

NERI



Earthquake | Homage to a wounded Italy

Sunday 30 October 2016

I am writing these notes with heartache.

This morning at 07:41 a strong earthquake that measured 6,5 on the Richter scale struck central Italy once again.

The epicentre was in beautiful Norcia. The violent tremor was felt in Rome and by us as well, 200 km away, with our chandeliers swaying for a number of minutes.

The first quake occurred on Wednesday at 19:10. By chance, I was in the area until shortly before that.

I had gone to meet the Mayor of Nocera Umbra to take him the printout of the PDF that I sent you two weeks ago. Homage was paid by Neri to those who had done so much to begin again after the disastrous earthquake that occurred 20 years before.

I was given a welcome that exceeded anything one could imagine. You could feel the happiness and gratitude for a documental work that valorises all that has been done.

The Mayor was really pleased for this encouragement for an economic upturn and tourism that is only now beginning to come back to life.

At 18:20 I had passed by Camerino. It was raining and, with a heavy heart, I did not stop in this beautiful town lit up by our lanterns. I mused: 'I will come back another time, with the sun, to document this in a way that its beauty deserves.'

I then went on towards Tolentino, and I stopped in the little village of Montecosaro, just a few kilometres away, to photograph our 'Light 804' on its medieval lanes.

At 18:50 I set off again and just 20 minutes later there was the earthquake, which I did not feel as I was on the motorway.

I will not be able to keep my promise to go back to Camerino. Similarly, I cannot go to Visso any more, although I had planned to go there for some time. This is the image that appeared in this morning's newspapers, with our lanterns in the midst of the collapsed buildings.



I will not be able to go back to Norcia either. The San Benedetto Cathedral, with the original lampposts next to it and the Neri lanterns, has collapsed.



Earthquake | Homage to a wounded Italy

Just a few kilometres from Norcia, there's Castelluccio, with stunning countryside in May it is a celebration of colour with the flowering of the lentils.



The Vettore mountain stands above the town. The hearth
quack caused a split of kilometers.

Now the photos show such large-scale destruction.
It's isolated and can only be reached by helicopter.





Earthquake | Homage to a wounded Italy

Finally Tolentino, which we lit up a few years ago with our 'Light 801' which light up the lanes and the magnificent Basilica of San Nicola.

The people of these towns can no longer go back into their homes, because they are perilous and unsafe.



It will take an enormous effort and more than a generation to bring life back to these towns, now almost destroyed.

Our hope is that this will happen and that this wealth of cultural, urban, historical and landscape heritage will not be lost forever.

We will also do our part to restore the splendour of these places and their peoples, as it happened in Nocera Umbra, for the earthquake of Irpinia in 1980, and, even before that in Friuli in 1976.

A commitment in order to help beauty characterize again, as it did previously, these places.









Thanks