argues, "is a problem," and so, more particularly, is perspectival depth: The more fully we believe in the illusion of space, the more deeply we become immersed in it, forfeiting our critical distance and agency, and that is the recipe for the power pictures have over us. Toward the end of the film, the three arrive in Hollywood. The film ends with the disillusion of all hope: The devil reinvents himself as a plastic surgeon, the goddess has metamorphosed into grass, and Lydia abandons her dream of lame. What remains is the two-dimensional world of drawing.
—Sabine B. Vogel

Goshka Macuga
FONDAZIONE PRADA

In Goshka Macuga's cosmological exhibition "To the Son of Man Who Ate the Scroll," the artist stages a creation myth of her own invention, presenting her work alongside a wide-ranging selection of that of her artistic predecessors. Yet this story is ambiguous at first. Visible from the windows of the Fondazione Prada's ground-floor exhibition space is a man carrying out small, mechanical gestures. He is seated on a large, low pedestal at the site where Virgilio Sieni's Atlante del gesto (Atlas of Gesture), 2013, was recently performed, and where examples of classical sculpture and their copies stood in Anna Anguissola and Salvatore Settis's 2015 exhibition "Serial Classic." Macuga plays on the institutional memory of these figures to underscore her exhibition's dynamics between the body, time, and space.

Upon closer inspection, the viewer realizes that the man in Macuga's show is an android that the artist has set up to serve as a kind of narrator for the exhibition. Produced in Japan by the company A-Lab, the robot rehearses a monologue on knowledge, memory, and time comprised of passages borrowed from seminal speeches by such thinkers as Buckminster Fuller and Mary Shelley. The android speaks to no one in particular, and claims to be a repository of human speech. He seems fundamental to Macuga's cosmology: This carrier of artificial memory represents both a beginning (of potential advancements in technology) and an end (he is a potential successor to humanity). Surrounding the narrator is a selection of large-scale sculptures from the Fondazione Prada's collection and other sources. Together, the works offer a sublime framework for entering Macuga's conception of the cosmos. We see Alberto Giacometti's Le cube, 1934; Lucio Fontana's Concetto spaziale. Natura (Spatial Concept. Nature), 1959–60/1983; James Lee Byars's The Golden Sphere, 1992; and Phyllida Barlow's untitled:

*hanginglumpcoalblack*, 2012. Each appears like a mirage, carrying with it an undercurrent of anxiety about confronting the mysteries of existence.

On the next floor, the work *Before the Beginning and After the End* (by Macuga in collaboration with Patrick Tresset) is presented in a space that resembles an operating room. Stretched across each of five hospital-bed-like tables is a thirty-three-foot-long roll of white paper that features sketches, drawings, texts, mathematical formulas, and diagrams in ballpoint pen, accompanied by a scattering of other artworks, books, and artifacts. The marks were made by Tresset’s “Paul-n” series of drawing robots. On a sixth table, robots from the series “Paul-A” continue drawing for the duration of the exhibition. The interwoven drawings and objects on each table—a letter from Einstein to Freud, Renato Bertelli’s 1933 sculpture *Profilo Continuo [Testa di Mussolini]*, and Joseph Cornell’s ca. 1948 *Untitled [Aviary with Cockatoos and Watches]*—represent an atlas of human memory that has been inscribed into a machine. But they also reflect the evolution of the interrelationship between humans, artificial memory, and technological information systems. Sitting on the edge of a red table is Jacob Epstein’s *The Rock Drill*, 1913–14—a particularly fraught emblem of this dynamic.

Modern man—or rather his head—is the subject of Macuga’s installation in the Prada’s Cisterna space. Bronze bars connect a constellation of seventy-three faces of sixty-one historical figures cast from the same metal. The work, which formally resembles a molecular structure, draws forceful connections between knowledge and power, the individual and the collective. It isn’t surprising that the exhibition concludes (and perhaps begins again) in the fifteenth-century *studiolo*, or a small study, designed to highlight the connections between architecture and memory, in the Fondazione Prada’s south wing. Here, Macuga is hosting a series of public readings, in Esperanto, dedicated to the benefits and detriments of externalized memory and speculations about the ways in which humanity’s increasing reliance on mnemonic technologies will impact culture.

—Paola Nicolin

*Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.*