

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

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LES RITALS

*Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Lucio Fontana,
Armando Testa, Carla Accardi, Piero Manzoni,
Michelangelo Pistoletto, Maurizio Cattelan*

19/10/2021 - 12/01/2022

Opening: Tuesday, October 19th, from 6pm to 9pm

With the valuable collaboration of :
Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto: Michelangelo Pistoletto,
Fondazione Piero Manzoni, Hauser & Wirth: Piero Manzoni,
Perrotin: Maurizio Cattelan, Testa per Testa: Armando Testa,
Tornabuoni Arte: Carla Accardi and Lucio Fontana

Galleria Continua is pleased to announce the third part of a series of exhibitions dedicated to the countries in which the gallery has settled. After France with "À Bras Ouverts" and Cuba with "La Brèche", Italy is brought to light with "Les Ritals".

Artworks by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Lucio Fontana, Armando Testa, Carla Accardi, Piero Manzoni, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Maurizio Cattelan will be brought together from October 19th 2021 to January 12th 2022 in the new space located in the heart of Paris.

The slang term "Ritals" – a reference to the different waves of Italian immigration in France in the 20th century and its negative connotation – refers to the common origins of the artists presented in the exhibition. But beyond this obvious link and the dialogue between different generations, the term also hints at the problems of acceptance and rejection. Misunderstanding, repulsion, scandal... The reception of the works of these precursors did not proceed smoothly at any time. The division generated by novelty impressed but also fueled inspiration, admiration and even encouraged the meeting of these seven artists. It has also opened new paths for their successors.

The history of the "Ritals" of the Galleria Continua begins at the dawn of the 20th century with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944). On February 20, 1909, *Le Figaro* published his *Manifesto of Futurism*, the founding text of the avant-garde literary and artistic movement of the twentieth century. The artist presented an eleven-point program that detailed the main principles of Futurism: erasing the past, speed, progress, destruction of museums and libraries, beauty of the modern world and of machines. This manifesto has become one of the fundamental sources of modernity.

The impact of visual quests which followed this modernity, as well as the idea of transmission and knowledge has been evoked by Michelangelo Pistoletto (b. in 1933). He attended the advertising school of Armando Testa (1917-1992) and treasured his advice: "To advertise you must know everything about modern art".

"Les Ritals" presents several works by the artist, including the famous *Uno e Mezzo* (1960-2020). This work is representative of Testa's taste for synthesis, which he resumed in this quotation: "The word 'synthesis' for me is a law: whether I am painting, writing or speaking. I will never tire of quoting Mies Van der Rohe's celebrated phrase: "Less is more"."

A work by Lucio Fontana (1899–1968) also influenced Michelangelo Pistoletto's artistic journey. The work was presented during "Mostra in vetrina" (Showcase exhibition) in Turin. It was one of his "cut" canvases, from the *Concetto Spaziale* (Spatial Concept) series. Through this series, Lucio Fontana renewed the traditional method of realizing a painting. The surface of the canvas is no longer used to add color, but to subtract, by perforating, by tearing, or, later, by slashing. The artist blurred the limit between the second and the third dimension, but also between creation and destruction. When he saw this work, Michelangelo Pistoletto understood that the seemingly simple gesture contained all the power and ideology of the artist within it and that he should do the same: seek his purpose, his power and his technique.

"Les Ritals" thus presents Lucio Fontana's works, from the same series *Concetto Spaziale* (Spatial Concept). The realization of one of them was documented through a video recording, a unique and rare document. It shows the perforation of a painting – a work of Jef Verheyen, one of Lucio Fontana's friends – by the artist, in the house of the collector Louis Bogaerts in Knokke (Belgium).

A copy of the *Manifesto Bianco*, written in 1946, is also presented to continue to follow the links between the artists of the exhibition. Indeed, the *Manifesto Bianco* influenced Piero Manzoni (1933–1963) and his search for an absence of color through his "Achromes". Shunning the goal of achieving white, the artist mainly tried to get rid of all forms of color in order to achieve this much coveted absence.

Lucio Fontana's influence also played a role in the artistic practice of Carla Accardi (1924–2014) with whom the artist spoke a lot. From 1965, Carla Accardi painted on Sicofoil – an industrial plastic material – which resembles Rhodoid which has tactile, visual, shimmering and transparent properties. The artist held this material which receives and diffuses light in a very particular way in her two-dimensional, but also three-dimensional, works. "Les Ritals" offers two examples of her pictorial research *Senza Titolo* (1967) and *Assedio rosso N° 3* (1956). They mainly deal with the sign, which Carla Accardi worked with in some modular series within fluid and organic compositions also made of materials, colors and shapes.

Maurizio Cattelan (b. 1960) also underlines the idea that each artist follows the footsteps of his predecessors. An emblematic work of this major figure of contemporary art is part of the selection of "Les Ritals". Among his influences, Maurizio Cattelan mentions Piero Manzoni. Two of his iconic works are presented: *Merda d'artista* (1961), a series of 90 hermetically sealed cans, with a label stating that the content is the artist's excrement, and *Linea m 19,11* (1959), which consists of a line drawn in ink on a roll of paper – of varying lengths – enclosed in a sealed cardboard box. These two works interrogate the faith placed in the artist's words. They also question the object of art and prefigure conceptual art.

Maurizio Cattelan also mentions Michelangelo Pistoletto. The contemplation of a *Quadro Specchiante* (Mirror Painting) the work *Autoritratto con occhiali gialli*, 1973 (Self-portrait with yellow glasses, 1973) is at the origin of his artistic career. The characteristics of the artist's *Quadri Specchianti* (Mirror Painting) are: the dimension of time, not only represented but actually active, and the introduction of the viewer into the work. The environment that surrounds him changes it into "the self-portrait of the world". According to this concept of transmission, Michelangelo Pistoletto decided to introduce a quotation of Maurizio Cattelan in his practice by designing a new work. *Tre bambini impiccati, 2004 Piazza XXIV Maggio, Milano di Maurizio Cattelan* (Trois enfants pendus, 2004 Piazza XXIV Maggio, Milan by Maurizio Cattelan) has been realized for this exhibition. It is a depiction of Maurizio Cattelan's public installation, presented in Milan in 2004, in collaboration with Fondazione Trussardi. Romualdo Roggeri notices: "We stop too often at the appearance of things without trying to understand the reason (...) There is no sign of suffering in the eyes of the three children, but their faces express an accusatory warning, as if to point the finger at the world of adults and its negative impact on the world of children and young people."

From rupture to celebration, including criticism and provocation, the exhibition "Les Ritals" sheds light on the common points and the links between the works of these seven major artists. A personal and untold story of artistic camaraderie is told, where each artist represents both a revelation and an inspiration to the one before and the one after.