



Press Release

Paolo Sorrentino. La dolce attesa

8th April 2025

 Salone del Mobile.Milano

Paolo Sorrentino. La dolce attesa

Supported by the scenographer Margherita Palli and the soundscape of Max Casacci, the Oscar-winning director pays tribute to a universal feeling: waiting. Not an interval but life's most serious time. Marked by the beating of a heart, hidden, mysterious.

La dolce attesa (Pavilions 22-24), the installation-project by the director **Paolo Sorrentino for the 2025 Salone**, is an experience that transforms the space into a **high-angled shot of suspended emotions, into a limbo of visual and sound suggestions**, playing on the borderline between two verbs. One of which is to wait, which doesn't mean standing still. Waiting means shifting one's gaze, tending towards. Pursuing, without running. Then there is the other, the hasty, peremptory one: **waiting**. Which makes us anxious. A foot tapping nervously, an eye on the clock, time that fails to pass. **Waiting is the state of mind of impatience. Waiting, on the other hand, is a dimension.** A place where things can happen. A time of transition. This is (perhaps) why the director describes it as **"sweet."** Because waiting is not passive. It is slow, but fertile. An incubator. It needs time. Time to transform chaos – the chaos outside and inside us when we wait in a clinic – into something recognisable. Not instantly. When the time is right. You have to know how to be in the emptiness of that room. **Which means that how that space is designed and created can make all the difference.**

As **Paolo Sorrentino** explains: *"In "La dolce attesa" we talk about waiting for a medical response. The kind of waiting that becomes suspended time. We remain suspended. Still, tense, nervous. And anguished. And the waiting room, as it has been conceived until now, only serves to amplify that anguish. Between white walls, uncomfortable chairs, monitors flashing up numbers, grumpy employees, you end up obsessively focusing on your smartphone. Perhaps, then, we should rethink waiting. Trick it. Travelling and getting lost in the journey as if in a vague sense of hypnosis. So, perhaps, waiting can become less painful. Because it becomes something else. Our waiting room aspires to be something else. It doesn't force you to sit still, but lets you go. A little trip, like when we were children, on reassuring rides. As adults, the rocking horses have become shell-like armchairs, like mothers' wombs. Disaffected office workers are replaced by men and women who reconcile you to an idea of tranquillity. They smile at you and know how to give you a fatherly pat. Your eye is drawn to a jumble of frosted glass that hides and distorts the only element that, assuming it continues to beat, can prolong our life. This is the heart. Hidden, mysterious, semi-invisible, but there nonetheless, reminding us that all is not yet over."*

In the era of speed and "we want it and we want it now," rediscovering the sense of waiting means dealing with it by seizing the opportunity to observe and listen to oneself. Waiting is like the moment before dawn. To fill this darkness, **Paolo Sorrentino** has chosen **Margherita Palli** – a set designer with a forty-year career behind her, studded with collaborations with directors such as Luca Ronconi, Liliana Cavani, Mario Martone, Alexander Sokurov and choreographers such as Yang Jiang, Daniel Ezralow, not to mention numerous awards, including six UBU Awards. Having had no idea what to expect from her first meeting with the director, she said: *"I'm a set designer, I work on opera, prose, exhibitions and events; with my collaborator Marco Cristini I awaited the arrival of Sorrentino; what did he want from me, what was I supposed to do, an anxious wait to find out what the theme would be. With just a few words but with a precise idea in mind, he told us about 'his' wait and asked us to think of a place that would make it gentler and of a kaleidoscope hiding a heart. When he left, I thought I should carry on as I usually do, creating the scenography for an opera; moving through an ephemeral structure with a sense of direction and attention to signs, symbols and meanings, respecting demands. A theatre is a large space, generally to be found in the middle of a city. Large theatres are called opera houses, while smaller theatres can be called 'La dolce attesa' and be found inside a pavilion at the Rho exhibition centre."* The costumes, which are as well designed by Margherita Palli, were made at the tailoring workshop of

Piccolo Teatro di Milano. **The actresses and actors**, participating in the installation, **come from "Luca Ronconi" course at the Scuola del Piccolo Teatro di Milano.**

