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MIMMO ROTELLA AT ROBILANT+VOENA

February 3, 2015 • [Angie Kordic](#)

A big retrospective exhibition of Italian artist Mimmo Rotella is coming to the UK for the first time, presenting works selected from fifty years of a very productive career. In collaboration with the Mimmo Rotella Institute in Milan, the show will depict the artist's innovative mind and groundbreaking techniques that introduced a new way of using materials to make conceptual visual artworks.



Left: Mimmo Rotella – [Senza titolo], 1957 / Right: Mimmo Rotella – Arachidina, 1963, decollage on canvas

The Décollages and the Retros D’Affiches

Mimmo Rotella is perhaps most famous for his *décollages*, which he invented in the first years of the 1950s and to which he remained true throughout his entire artistic career. This technique, being the exact opposite of collage and composing, led him to the streets of Rome, where he would take movie and advertising posters and then cut them, scar them and tear away the pieces to deprive it of its meaning. This act of rebellion had a symbolic meaning, representing a protest against “a society that has lost its taste for change,” as Rotella said himself. Linked to this process were the *retro d’affiches*, where he would focus on the back side of the posters, leaving it untouched after taking them off walls. As a result, they contained pieces of wall, plaster, glue and metal scraps, forming a relief of various materials that leave a testimony of a whilom existence



Left: Mimmo Rotella – Bathing Beauty, 1971 / Right; Mimmo Rotella – Blank C blue violet, 1980, blank.
For illustrative purposes only

The Artypos, Blanks and Sovrapitture

His art was influenced by many European avant-garde movements of the period, such as Pop art, Dadaism and Futurism, which originated in his homeland Italy. In the 1960s, he introduced new techniques of *artypos* and *photographic reportage*. Involving photography and its mechanical processes, for *artypos* he projected several colored layers of images onto canvas and then fixed them with emulsion, while the *reportages* were mostly black and white, taken from newspapers and magazines. Tackling the topics of advertising and politics was a recurring idea behind his creation, but his artwork continued to grow visually. During the 1980s and 90s, he experimented with two more ways of making. The *sovrappittura* (meaning “painting over”) marked the return of the *décollages*, only now they were covered in acrylic paint, while in the *blanks* series, they’re covered with monochrome pieces of paper.

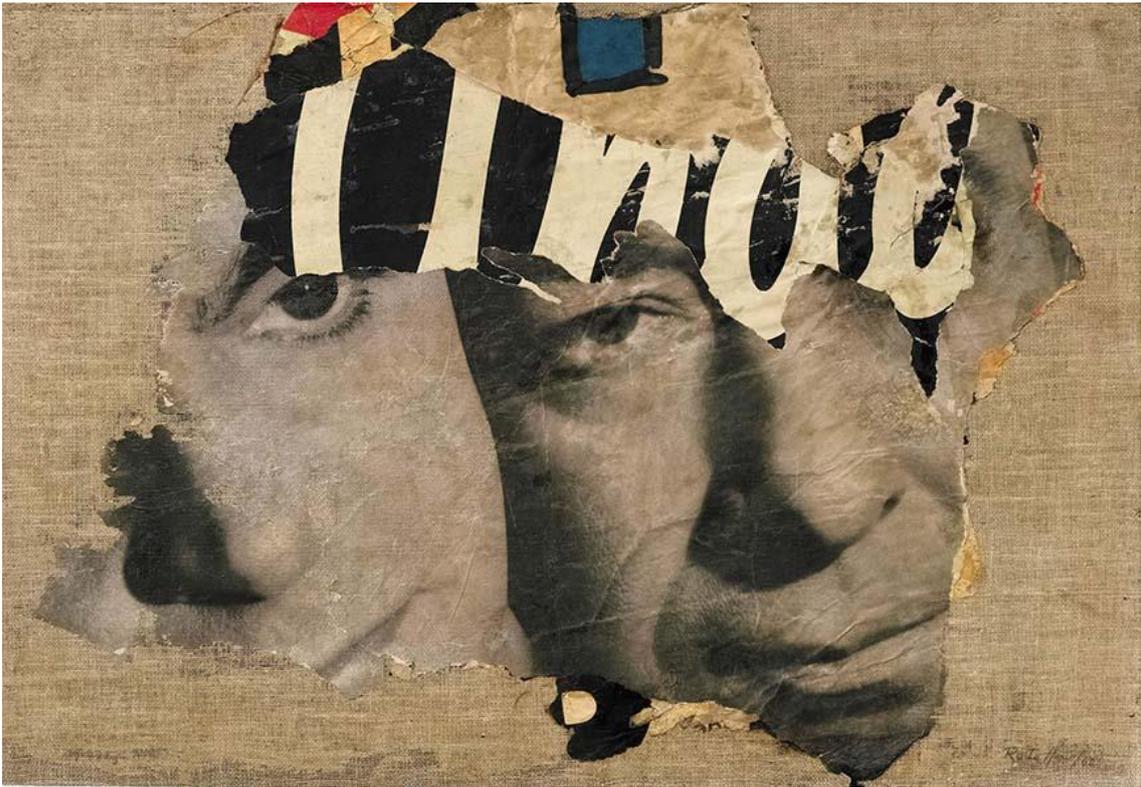


Mimmo Rotella – Materia 5, 1956, retro d'affiche on canvas

Mimmo Rotella

The curious nature of Mimmo Rotella led him to discover many expressing possibilities, establishing his name in the world of art and putting the attribute of “a great experimenter” next to his name. He was associated with the French group of Ultra-Lettrists and was a member of the Nouveau Réalisme, together with Yves Klein and Arman. He found inspiration in everyday objects, on the street, using them to criticize and address the issues of the society he lived in and to redefine the traditional artistic languages imposed by current trends. Even after his death in 2006, his art is relevant and intriguing.

The exhibition of works by Domenico “Mimmo” Rotella will be hosted by Robilant+Voena Gallery in London, UK, from February 6th until March 24th, 2015.



Mimmo Rotella – I due visi, 1962, decollage on canvas

Images courtesy of Robilant+Voena Gallery, unless otherwise stated.