

# Fondazione Ermanno Casoli

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announces

**CEZARY PONIATOWSKI**

**Winner of the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Premio Ermanno Casoli**

curated by Jakub Gawkowski and Marcello Smarrelli

## PRESS RELEASE

Fondazione Ermanno Casoli announces the winner of the **23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Premio Ermanno Casoli**, one of the most important international awards dedicated to the relationship between **art and business**. The prize has been awarded to the Polish artist **Cezary Poniatowski** who will create a site-specific artwork for the **Elica Group Polska** plant, Elica's facility in Jelcz-Laskowice, Poland, which celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The project is curated by **Jakub Gawkowski** and **Marcello Smarrelli**.

**Francesco Casoli**, President of Elica, said, "We are proud that the Premio Ermanno Casoli, a project that embodies Elica's core values, is being held in our Polish plant for the first time. This edition of the prize is especially meaningful as it marks the 20th anniversary of Elica Group Polska, which has become a key part of our group, contributing to its growth and evolution. We believe that art is a powerful tool for connection and development, and we are excited to see how this project will engage our corporate community."

In his artistic practice, **Cezary Poniatowski** transforms everyday objects and materials into sculptural compositions. Drawing inspiration from the histories, emotions, and memories linked to material culture, he creates works that feel both familiar and unsettling. "Poniatowski's research reflects the ways perception shapes meaning—how we recognize familiar forms in abstract compositions and how materials tied to domestic or utilitarian functions carry cultural and emotional significance. This approach positions him among the most compelling voices in sculpture and spatial practice in Central Europe today" - affirms **Jakub Gawkowski**, co-curator of this edition of the Premio Ermanno Casoli.

In the words of **Marcello Smarrelli**, Artistic Director of Fondazione Ermanno Casoli, "The Premio Ermanno Casoli has always aimed to foster dialogue between art and business, using the universal language of art to inspire new perspectives and ways of thinking. We do this across all the countries where Elica operates, promoting its values globally and reinforcing the deep connection between creativity and innovation. Thanks to his artistic practice, which explores crucial issues such as the human condition and its relationship with technology and the environment, we are confident that Cezary Poniatowski's contribution will have a profound and lasting impact on the company and its employees."

Following this approach, Cezary Poniatowski has been invited to conceive a **site-specific project for the Elica Group Polska** plant. As is typical of the Premio Ermanno Casoli, employees will be directly involved in the creation of a permanent artwork. Poniatowski's intervention will explore breath and inhalation—both as physiological processes and as metaphors for circulation, flow, and transformation. Engaging with Elica's advanced technologies that regulate and enhance air saturation, the project will link those processes to the broader metabolic exchanges within individual and collective bodies.

This activity, designed from a corporate training perspective, has been developed in response to a need identified within the company in collaboration with the Human Resources department. "This project is not only a celebration of Elica Polska's 20th anniversary but also an opportunity to strengthen the bond and sense of belonging within our group" - said **Katarzyna Wieteska**, HR Manager of Elica Group Polska - "Through art, we aim to inspire collaboration, creativity, and shared values among our employees, reinforcing the strong connection that defines Elica's corporate culture."

**The work will be inaugurated in June 2025 at the Elica Group Polska plant in Jelcz-Laskowice, Poland.**

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**Cezary Poniatowski** is an interdisciplinary artist who lives and works in Warsaw, Poland, and Crete, Greece. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, he first gained recognition for his paintings, characterized by a bold, graphic aesthetic and a restrained color palette. Over the past five years, he has shifted from painting to sculpture, creating spatial forms and site-specific installations. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include: *Scouts Wschód*, New York, United States, 2024; *News from Home*, Galerie Derouillon, Paris, France (with Biraaj Dodiya), 2024. Recent group exhibitions include: *Little Tree Ginny on Frederick*, London, United Kingdom, 2024; *Productive Narcissism*, O32c gallery, Berlin, Germany, 2024; *Air Service Basel 2024*, Air Service Basel, Basel, Switzerland (organized by Lo Brutto Stahl, Paris), 2024; *Does The Rising Sun Affright*, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland, 2024; *It Was A Hot Day, A Day That Was Blue All Through*, Crèvecœur, Paris, France, 2024; *Living Spaces*, Molitor, Berlin, Germany, 2023; *Reading Stones*, Linseed Projects, Shanghai, China, 2023. Cezary Poniatowski is represented by Galeria Wschód (Warsaw; New York). [www.cezaryponiatowski.pl](http://www.cezaryponiatowski.pl)