If waiting is a suspended space, sound must be able to fill it while marking its rhythm. To this end, **Paolo Sorrentino** has entrusted **Max Casacci** with creating a sound fabric that would mark its flow. An underlying, pulsating beat accompanying the immersive experience of the installation without being overpowering, but penetrating the very breath of those experiencing it. A musician, producer and sound engineer, Casacci is known for being the founder and guitarist of **Subsonica**, one of the most influential bands on the Italian music scene. His sound research has led him beyond the boundaries of traditional music, experimenting with environmental sounds and transforming everyday life into compositions. He recently collaborated with Michelangelo Pistoletto, with whom he created **Watermemories**, a sound work harnessing the sounds of water in Biella. He was the director of the Traffic Torino Free Festival, one of Italy's most important rock festivals, and has been the recipient of numerous awards during his career, including the Italian Music Award and the MTV Europe Music Award for best Italian artist. The sound he has created for *La dolce attesa* is **a presence that vibrates, expands and contracts, just like time spent waiting**. Casacci has put together an acoustic landscape that envelops the visitor, evoking the tension and magic of waiting: *"Music without musical instruments that, using just the sounds and songs of the sea, the sounds of the forest, the breath of the wind and the transparency of crystal, immerses itself in the rhythm of waiting,"* says the musician.

Waiting is not silent, it is an inner rhythm that pulses below the surface. And in this hypnotic and dizzying journey, Casacci's sound becomes the **hidden beat of the passage of time**, teaching us to listen to waiting with fresh ears and a fresh heart.

Paolo Sorrentino. La dolce attesa

8th - 13th April

Fiera Milano, Rho - Pavs. 22-24

With the participation of the students of "Luca Ronconi" course at Scuola del Piccolo Teatro di Milano. The costumes are by Margherita Palli, made by the tailoring department of the Piccolo Teatro di Milano.

Admittance by reservation on www.salonemilano.it

Biographies



Salone del Mobile.Milano

La dolce attesa

Paolo Sorrentino

Oscar Winner Filmmaker

The film director and screenwriter Paolo Sorrentino was born in Naples in 1970. His first feature film, *One Man Up*, was screened at the Venice Film Festival in 2001. He made *The Consequences of Love* in 2004, and *The Family Friend* in 2006, both of which competed at the Cannes Film Festival. He was back at Cannes in 2008 with *Il Divo*, which won the Prix du Jury. He again competed at Cannes in 2011 with *This Must be the Place*, followed two years later by *The Great Beauty*, which won him an Oscar, a Golden Globe, a Bafta for Best Foreign Film and three EFAs. He won at Cannes yet again in 2016 with *Youth*, which netted three EFAs, an Oscar nomination and two Golden Globe nominations. He created the TV series *The Young Pope* in 2016, which was nominated for a Golden Globe Best Actor Award and Emmy Awards for scenography and photography. He wrote the screenplay for *Loro*, starring Toni Servillo, in 2018. In 2019 he shot his second series set in the Vatican, *The New Pope*, starring Jude Law and John Malkovich. In 2021 he wrote and directed the film *The Hand of God*, nominated for a Best Foreign Film at the 2022 Oscars, which won the Silver Lion Grand Jury Prize and the Marcello Mastroianni Award at the 78th edition of the Venice International Film Festival, and also netted 5 David di Donatello 2022 Awards, including Best Film and Best Director and four 2022 Silver Ribbons, including Best Film. In 2024 he wrote and directed *Parthenope*, presented in competition at Cannes and winner of the Golden Ticket for one of the most viewed films of the year.

