

NEWS RELEASE

THE
CLARK
ART
INSTITUTE

Williamstown
Massachusetts 01267
413 458 2303
clarkart.edu

For Immediate Release

December 10, 2019

[Digital images available upon request]

NEW SCULPTURE INSTALLED ON CLARK ART INSTITUTE'S FRONT LAWN IS A SYMBOL OF ITS COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND EMBRACE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Williamstown, Massachusetts—The Clark Art Institute announces the first American installation of *Le foglie delle radici* (*The Leaves of the Roots*) (2011) by sculptor Giuseppe Penone (Italian, b. 1947, Garessio, Italy). The thirty-foot-tall cast bronze, steel, and soil sculpture of an upturned tree with a live eastern red cedar sapling growing from its inverted roots is a long-term installation on loan from a private collection and is situated on the lawn of the Clark's 1955 Museum Building.

"The Clark is pleased to accept the long-term loan of this important sculpture by leading artist Giuseppe Penone," said Hardymon Director Olivier Meslay. "The form of a tree—encountered in a very unexpected way—resonates deeply with the Clark's commitment to stewardship of our grounds and natural setting."

Le foglie delle radici is the latest long-term contemporary art installation on the Clark's campus in recent years. In 2014, five carved stone benches by American artist Jenny Holzer's *Truism* and *Living* series were placed near the reflecting pool to mark the opening of the Clark Center. In 2015, the site-specific commissioned work by Thomas Schütte, *Crystal*, a wood and metal structure in the shape of a human-scale geode, was fabricated at the top of Stone Hill, and in 2016, William Crovello's red granite sculpture *Katana* was installed just north of the main parking lot.

About Giuseppe Penone

Giuseppe Penone lives and works in Turin, Italy, and uses objects from the natural world to explore the interconnected relationship between humans and nature. In the late 1960s, he was a proponent of the Arte Povera movement which used "poor" and unconventional materials such as soil or plant matter to evoke a preindustrial age and subtly critique systems of industrialization, mechanization, and art. Penone's sculptural transformations draw the viewer's attention to details that have long existed but are easily overlooked. By bringing the grandeur—as well as the modesty and intimacy—of raw but also cultural material into various settings, Penone raises questions about sculpture and its essence.

The artist's work is held in collections including The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate, London; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Penone has an extensive history of major awards and exhibitions, most recently including the Musée

de Grenoble (2014); Nasher Sculpture Center (2015); Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (2016); Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, Rome (2017); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield; and Palais d'Iéna, Paris (both in 2019).

The artist has compared the process of creating the tree-formed *Le foglie delle radici* by the lost-wax process of bronze casting to the natural methods of capillary nourishment and formation of living trees. Perceiving its roots as its life center, or brain, the artist inverts the tree so that this brain now hovers some thirty feet above the ground and is a site of new growth as a living sapling thrusts its own roots into the virtual roots of the sculpture.

Le foglie delle radici exists in four versions. It has been displayed as *Penone Versailles*, Château de Versailles, from June 11 to October 30, 2013; *Giuseppe Penone, Prospettiva vegetale*, Forte di Belvedere and Giardino di Boboli, Florence, from July 5 to October 5, 2014; and *Penone in the Rijksmuseum Gardens*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, from June 10 to October 2, 2016.

ABOUT THE CLARK

The Clark Art Institute, located in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts, is one of a small number of institutions internationally that is both an art museum and a center for research, critical discussion, and higher education in the visual arts. Opened in 1955, the Clark houses exceptional European and American paintings and sculpture, extensive collections of master prints and drawings, English silver, and early photography. Acting as convener through its Research and Academic Program, the Clark gathers an international community of scholars to participate in a lively program of conferences, colloquia, and workshops on topics of vital importance to the visual arts. The Clark library, consisting of more than 275,000 volumes, is one of the nation's premier art history libraries. The Clark also houses and co-sponsors the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art.

The Clark, which has a three-star rating in the Michelin Green Guide, is located at 225 South Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Its 140-acre campus includes miles of hiking and walking trails through woodlands and meadows, providing an exceptional experience of art in nature. Galleries are open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm; open daily in July and August. Admission is \$20; free year-round for Clark members, children 18 and younger, and students with valid ID. Free admission is available through several programs, including First Sundays Free; a local library pass program; EBT Card to Culture; and Blue Star Museums. For more information on these programs and more, visit clarkart.edu or call 413 458 2303.

Press contact:
pr@clarkart.edu