numerosi progetti per la TV, il cinema, la radio e il web.

### **Motivo di mancata realizzazione:**

Originariamente presentata alla commissione Artangel/Times Open nel 1998, e successivamente respinta. Il progetto è stato proposto una seconda volta agli studenti del corso di curatela del Royal College of Art, ai quali è stato chiesto di unirsi all'artista nella produzione del progetto durante l'estate del 2001 (anch'esso rifiutato).

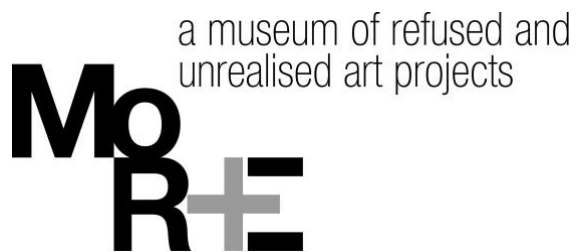
### **Bibliografia specifica**

#### Eventi

- Publicness, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 2003

#### Testi

- Birnbaum, Molly, Ironic Chef, Artnews, Vol. 109, #8, NYC, Sep 2010
- Bollen, Christopher, Interview with Aleksandra Mir, The Believer, San Francisco, Dec 2003
- Suchin, Peter, Publicness, Mute, #26, London, Apr 2003
- Jones, Jonathan, Publicness, The Guardian, London, Feb 2003
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- Ricupero, Cristina, Publicness, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, Jan 2003

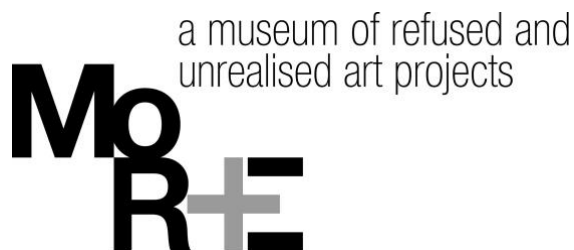


- Ricupero, Cristina, Interview - Haaning, Laurette & Mir, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, Jan 2003
- Güner, Fisun, Political Wilderness, Metro, London, Jan 2003
- Bradley, Will, Life and Times, Frieze, #75, London, 2003
- Frieze Art Fair, Frieze Yearbook 2003-04, London, 2003

**Scheda a cura di:**

Aleksandra Mir & Marco Scotti

**Pubblicato su MoRE museum il 6 febbraio 2023**

**Artist:**

Aleksandra Mir (born 1967) is a Swedish-American contemporary artist known for her collaborative installations and projects. Her work deals with travel, time, placehood, language, gender, identity, locality, nationality, globality, mobility, connectivity, performativity, representation, transition, translation and transgression. She is known for her large scale collaborative projects and for her anthropological methods, involving rigorous archival research, oral history and field work.

She has exhibited at Kunsthau Zurich (2006), Tate Modern, London (2014), Tate Liverpool (2017), Modern Art Oxford (2017), Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2009), M – Museum Leuven (2013), Whitney Museum of American Art (2014), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (2007), MoMA, New York City (2012), YUZ Museum, Shanghai (2018), Whitney Biennial (2004), Biennale of Sydney (2002), Biennale di Venezia (2009), and Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre (2015), Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong (2020).

**Title:**

Stonehenge II

**Date:**

1998-2001

**Abstract:**

Stonehenge II is a proposal for a work in a public space by Aleksandra Mir.

Originally presented to the Artangel/Times open commission in 1998 (and subsequently rejected), the proposal was to build a Stonehenge replica close to the original, to reduce the volume of pedestrian traffic and save this piece of cultural heritage from further destruction. To compensate for the necessary limited access to *Stonehenge I*, *Stonehenge II* would allow full access and promote a wide range of activities on its grounds. The project was proposed a second time to students on the Royal College of Art curating course, who were asked to join the artist in the production of the project over the summer of 2001 (also rejected). The scale model was constructed in 2002–03. Aleksandra Mir continues to further her ambition to realize this work and hopes to make contact with interested parties who wish to assist.

**Project description:**

LONDON - Aleksandra Mir will present a scale model of Stonehenge II, a proposal for a work in a public space. Originally presented to the Artangel/Times open commission in 1998 (and subsequently rejected), the proposal was to build a Stonehenge replica close to the original, to reduce the volume of pedestrian traffic and save this piece of cultural heritage from further destruction. To compensate for the necessary limited access to *Stonehenge I*, *Stonehenge II* would allow full access and promote a wide range of activities on its grounds. The project was proposed a second time to students on the Royal College of Art curating course, who were asked to join the artist in the production of the project over the summer of 2001 (also rejected). The scale model was constructed in

2002–03. Aleksandra Mir continues to further her ambition to realize this work and hopes to make contact with interested parties who wish to assist.

