



Mimmo Rotella, S.P.Q.R., 1963 (detail)

PRESS KIT  
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## LA DOLCE VITA

AVANT-GARDE ARTISTS IN POST-WAR ROME

20 October - 10 January 2017

TORNABUONI ART PARIS

Vernissage - 19 October 2017, 7 pm - 10 pm

RSVP - [rsvp@tornabuoniart.fr](mailto:rsvp@tornabuoniart.fr)

*Sometimes at night the darkness and silence weigh upon me. Peace frightens me; perhaps I fear it most of all. I feel it is only a façade hiding the face of hell. I think, 'What is in store for my children tomorrow?', 'The world will be wonderful', they say.*

*But from whose viewpoint? If one phone call could announce the end of everything?*

*We need to live in a state of suspended animation like a work of art, in a state of enchantment.*

From the film 'La Dolce Vita', directed by Federico Fellini, 1961

**Works by :** Giuseppe Capogrossi / Giulio Turcato / Afro / Alberto Burri / Mimmo Rotella / Salvatore Scarpitta / Carla Accardi / Gastone Novelli / Piero Dorazio / Ettore Colla / Giosetta Fioroni / Mario Schifano / Pino Pascali / Francesco Lo Savio / Franco Angeli / Jannis Kounellis / Renato Mambor / Mario Ceroli / Tano Festa

After dedicating many shows to the Milanese art scene of the 1960s – with exhibitions of the works of Lucio Fontana, Enrico Castellani, Dadamaino, Turi Simeti and Paolo Scheggi – Tornabuoni Art Paris inaugurates a second journey into Italian art, with the exhibition *La Dolce Vita: Avant-Garde Artists in Post-War Rome*.

*La Dolce Vita* refers to an historical period in Rome of the 1950s-1960s and specifically to new trends and lifestyle that became synonymous with Federico Fellini's 1961 film, *La Dolce Vita*, a chef-d'oeuvre of Italian cinema.

In the 1950s, Rome was recovering from the wounds of WWII. While this dark past was in the background, these were the years of the economic boom and rebuilding, that came with a strong desire to make the most of life and celebrate beauty after the horror of war and Fascism. At that time Rome also became a destination that attracted international intellectuals and artists, such as Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly.

From the remains of the war emerged a wave of change, the birth of a modern era, with the formation of new artistic movements that would make their mark on the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This exhibition explores the way the art that emerged in Rome at this time – the Forma 1 and Origine groups and Roman Pop – were inspired by the cultural panorama of those years to push the boundaries of painting in a way that still influences contemporary art today.

*La Dolce Vita* pays tribute to and documents this historical moment in Italian art with a selection of 40 museum-quality works, many – including those by Alberto Burri, Carla Accardi and Piero Dorazio – created between the 1950s and 1960s, and others made in the years following *La Dolce Vita*, by artists such as Jannis Kounellis and Mario Ceroli, directly inspired by their experiences of the Post-War Roman art scene.



The first group of artists presented in the exhibition, named **Forma 1**, was founded in 1947 by Carla Accardi, Piero Dorazio and Giulio Turcato, among others. In their manifesto, published in the *Forma 1* journal in April 1947, the artists claim to be “formalists and Marxists”, their ambition being to connect Marxist politics to abstract art. The group promoted a structural anti-realist, abstract art that gives importance to the form and the sign in their basic sense, excluding any symbolic or psychological representation in their work.

Carla Accardi, a researcher and experimenter, developed her own poetic painting style, at first based on interlocking geometric forms and later evolving into pseudo-calligraphic signs and informal improvisations with different materials, such as her colourful paintings on transparent plastic. Her work later influenced Arte Povera artists. Piero Dorazio and Giulio Turcato, painters of colour and

light, attempted to express movement with their luminous textures. Dorazio in particular went against the tide of contemporary avant-gardes by questioning the role of colour and experimenting with all its possibilities, while Turcato in his work abolished the concepts of mass, volume and perspective. Forma 1 disbanded in 1951 but left a deep mark on 20<sup>th</sup>-century Italian Art.

The year 1951 also saw the birth of the **Gruppo Origine** of which Dorazio was also a member. Maintaining numerous contacts with American artists, such as Cy Twombly and Robert Rauschenberg, the group was founded by Alberto Burri, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Ettore Colla and Mario Ballocco. The Gruppo Origine considered abstract art to be “decorative” and instead sought to become the reference for non-figurative art, reducing colour to its simplest and most incisive expressive function, developing pure and elementary images.



During this period, Rome also benefitted from an intense dialogue with the USA through the strong influence of the language of American Pop Art. By the late 1950s, Italian Pop precursors emerged in Rome: Mimmo Rotella with his appropriation of street posters through layering, tearing and peeling; followed by the sculptures of Mario Ceroli. Italian Pop Art found its unity in the Roman group Scuola di Piazza del Popolo whose members included Tano Festa, Franco Angeli, Giosetta Fioroni and Mario Schifano.



