

ROBILANT + VOENA

ITALIAN NEO-RENAISSANCE: Bonalumi Scheggi

5 – 28 May 2015

ROBILANT+VOENA in NEW YORK

at Moretti Fine Art, 24 East 80th Street, 10075 New York

Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm



Scheduled to coincide with Frieze New York and the broader program of art events in the city during May, **ROBILANT+VOENA** will present a survey of the Italian post-war Neo-Renaissance focusing on two key artists – **Agostino Bonalumi and Paolo Scheggi**. In 1966 these artists, alongside Enrico Castellani, were selected by Alfredo Bonino to represent the thriving Milanese art scene in his seminal exhibition *Italy – New Tendencias* (Galeria Bonino, NYC, Oct 11-Nov 4, 1966). Nearly fifty years later **ROBILANT+VOENA** will re-present their work to the New York public, in an exhibition curated by Francesca Pola, investigating their crucial role in the development of the Italian cultural landscape of the 1960s, alongside singular works by Lucio Fontana and Alberto Burri. The work of these artists matched radical experimentation with a classical background, and balanced breakthrough innovation with a distinct awareness of historical continuity. These developments represented a Neo-Renaissance where the most advanced achievements in creating a new relationship between matter, space and perception gave birth to a new and original “classic” vision.

Alberto Burri and Lucio Fontana, with their crucial pioneering concepts of matter and space can be considered the double root of Italian Postwar art as a whole, and also of this specifically classical perspective. Agostino Bonalumi and Paolo Scheggi developed the relationship between shape and matter in strongly innovative ways: in their plastic use of monochrome to create three-dimensional shaped and environmental works, as well as the tactile physicality of their pieces. All these artists exhibited at the 1966 Venice Biennale – a turning point for this line of research, which cemented their international profiles. Lucio Fontana won a prize for his oval *Ambiente spaziale bianco* (White Spatial Environment) with his characteristic “tagli” (slashes), while Alberto Burri presented his monumental burnt *Plastiche* (Plastics). Enrico Castellani created some of his largest and most complex pieces ever in a solo presentation, whilst Agostino Bonalumi and Paolo Scheggi conceived a joint room presenting their latest constructed colored canvases, challenging issues of structure and perception, which earlier that year had been defined as “*pittura oggetto*” (object painting) in a seminal show presented by Gillo Dorfles (featuring the three of them with Fontana).

As a result of his visit to the 1966 Venice Biennale, Alan Solomon (Director of the Jewish Museum in New York) recommended the work of Bonalumi and Scheggi to Alfredo Bonino, who then organized the *Italy-New Tendencias* show in New York later that autumn, and gave Bonalumi a solo show in 1967. Solomon himself curated the 1968 Jewish Museum exhibition *Young Italians*, which included Bonalumi and Castellani. In the meantime, also in 1966, a double exhibition of Alberto Burri and Lucio Fontana was promoted by the Museum of Modern Art, and travelled in the U.S. for two years.

The **ROBILANT+VOENA** exhibition will focus on this crucial period around the 1966 Venice Biennale and first New York exhibitions with over fifteen significant works, including: a rare 140cm *Intersuperficie curva dal rosso* from 1965 by Scheggi, and an incredible 240cm Red ciré work by Bonalumi from 1967 (Bonalumi having discovered the ciré material in the US during his trip for his solo show there that year).

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue with an introduction by Francesca Pola. For all further information and images please contact Mira Dimitrova via mira@robilantvoena.com

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