

Ugo Mulas and the Italian Post-War Artists of the 1960s and 70s



April 7, 2019

Balasz Takac

Balasz Takac is alias of Vladimir Bjelicic who is actively engaged in art criticism, curatorial and artistic practice.

Following World War II, the Italian art scene after the war was revived quickly. Although the means through which artists expressed themselves were humble, the results were outstanding; each city had its own micro scene and the majority of the proponents collaborated with each other.

The intersection of various practices is probably best seen through the lens of prolific photographer **Ugo Mulas**, who captured numerous artists in their studios, in a dialog with their works or the works of other artists or intellectuals.

In order to present his practice, **Robilant + Voena** is hosting **the first ever solo exhibition of Mulas in London and the UK**. The selection from, as he used to call it, *critical reportage* is on display; the images featuring Italian post-war artists of the 1960s and early 1970s are accompanied by artworks from the photographer's private collection.



Left: Ugo Mulas – Fausto Melotti, I sette Savi, 1970-2019. Modern print, Gelatin silver print on baritated paper, 58 x 63 cm (framed), 37 x 31 cm (unframed). Edition 9 of 28 / **Right:** Ugo Mulas – Pietro Consagra, 1962-2019. Modern Print. Gelatin silver print on baritated paper, 58 x 63 cm (framed), 37 x 37 cm (unframed). Edition 1 of 28

Who Was Ugo Mulas?

Ugo Mulas was self-taught and his career developed simultaneously **with the artistic and cultural scene in Milan**. From 1954 to 1972, he **photographed the Venice Biennale** and became affiliated with prominent artists of the time (among them the famous Lucio Fontana). In 1964, at this prestigious manifestation, Mulas discovered Pop Art, and he **spent three years in the States** where a book called *New York: The New Art Scene* was made.

The photographer was much inspired by the encounters with American artists that he moved further away from traditional reportage. In the late 1960s, Mulas was involved in the growth of the neo-avant-garde movements in Italy, participated in experimental work on theatre, and contributed largely to reconsideration of the historical function of photography, which resulted in a few important critical publications.

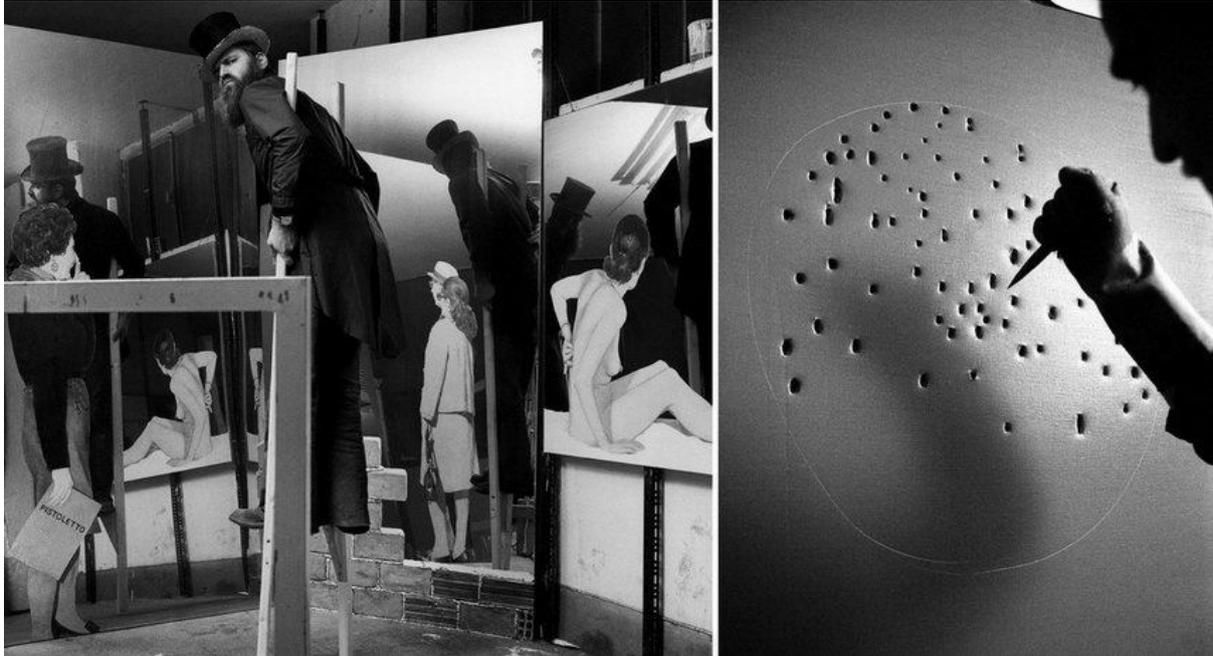
Ugo Mulas at Robilant + Voena London

Creative Intersections

The exhibition curator Francesca Pola, who was in charge of the show in close collaboration with the Archivio Ugo Mulas, decided **to underline Mulas' specific position, or rather his perception, of photography as a significant tool for the critical articulation of modern and contemporary art**. The artist wisely connected with Italian post-war artists and was eager to understand and present their pioneering and radical practices aimed to deconstruct the inherited representational canons.

Mulas's *critical reportage* was based on an almost **cinematic approach**, meaning that the photographer is narrating the artistic process of the portrayed subject; his photographs are important artifacts transmitting the intersection of personalities, disciplines, spaces, and experiences of the specific cultural context.

Therefore, the London exhibition also features artworks by Pietro Consagra, Fausto Melotti, Lucio Fontana, and Michelangelo Pistoletto, taken **from Mulas' private collection alongside his photographs.**



Left: Ugo Mulas – Michelangelo Pistoletto, 1970-2019. Modern Print. Gelatin silver print on baritated paper on board, 58 x 63 cm (framed), 37 x 37 cm (unframed). Edition 1 of 28
Right: Ugo Mulas – Lucio Fontana, Il Sole, Milano (5), 1962-2019. Modern print. Gelatin silver print on baritated paper, 58 x 63 cm (framed), 37 x 25 cm (unframed). Edition 1 of 28

Ugo Mulas at Robilant + Voena

Although Mulas died in 1973, just one month prior the opening of his retrospective at the University of Parma, his works do not cease to impress and are important for a better understanding of the certain phenomena of the local scene and art history in general.

For the purposes of this exciting survey, a bilingual catalog (English / Italian) edited by the curator is prepared.

Ugo Mulas: Creative Intersections will be on display at Robilant + Voena in London until **24 May 2019**.

Featured images: Ugo Mulas, Creative Intersections Installation views at Robilant + Voena London, 2019. All images courtesy of Robilant + Voena

Read the article here: <https://www.widewalls.ch/ugo-mulas-robilant-voena-london/>