**Roman Pop Art's** fertile experimentation with images and art differs from other contemporaneous Italian art scenes. Refusing to relinquish figuration, these artists developed their own artistic vocabulary, defined by cultural references to the past, art and its history, as can be seen in Tano Festa and his citations of Michelangelo, as well as in Mimmo Rotella's collage-like works. These references to classical art also influenced the work of Pino Pascali and Renato Rambor.

In the creative setting of Post-War Rome, artists such as Mario Ceroli and Jannis Kounellis embarked on more radical experiments, creating sculptural forms and challenging traditional notions of artistic classification, materials and genre – ideas that later found fruition in Arte Povera.

As a tribute to Jannis Kounellis, who passed away last February, the final room of this exhibition will be dedicated to his monumental *Untitled* work from 1989, a 16-metre-long installation made of iron, lead, oil lamps and coal – materials typical of his Arte Povera work. One of Kounellis' most impressive works, it concentrates and epitomises the different themes and creative elements of his work. Typically large-scale, the work fills the entirety of the room in which it is exhibited.

Another key aspect of this work is the relationship between man, the artist and nature. This installation is neither a painting, nor a sculpture ; the frontier where nature ends and the artist begins is difficult to trace. While Kounellis' magnum opus embodies the ideas of Arte Povera, its experimental spirit was born in the cultural ferment of Post-War Rome.

## ABOUT TORNABUONI ART

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 Art 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 20<sup>th</sup>-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 Art 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, along with the Armenian pavilion, won the Golden Lion at the 2015 Venice Biennale.

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

The gallery also works closely with museums, artists' estates and institutions, most recently with the Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice on the exhibition 'Alighiero Boetti: Minimum/Maximum', timed to coincide with the opening of the Venice Biennale 2017. With Tornabuoni Art's 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.

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### Images :

- Mimmo Rotella, S.P.Q.R., 1963, décollage on canvas, 62 x 86 cm ©Tornabuoni Art
- Alberto Burri, *Combustion* series, Città di Castello, Italy, 1976. ©Aurelio Amendola
- Giuseppe Capogrossi with in the back his work *Superficie 28* (formerly titled *Superficie 25*, 1950-1952) at the Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, Italy, 13 January 1953. ©Archivio Farabola
- Mimmo Rotella, Rome, Italy, 1960, the rite of tearing. ©Fondazione Mimmo Rotella

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For more information on the gallery and its activities, visit [www.tornabuoniart.fr](http://www.tornabuoniart.fr).

Follow us on Facebook (@TornabuoniArt), Instagram (@TornabuoniArt), Twitter (@TornabuoniArt) and Pinterest (@TornabuoniArt) with the hash-tags #TornabuoniArt #LaDolceVita #LaDolceVitaExhibition.

IMAGES AVAILABLE FOR PRESS



Alberto Burri, *Combustione*, 1960  
Paper, acrylic, vinavil and combustion on canvas, 100 x 70 cm.  
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art



Piero Dorazio, *Come ogni giorno*, 1957  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 80 cm.  
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art



Mimmo Rotella, *S.P.Q.R.*, 1963  
Decollage on canvas, 62 x 86 cm.  
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art



Carla Accardi, *Negativo e Positivo*, 1956  
Casein on canvas, 60 x 80 cm.  
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art



Mario Ceroli, *La geometria quale paesaggio pittoresco!*, 1974  
Wood and wooden letters, 200 x 160 x 10 cm.  
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art



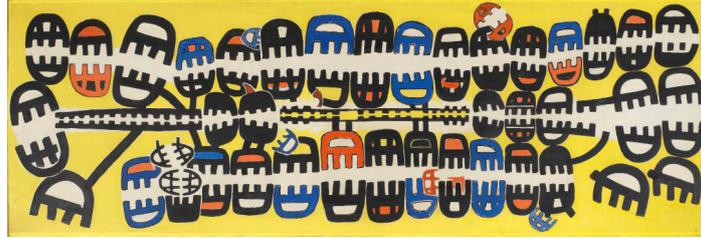
Salvatore Scarpitta, *Untitled*, 1958  
Bandages and mixed media, 66 x 81 cm.  
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art



Tano Festa, *The Strike of the stars Michelangelo according to Tano Festa n°17.*, 1967  
Enamel and pen on canvas, 92 x 91 cm.  
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art



Jannis Kounellis, *Senza titolo*, 1961  
Mixed media on paper laid on canvas, 100 x 140 cm.  
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art



Giuseppe Capogrossi, *Superficie n° 25*, 1952  
Huile sur toile, 74 x 217 cm.  
Courtesy Tornabuoni Art

## ARCHIVE IMAGES



Giuseppe Capogrossi with in the back his work *Superficie 28* (formerly titled *Superficie 25*, 1950- 1952) at the Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, Italy, 13 January 1953.  
Copyrights Archivio Farabola



Jannis Kounellis with Margherita di Fuoco, Italy, 1967.  
Copyrights Claudio Abate



Mario Ceroli with *Io, piramide di ghiaccio* at the XII Festival of Two Worlds, Spoleto, Italy, 1969.  
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Alberto Burri, *Combustion series*, Città di Castello, Italy, 1976. Copyrights Aurelio Amendola



Mimmo Rotella, Rome, Italy, 1960, the rite of tearing.  
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