Triennale Milano

23rd International Exhibition of Triennale Milano

Unknown Unknowns
An Introduction to Mysteries

May 20 – November 20, 2022

Curated by Ersilia Vaudo
Exhibition Design by Francis Kéré

From the deep sea, through an (un)built environment, to outer space — the Unknown is all around us. Of our surroundings, of the finite bodies we are, of the phenomena we experience, 95% is a boundless mystery. We can only grasp onto that tiny 5% that we have succeeded in mastering, or perhaps taming. The Unknown is the fullest dimension. A margin drawn on an edge.

The Unknown is not the flaw of a specific epoch, culture, or civilization. It is a structural feature, inherent to the very nature of the universe and the forces that shape it. Take for example Gravity, the greatest designer of and in the cosmos. Hidden in the perfection of those spherical forms — celestial bodies that shine, float, and transform into nothingness, is the tireless work of gravity's pull. A tension, a trajectory, or simply a warping of space and time. A line in which sliding in, effortlessly, while a design emerges from the presence of a heavy mass. We barely recognize this work, and yet our daily life is a constant effort of coexistence, striving to find a way to grow intimate with this cosmic architect we weren't even aware we were ignoring.

In line with the tradition and heritage of the International Exhibitions of Triennale Milano, Unknown Unknowns. An introduction to Mysteries invites us to undertake an exploration, both as individuals and as humanity, in search of question marks and uncharted mysteries. This journey will carry us toward a multiplicity of unknowns, through space and time; in and out, back and forward, and up and down. Not chasing answers, rather giving in to the seduction of enquiry and imagination.

The Earth itself is an unknown we share. The times ahead will have to endeavor to set free this planetary unknown from everything weighing on it, in search of new ways to inhabit it. Even when we think we can anticipate our future, tomorrow itself surprises us with the unexpected. This makes existence a game of constant improvisation — whose purpose is to let the unknown emerge in order to find better ways of living.

This International Exhibition will approach the Unknown Unknowns with a sense of wonder, seeking to trigger collective awe and cross-disciplinary pollination with the shared aim of prototyping better futures and crafting new ways to inhabit them.