Cristina Ricupero, 'Publicness', Institute of Contemporary Art, Press Release, London, 2003

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Proposal presented to the Artangel/Times open commission in 1998:

## Stonehenge II

My idea is to build a replica of the remnant formation at Stonehenge within the distance of a daytrip from the original

## HISTORY

“... The earliest farmers of Britain, entering the island in the late fifth century, flourished during the course of centuries of occupation. Their population grew apace as they tilled small plots of land and herded the cattle. Organized tribally, they built great hill forts, corrals really, where they gathered their cattle each year to celebrate seasonal festivals of the harvest and perhaps, on the other side of the year, to the coming vernal season. Out of this activity there arose the political institution of chiefdoms and also the tradition of celestial observation. Both have to do with the building of Stonehenge ...” <sup>1</sup>

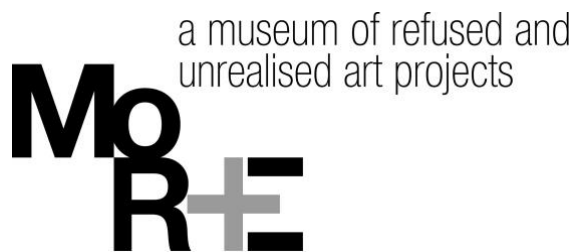
## MYSTICISM

“... A more radical alternative, then and now, has been to abandon the settlers of Britain, and search farther afield for more distant and colorful architects. The further away they are, the less is known about them, and the more easily is the discrepancy between Stonehenge and a possible prototype evaded - for would not the shock of leaving its native land for the cold of the Salisbury plain modify any style of architecture? The ultimate personifications of this idea have been UFO-nauts, infinitely remote, infinitely mysterious, infinitely capable; an earlier suggestion has been the people of lost Atlantis...” <sup>2</sup>

## HERITAGE

“... Issues of peoples’ rights and responsibilities remain unresolved and there has been a troubled history of alienation and confrontation around this very ancient monument which is a World Heritage site and continues to resonate as a central point in the spiritual history and in the regional consciousness of identity for people in these islands. One only has to mention topics like The Stonehenge People’s Free Festival, Religious Rights of Druids and





Pagans, The Stonehenge Exclusion Zone, or New Age Travelers to find oneself in a region of seemingly irreconcilable controversy..."<sup>3</sup>

## ECONOMY

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<https://aleksandramir.info/projects/stonehenge-ii/>

## Project materials description:

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Photography of the scale model, 2004

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*Stonehenge II (model)*, mixed media, 'Publicness', ICA, London, 2003

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Installation view, *Stonehenge II (model)*, mixed media, 2002-3; *First Woman on the Moon*, video, 1999, 'Publicness', ICA, 2003

## Commissioner and other information about the original project:

*Open* is an open call, promoted by Artangel since 1999, who invites artists to share their

most ambitious ideas for art about, in or for an unusual place. From a reservoir of ideas for a huge range of possible locations – as well as a few impossible ones – a number of artists have been selected and gone on to realise their projects.

The original open call was made in 1999 and the selected artists were Jeremy Deller and Michael Landy. Both projects were realised in 2001. *The Battle of Orgreave* was Jeremy Deller's re-enactment of a pivotal battle from the 1980s miners strikes in Yorkshire and *Break Down* was Michael Landy's systematic, public destruction of every single thing he owned on Oxford Street, London.

The judging panel included previously-commissioned artists Brian Eno and Rachel Whiteread, art historian Richard Cork and Artangel Co-Directors James Lingwood and Michael Morris.

Artangel is a London-based arts organisation founded in 1985 by Roger Took. Directed since 1991 by James Lingwood and Michael Morris, it has commissioned and produced a string of notable site-specific works, plus several projects for TV, film, radio and the web.

### **Unrealised project, reason why:**

Originally presented to the Artangel/Times open commission in 1998, and subsequently rejected.

The project was proposed a second time to students on the Royal College of Art curating course, who were asked to join the artist in the production of the project over the summer of 2001 (also rejected).

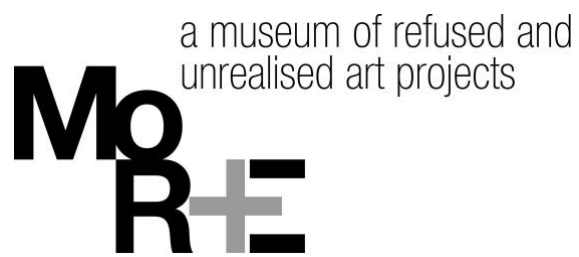
### **Selective bibliography:**

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**Archival record edited by:**  
Aleksandra Mir & Marco Scotti

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