



**Autostrada del Brennero SpA**  
**Brennerautobahn AG**

## **Brenner Pass (BZ) GRAND OPENING OF THE PLESSI MUSEUM**

Near the former customs area between Italy and Austria, the new building designed by Carlo Costa - the first museum found along a motorway - hosts videos, drawings and installations by Fabrizio Plessi as well as his great work of art created for the Hanover Expo in 2000.

The new architectural complex of the Autostrada del Brennero SpA holds a conference centre and a restaurant area too. It represents an aesthetic and functional experimental approach that is far from traditional rest areas.

**The Brenner Pass stages soon an event of great cultural meaning.**

**The Plessi Museum**, an innovative architectural artefact near the former customs area between Italy and Austria, **is being inaugurated**. It hosts a permanent exhibition area dedicated to the art of **Fabrizio Plessi** (born in Reggio Emilia in 1940 but Venetian by adoption), one of the most internationally regarded and renowned Italian masters.

Sponsored by the **Autostrada del Brennero SpA**, the building designed by the engineer Carlo Costa is the **first example in Italy of a museum on a motorway** and a symbol of the ties between the Mediterranean and middle-European worlds in a locality that, on the contrary, has represented a dividing line between the Latin and Germanic cultures from the end of the first world war until the Schengen Agreement came into force (1 January 1995).

Furthermore, the new complex also holds a conference centre, restaurant and service areas, and represents an aesthetic and functional experimental approach aiming to transform a traditional rest area into a place consecrated to culture.

"The challenge - asserts **Paolo Duiella, the Autostrada del Brenner SpA President** - that our era presents us with, is not only a challenge in terms of technology or efficiency. We need to work considerably on cultural aspects because the world we are living in today needs bold acts that look to the future. For this reason, in imagining a motorway that is not just safe and fast, we are also working to create an infrastructure that is perceived as a resource by the surrounding regions and a means for their development. The museum at the Brenner Pass fits into this philosophy: a stop along the motorway has become an opportunity for a fundamental cultural and aesthetic experience".

**Walter Pardatscher, General Manager of the Brenner Motorway company**, has thus stated "In European history, the Brenner Pass has always had a highly symbolic value and importance

PLESSI MUSEUM

in terms of people's identity. For this reason, the redevelopment of the former customs area became necessarily an opportunity to bring a new purpose to this site. To establish a museum containing the works of Fabrizio Plessi is the actual materialization of this aim".

Inside, the Plessi Museum is marked by the presence of the great installation that the artist had created in 2000 for the Hanover Expo and that was conceived to celebrate the Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino Euroregion - a shared cross-border cooperation project of the regions that were once part of the historic Tyrol. It is a sculpture composed of three pieces representing the provinces of Trento, Bolzano and Innsbruck, conceived as an artificial mountain landscape: an alpine environment to be travelled through and experienced technologically from within.

Curated by Fabrizio Plessi, the exhibition holds video installations, sculptures and graphic-pictorial works. The artist also designed the exhibition fittings, creating tables, seats, workbenches and corten steel shelves.

The descriptive key to the works displayed within the Museum is centred on an aquatic theme that has been the inspiration of many of Fabrizio Plessi's installations, films, videos and performances since 1968.

Water can trigger very evocative pictorial images. Plessi himself states "I think that video images and water constitute a perfect pair: water is a shimmering, ancient, ancestral, primordial element, a video is an element of contemporary times: both are fluid, unstable. Both give off a blue glow". This same glow was found by Plessi in the works of Tintoretto and Titian, which he was able to study and appreciate while living in a city influenced by water such as Venice.

"Water - continues Plessi - has now become digital thanks to the magic of modern technology and will continue to flow forever, luminescent and alive, able to enchant and surprise us just like the water in seventeenth-century fountains in Rome. Thus, the miracle of Art continues to repeat itself like an inexhaustible replay through history."

The Plessi Museum - which covers 13,000 sqm with a length of 55 metres and width of 30 metres - is designed to look like a large crystal casing overlaid by an ample roofing structure, representing a link between the building and its surrounding landscape. The great hall with a cathedral ceiling (12.90 m) is conceived as a veritable museum space, while the conference centre is intended to become a privileged venue for cultural and institutional meetings concerning the relationships between the Italian and Germanic world. The connection to the external spaces has been unravelled by Carlo Costa by mounting glass walls that ensure a perfect visual interpenetration between the natural and the artificial element. The large central pool thus becomes an all-absorbing space made of sounds and images: a veritable indoor *piazza*, a modern sensorial *agora* where the encountering of Fabrizio Plessi's work becomes not only an aesthetic experience but also a social and environmental one.

### **Fabrizio Plessi. Short Biography**

Fabrizio Plessi was born in Reggio Emilia in 1940. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice where he had also taught for many years. Using video as an artistic tool, he was an innovative trailblazer and thus became renowned throughout the world. He was co-founder of the *Kunsthochschule für Medien* in Cologne where he taught Humanisation of Technology and Electronic Scenography. His *BOMBAY-BOMBAY* installation at the Ludwig Museum in Cologne is famous. He took part in 14 editions of the Biennial of Venice from 1970 to the last one in 2011 with the installation *MARI VERTICALI* (Vertical Seas) in the Venice Pavilion. In Italy, he was awarded a prize at the Quadrennial of Rome in 1999. In the same year, he was awarded the Artist of the Year with the NLB prize at the Kestner Gesellschaft of Hannover. In 2002, his retrospective *PARADISO/INFERNO* was exhibited at the Scuderie del Quirinale in Rome. He has produced over 500 personal exhibitions, from the Centre Pompidou in Paris (1982) to the Guggenheim in New York (1998), from the Museum of Contemporary Art of San Diego (1998) to

the Guggenheim of Bilbao (2001). He took part in Documenta VIII in Kassel (1987) with his famous installation ROMA. Retrospective exhibition at the Martin Gropius Bau of Berlin (2003). Large installation for the Sony Centre in Potsdamer Platz in Berlin. He collaborated with the most important museums in Austria such as the Kunsthistorische Museum, the Museum Ludwig and the Neue Galerie in Linz. Even developing countries have found in Plessi a reliable reference as demonstrated by the opening of the new Museum of Contemporary Art of Rabat in 2006. He participated in the Cairo Biennial as a guest artist in 2001 as well as in the Biennials of Sharjah and Gwangju in Korea in 2000. He has been collaborating with the Louis Vuitton group since 2008, exhibiting his art alongside events organised by the famous French company, such as the America's Cup. He also has close ties with the industrial world as can be seen by his collaborations with BMW, Dornbracht, Loewe, Swarovski, Calvin Klein. Intellectuals and musicians such as Robert Wilson, Philip Glass e Michael Nyman also worked with him. His electronic scenic design created for Luciano Pavarotti's concert in Central Park in New York in 1993 are unforgettable. His latest magnificent installation is Monumenta in Agrigento, set inside the Valley of the Temples.

Brenner Pass (BZ), 28 November 2013

**PLESSI MUSEUM**

Brenner Pass (BZ) - A 22 Motorway

**Admission is free**

**Open: 05.00 – 22.00**

**Information:** [www.a22.it](http://www.a22.it)

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