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Introduction to the exhibition

Five hundred years have passed since the first edition of Ludovico Ariosto and world's literature's masterpiece *Orlando furioso* was put into print, in Ferrara, in 1516. In order to celebrate the *Furioso's* 500th anniversary, EXMA presents a major exhibition devoted to ALIGI SASSU, twentieth century Italian prominent artist who had a significant interaction with Ariosto's poem.

The exhibition features engravings titled *Love and War Fantasies from Orlando furioso*, that Sassu engraved in 1974, for a group exhibition at the Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara - "Tribute to Ariosto" - and edited in Milan, within a portfolio introduced by the poet Vittorio Sereni. Next to the engravings, in fine specimens, unpublished preparatory studies are displayed and allow the visitor to enter directly into the artist's creative process. Moreover, a selection of paintings reveals how Sassu's artistic world is near to Ariosto's poetic universe, with the iconic subjects of female figures, horses and horsemen, battles.

Love and War Fantasies from Orlando furioso's signs and vibrant colors translate events and characters of the Ariosto's poem, arguably comparable, according to Italo Calvino, to an "huge game of chess", played on the world's map. In Sassu's artistic world, as well as in the poem, despite the war love does not discriminate between Christians and Muslims, or between whites and blacks; it overcomes the prejudice and let us reflect on our present.

Exhibition curated by Simona Campus

Exhibition design and set up Salvatore Campus

The exhibition is sponsored and organized for EXMA - Exhibiting and Moving Arts by Consortio Camù, in cooperation with Helenita and Aligi Sassu Foundation. It received support from the City of Cagliari, the Municipality of Ferrara and the National Committee for the Orlando Furioso 500th anniversary.

Thanks to the Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art of Ferrara, that makes possible to show the documents relating to the aforementioned group exhibition "Tribute to Ariosto", staged at the Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara, in 1974.

Thanks to the collectors, to the University Library of Cagliari and all those who contributed to the project.