Margherita Palli

Scenographer

Born in Ticino, she studied scenography in Switzerland and Italy. She graduated in scenography from the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in 1976 and began working with the sculptor Alik Cavaliere, and later with Gae Aulenti in theatre and on the Gare D'Orsay project. In 1984 she opened her own studio in Milan and collaborated with many directors: Ronconi, Avogadro, Barzini, Binasco, Branciaroli, Brockhaus, Cavani, Lievi, Malosti, Martone, Muscato, Rifici, Shammah, Sokurov, with the choreographers Erzalow, Yang Jiang, and with The George Balanchine Trust. The Margherita Palli studio also deals with installation projects for art exhibitions and events. These projects include W. Women in Italian Design, Design Museum 9th edition at Triennale Milano; Corridoio Rosso (Red Corridor) at the 23rd Triennale di Milano; Il Meraviglioso Mondo della Natura (The Wonderful World of Nature) at Palazzo Reale; Opera: Il Palcoscenico della Società (The Stage of Society), at Palazzo del Governatore, as part of Parma Italian Capital of Culture 2021; Ulysses' Dream for the Carmignac Foundation; Storia della Notte e Destino delle Comete (History of Night and Destiny of the Comets) at the Italian Pavilion, 59th International Art Exhibition - Venice Biennale, and Fantasmagoria Callas at the Teatro alla Scala Museum. She has often collaborated with her husband the architect Italo Rota's studio. She has won many awards, including the UBU Prize, the Abbiati Prize, the Gassman Prize, the ETI Prize, the Olimpici del Teatro Prize, the Associazione Nazionale dei Critici di Teatro Prize, and the 2015 Swiss Theatre Award. In 2007 she was included in the Guinness World Records for the world's largest wall of screens. Since 1991 she has devoted herself to teaching: Advisor Leader of the three-year course in Scenography at the NABA Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti Milano NABA; Professor of Scenography at the Academy of Architecture at the Università della Svizzera Italiana in Mendrisio, Professor at the IUAV University of Venice and at the Politecnico di Milano; and has also been invited to give lectures as part of the museography course at the Catholic University in Milan. Since 2024 she has been a non-resident correspondent member of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti.

Max Casacci

Musician and Producer

Max Casacci has been active in the underground world of post-punk and new wave since the '80s, playing in the bands Deafear and Carmody. He set up a small recording studio in his father's film

dubbing studio that later became known as Casasonica, which was to become the point of reference for independent music in Turin in the '90s. He then joined Africa Unite as a guitarist, co-author and co-producer, playing all over the world. He subsequently became the guitarist, co-author of music and lyrics and producer of Subsonica. In the 2000s, Subsonica became one of the most influential bands on the Italian scene. During this time, he also worked for artistes such as Mina, Eugenio Finardi and Antonella Ruggiero. He then accepted the position of director of the Traffic Torino Free Festival. In 2011, as part of the Venice Art Biennale, he created Glasstress, a sound work using the sounds of glass. In 2012 he joined the music for science collective Deproducers, along with Vittorio Cosma, Gianni Maroccolo and Riccardo Sinigallia. He composed the soundtrack for Mimmo Calopresti's film *One for All* and, together with Emanuele Cisi and Daniele Mana, he produced *The City*, an album in which the noises of the city of Turin become the rhythm supporting the instruments of jazz musicians such as Enrico Rava, Gianluca Petrella, Furio Di Castri, Flavio Boltro. At the request of Michelangelo Pistoletto, he created *Watermemories* (2019), a work made with the sounds of the river Biella. In 2020 he released *Earthphonia* (Sugar/Universal), a solo album made with the sounds of nature and its ecosystems in which Stefano Mancuso, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Mario Tozzi took part, amongst others. In 2021 he wrote the soundtrack for *The Girl in the Fountain*, a documentary film about the life of Anita Ekberg by Antongiulio Panizzi. He was the mix engineer for the albums *Persona* and *Scacco Matto* by Lorenzo Senni, published by Warp, and is the artistic director of *Fotofonia*, the music section of the *Fotografia Europea* festival (Reggio Emilia). In 2022, *Urban Groovescapes* (*Earthphonia II*) was released by 42 Records/35 mm, his second album made using the sounds of urban space. During the same period, the *Earthphonia* live project was chosen for international events by brands such as Shanghai Tang, Xerjoff, Molteni, and the Teoresi Group. In 2024, with Subsonica, he won the David di Donatello Award for Best Soundtrack for the film *Adagio* by Stefano Sollima.



Salone del Mobile.Milano International Press Office

For more information or interview requests, please get in touch with the Press Office.
Images and preview images with captions and credits are available in the [Press and Media Area](#).

Patrizia Malfatti

International Press Office Manager

patrizia.malfatti@salonemilano.it

Vlatka Zanoletti

International Press and Cultural Events Senior Support

vlatka.zanoletti@salonemilano.it

Luca Adornato

Marketing & Communication Director

Susanna Legrenzi

Press & Communication Strategy Advisor

Andrea Brega

Head of Press Office Coordination

Marilena Sobacchi

Italy Press Office Manager

Patrizia Ventura

International Press Incoming and Media Buying Manager

Massimo Poggipollini

Secretariat