**Jakub Gawkowski** is a curator and art historian, Head of the Modern Art Department at the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, and a PhD candidate at the Department of Comparative History at Central European University in Vienna. In his exhibitions, writing and research, he explores visual arts in relation to temporality, knowledge and memory. His recent curated and co-curated exhibitions include *Erna Rosenstein, Aubrey Williams. The Earth Will Open its Mouth* at Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, *The Work That Textile Does* at Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź, and *Wacław Szpakowski. Riga Notebooks* at the Latvian National Museum of Art in Riga. His essays and interviews have been published in specialized journals such as *Krytyka Polityczna* and *e-flux*, among others, as well as in various exhibition catalogues. He is a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA), the program council of TRAF0 in Szczecin, and the program council of QueerMuzeum in Warsaw.

**Marcello Smarrelli** is the Artistic Director of Fondazione Ermanno Casoli in Fabriano, Pesaro Musei, and Fondazione Pastificio Cerere in Rome, as well as Curator-at-Large at Fondazione Memmo in Rome. He is also a member of the Scientific Committee of the Osservatorio della Cultura of the Marche Region. Born in Rome, Smarrelli is an art historian and curator. After earning a degree in Art History from La Sapienza University of Rome and specializing in Contemporary Art History at the University of Siena, he focused particularly on exploring the relationship between aesthetics and pedagogy, refining a curatorial practice increasingly aligned with themes related to public art and relational aesthetics. He has curated numerous exhibitions in public and private institutions, public art projects, and training workshops with artists for major multinational companies. E-STRAORDINARIO, a project he conceived for Fondazione Ermanno Casoli that fosters collaboration between artists and businesses for corporate training, won the first prize in the Cultura+Impresa Award in 2014. His critical essays are published in exhibition catalogs and specialized magazines, to which he is a regular contributor. He has also served as a juror for prestigious contemporary art awards in Italy and abroad (Curator of the Ariane de Rothschild Prize, Critic and selection advisor for the Prix Prince Pierre de Monaco, Furla Prize for Art, Talent Prize, Premio per la Giovane Arte Italiana, ideator and curator of 6artista, the Premio Ermanno Casoli, and Surprise).

**Fondazione Ermanno Casoli (FEC)**, a contemporary art foundation established in 2007 in memory of Ermanno Casoli (Fabriano, 1928–1978), founder of Elica—a global leader in kitchen extraction systems and the main supporter of FEC—promotes initiatives where contemporary art acts as an educational and methodological tool to enhance work environments and drive innovation. A pioneer in fostering dialogue between art and business, FEC has become a leading model in Italy for managerial education through contemporary art. It offers structured and specialized activities with international artists, bridging these two worlds while respecting their distinct objectives. This method was the subject of study in the publication "Innovating Business with Art: The Fondazione Ermanno Casoli Method", published by Egea in 2018, with an English version released in 2021. [www.fondazioneecasoli.org](http://www.fondazioneecasoli.org)

The **Premio Ermanno Casoli** is conceived as a commission awarded by the Fondazione Ermanno Casoli to a different artist with each edition. Its aim is to create permanent artwork within a company, fostering the active participation of its employees throughout the process. The project often includes an artist residency at the company, allowing for an in-depth exchange between the artist and the community. The award is dedicated to artists whose work addresses pressing social and political issues, where collaboration and interpersonal relationships play a fundamental role in the creative process. Over the years, the award has been given to prominent artists, including: Agostino Iacurci (2024), Claire Fontaine (2023), Eugenio Tibaldi (2022), Jorge Satorre (2021), Matteo Fato (2020), Patrick Tuttofuoco (2019), Elena Mazzi, (2018), Andrea Mastrovito (2016), Yang Zhenzhong (2015), Danilo Correale (2013-2014), Anna Franceschini (2012), Francesco Barocco (2011), Francesco Arena (2009).

**Elica**, Italian company standing at the forefront of cooking appliance production and design, a global leader in kitchen extraction systems with over 50 years of history. European major player in the production of electric motors for household appliances and heating boilers. 2,600 staff employed in its Fabriano headquarters and in its seven production sites in Italy, Poland, Mexico and China: these are Elica's figures, successfully achieved under the constant guidance of the company President Francesco Casoli. Results driven by corporate values that have always inspired every single project, product and activity: design that meets aesthetics and performance for an extraordinary cooking experience, art destined as a model for creative processes and working methods, and innovation to support technological solutions capable of enhancing product functionality. [www.elica.com](http://www.elica.com)

Fabriano, March 2025

Photos: [press kit download](#)

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