

Christo, *Running Fence*, 1976

PRESS RELEASE

9 June 2018

ITALY - USA

ALBERS ACCARDI
CHRISTO AFRO
DE KOONING BOETTI
LEWITT BURRI
MARCA RELLI CEROLI
NEVELSON CHIARI
PAIK DADAMAINO
RAUSCHENBERG FESTA
TWOMBLY LOMBARDO
WARHOL NOVELLI

Two Art Worlds Connected

Post-War to Pop

TORNABUONI ART LONDON

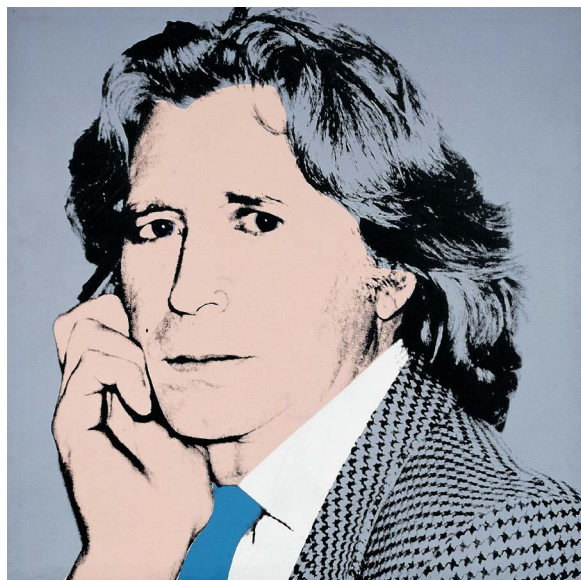
26 JUNE - 15 SEPTEMBER 2018

25 June 2018 - Private view, 6 to 8 pm

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Tornabuoni Art's summer exhibition this year draws from the gallery's collection of international post-war art to explore the links between the Italian avant-gardes and artists based in the USA in the decades following the Second World War. 'Italy – USA' highlights the special link that existed between the New York and Italian art scenes in the post-war years by drawing parallels between artists who collaborated or inspired each other from either side of the Atlantic

With the end of the Second World War, Italy emerged from years of cultural isolation, and international art shows like the Venice Biennale reopened. Meanwhile, with help from the Marshall Plan, the newly formed Italian Republic found a renewed economic and creative impetus. Italian artists, emerging and established, were galvanised by the new horizons that seemed to open up and many travelled to the USA to find inspiration and discover different ways of painting. Likewise, rising economic prosperity in Italy contributed to the atmosphere of 'La Dolce Vita', which attracted many American artists, some of whom, like Cy Twombly, settled in the Italian capital.



Andy Warhol, *Portrait of Mario Valentino*, 1981

Artists such as Afro Basaldella, better known simply as Afro, travelled to the United States as early as 1950 and were inspired by the experiments of the American avant-gardes. Indeed the 1950s mark a significant change in Afro's approach to abstraction, which becomes less representational and more experiential. During several trips to New York, Afro developed a close friendship with the artists of the New York School, who came to consider him as the Italian response to Abstract Expressionism. In particular, Willem de Kooning remained a lifelong friend of his, as demonstrated by their correspondence. He even created his black and white paintings of the early 1960s, better known as the 'Rome' series, in Afro's studio. A letter from De Kooning, dated 1960, will be on show alongside a painting from the same year.



Robert Rauschenberg, *For + With Jack + By With*, 1960

The seminal exhibition *The New Decade: 22 European Painters and Sculptors*, at MoMA in 1955, saw Afro, Alberto Burri and Giuseppe Capogrossi exhibited in New York for the first time. Their work attracted the attention of the legendary Guggenheim Museum Director James Johnson Sweeney and MoMA Director Alfred Barr, who would include them in future shows for the benefit of the US public. Many artists including Conrad Marca Relli, Christo, and Keith Haring, were influenced by the works of these Italians.

In 1964, Pop Art came of age when Robert Rauschenberg won the First Prize at the Venice Biennale. The Roman artists' group that included Sergio Lombardo, Mario Schifano, Tano Festa, Franco Angeli, Cesare Tacchi and Gioietta Fioroni, had already begun working on their own critique of consumerist culture and were impressed by the works they saw in the American Pavilion of the Biennale. Their work quickly became known as Italian Pop.

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The next year, in 1965, MoMA inaugurated the Responsive Eye exhibition, which showed the works of many artists who explored optical effects and colour. Among them were Josef Albers and Dadamaino, two artists who drew their inspiration from the Bauhaus teacher Johannes Itten and whose research on colour can easily be compared.



Sol Lewitt, *Complex Structures in a Contained Space*, 1988

Finally, some artists collaborated. The friendship between Sol Lewitt and Alighiero Boetti, and the influence they had on each other's practice, is visible in their respective works on show at Tornabuoni. The pair also collaborated on works, for example the small folded square that always hung on Boetti's Muro – a wall of artworks, letters and memories he hung in his house. The Florentine artist Giuseppe Chiari, as the only Italian member of the Fluxus collective, also collaborated with artists such as Nam June Paik on musical performances.

MASTERPIECE LONDON 2018

Tornabuoni Art is proud to be exhibiting at Masterpiece London (28 June – 4 July) for the third time with a booth featuring works from the gallery's modern and contemporary collection. Highlights of Tornabuoni's Masterpiece stand include works by Alighiero Boetti, Alberto Burri, Lucio Fontana, Enrico Castellani, Christo and Gunther Uecker.



Alighiero Boetti, *Mappa*, 1979-83

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT TORNABUONI

Founded in Florence in 1981 by Roberto Casamonti, in the street that gave the gallery its name, Tornabuoni opened other exhibition spaces in Crans-Montana in 1993, Milan in 1995, Forte Dei Marmi in 2004, Paris in 2009 and London in 2015. Specialising in Post-War Italian art, the gallery presents the work of artists such as Fontana, Burri, Castellani, Bonalumi, Boetti, Scheggi and Manzoni.

Tornabuoni also has a permanent collection of significant works by major Italian artists of the Novecento, such as de Chirico, Morandi, Balla and 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. Complementing its focus on Italian art, the Tornabuoni collection also features the work of young contemporary artists such as the Italian artist Francesca Pasquali and the Italy-based Armenian artist Mikayel Ohanjanyan, who won the Golden Lion at the 2015 Venice Biennale and whose work is on show at Yorkshire Sculpture Park since 2017.

Tornabuoni participates in major international art fairs such as the FIAC in Paris, TEFAF in Maastricht, Art Basel, Art Basel Miami Beach, Art Basel Hong Kong, Artefiera in Bologna, Miart in Milan, Frieze Masters in London, Artgeneve in Geneva and Artmonte-carlo in Monaco.

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

Press contact

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Images: Christo, *Running Fence*, 1976, mixed media and collage on masonite, 147 x 245 cm, Courtesy Tornabuoni Art
Andy Warhol, *Portrait of Mario Valentino*, 1981, acrylic and silkscreen on canvas, 102 x 102 cm, Courtesy Tornabuoni Art
Robert Rauschenberg, *For + With Jack + By With*, 1960, ink on paper, 152 x 96 cm, Courtesy Tornabuoni Art
Sol Lewitt, *Complex Structures in a Contained Space*, 1988, watercolour on paper, 57 x 75,5 cm, Courtesy Tornabuoni Art
Aldighiero Boetti, *Mappa*, 1979-83, embroidery on cloth, 103x155cm, Courtesy Tornabuoni Art

For more information on the gallery and its activities, please visit www.tornabuoniart.com

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