

tornabuoniArt

LONDON



Afro, *Teatro spagnolo*, 1966
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art

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THE DIE IS CAST
Contemporary Italian Art beyond tradition

10 DECEMBER 2015 – 30 JANUARY 2016
9 DECEMBER (6:00 – 8:00pm) Opening cocktail

Tornabuoni Art is delighted to announce its first group exhibition in its London space presenting over forty works by Italian artists such as Afro, Boetti, Burri, Castellani, Fontana, Kounellis, Pistoletto, Scheggi and Zorio, to name but a few, who documented through their work the move away from the Italian artistic tradition of figuration after the 1930s. Curated by Sergio Risaliti, *The Die is Cast* explores through painting, and abstract sculpture in particular, how these artists created a rift in the ever-conflicting and unresolved relationship between tradition and the avant-garde.

Detachment from figurative and anthropomorphic representation was already close at hand in Italy at the end of the 1920s. To renounce the figurative reproduction of nature and reality seemed like a decisive and necessary step to discover a world of new inventions in which one could glimpse beyond tradition and towards the possibility of creating an artistic language that was more autonomous and absolute. Lucio Fontana, Fausto Melotti, and later Alberto Burri, Giuseppe Capogrossi and

Afro, all contributed in generating this drastic move away from figurative language in favour of abstract signs, shapes, structures and gestures.

This new avant-garde, so clearly outlined in the *Manifesti* of those years, (for instance *Kn* by Carlo Belli – considered the Gospel of abstract art – and Fontana's *Manifesto Blanco*) constituted an example for subsequent artistic experiments from the 1950s onwards, when for instance Piero Manzoni and Enrico Castellani were able to propose abstract art that was again different from that of the early avant-gardes. The work of the previous generation of artists was also used as a reference point by artists of the neo-avant-gardes of the 1960s, such as Kounellis, Paolini, Pistoletto, Boetti and Zorio, who were grouped by Germano Celant in the Arte Povera movement.

Highlights of the show include *Teatro Spagnolo*, 1966, by Afro, a striking work by one of the pioneers of Italian abstraction, as well as a two and a half metre-high 1951 paper on canvas by Giuseppe Capogrossi that epitomises the artist's research on pictorial language. Visitors will also see a large wall-installation by Jannis Kounellis, one of the foremost exponents of the Arte Povera movement since the 1960s, who continues to push the boundaries of intermediality and monumentality.

“To speak about “Italian art beyond tradition””, comments Sergio Risaliti, curator of the exhibition “means identifying in the century of the avant-garde and new avant-garde movements, the most significant stages of an evolutive leap that began overcoming naturalism and neo-classicism. This is what this exhibition is about, a glimpse into what happened after the 1930s in Italy.”

“Following our inaugural Lucio Fontana exhibition, we wanted to present a group show that furthered the exploration of abstraction in Italian art of the 20th century”, explains gallery director Ursula Casamonti. “These artists were guided by a common defiance towards the established canons of the early Novecento that translated into a search for new space and for a new form of artistic expression free from the constraints of figuration. Such innovation befits our exhibition programme, through which we aim to present to the London audience the main figures of the Italian avant-garde, and how they enriched 20th century artistic research.”

To accompany the earlier show of the exhibition in Florence, the gallery has published a bilingual hardback monograph published by Forma, Florence. The catalogue features an introductory essay by Sergio Risaliti and profile essays on the artists in the exhibition.

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT TORNABUONI ART

Founded in Florence in 1981 by Roberto Casamonti, in the street that gave its name to the gallery, Tornabuoni Art opened other spaces in Crans-Montana in 1993, Milan in 1995, Portofino in 2001, Forte dei Marmi in 2004 and Paris in 2009. In 2015, Tornabuoni Art launched its new gallery space in London's Mayfair.

Specialising in Post-War Italian art, exhibiting artists such as Fontana, Burri, Castellani, Bonalumi, Boetti and Dadamaino, the gallery also has a permanent collection of significant works by major Italian artists of the Novecento, such as de Chirico, Morandi, Balla or Severini, as well as International 20th century Avant-garde masters, such as Picasso, Mirò, Kandinsky, Hartung, Poliakoff, Dubuffet, Lam, Matta, Christo, Wesselmann, Warhol and Basquiat.

Tornabuoni Art London is led by Ursula Casamonti, daughter of the gallery's founder Roberto Casamonti, who has worked closely alongside her father for 20 years. The gallery aims to focus its annual exhibition programme on Post-War Italian art by presenting at least two monographic exhibitions of major Italian artists, two themed group shows, as well as two contemporary solo shows.

The gallery also works closely with museums and institutions for expertise and guidance and with its experience and thorough knowledge of the work of the artists it represents, it has established itself as an advisor for both private and public collections.

ABOUT SERGIO RISALITI

Curator and critic Sergio Risaliti was born in Prato in 1962. After studying history of Art and curating in Florence and Grenoble, he became a writer at Flash Art in Milan, while independently curating shows in several cities across Italy, France and Luxembourg.

In 1997, he worked on the creation of the Palazzo delle Papesse centre for Contemporary Art in Siena, which he directed until 2001, organizing several solo and group exhibitions such as *Teatro metropolitano italiano*, a show on the identity of the Italian urban space, from De Chirico and Sironi to today.

Risaliti has since headed the Quarter and Quarter relocated foundations in Florence and Turin and MARCA museum in Cantazaro, as well as published several tomes, including *La Verità*, 1998 – a monograph on Giulio Paolini – *Toscana Contemporanea 1980-2000*, and a monograph on Michelangelo's Bacchus alongside Francesco Vossilla.

Co-founder of the *Impresa* magazine and the UO.MO art publishers, he has edited books and collaborated with international magazines to produce writings of many international contemporary artists including Jannis Kounellis, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Vanessa Beecroft, David Hockney and Rachel Whiteread.

For more information on the gallery's history and other activities, please visit www.tornabuoniart.com

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