

5 April–24 August 08

Rome – Open Painting: The Material Picture in Italy of the 1950s and 1960s

An exhibition at the ZKM | Museum of Contemporary Art

The artistic dissolution and destruction of the panel painting began in Italy of the late 1950s. The endeavor to separate the picture from the panel commenced: a development that would have far reaching consequences for art history. Many artists – from Alberto Burri to Lucio Fontana – no longer followed the path of abstraction. They thus veered from the general trends, for example, of the Abstract Expressionism dominant in New York of the 1950s. Not only was a depiction of the representational world refused, but also the means of painting: oil and canvas. The Italian avant-garde artists sliced and bored through canvases. They curved them in space, pressed, layered and stretched them. Such works no longer contain images, but rather, only a canvas, as such. Using this model, others such as, Giuseppe Uncini, Agenore Fabbri, and Paolo Scheggi, replaced even the canvas itself: with plastic film, wood, metal, marble, or concrete. The step was taken from color and painting to material panel. This retreat to the material was not only a radical and early »point of origin« for painting, but also the beginning of material art. This cleared the way for filling the canvas with materials and objects from outside of art, as Pop art would subsequently carry out in the 1960s. From a painterly context, the first phase of the avant-garde, from Wladimir Tatlin to Kurt Schwitters presented a precursor to this trend. Robert Rauschenberg and others who spent time in Rome in the 1950s on grants, absorbed the impulses and transported them back to the US.

The majority of the exhibited works are from the collection of the VAF-Stiftung, the most important collection of Italian Modernism and partner of the ZKM | Museum of Contemporary Art. Additional works from public museums and private collections add to the spectrum of works shown.

Curated by Peter Weibel

An extensive volume including illustrations and other material will be published in June in conjunction with the exhibition, edited by Peter Weibel, with texts by Peter Weibel and Klaus Wolbert, as well as numerous source texts and extensive biographies (ca. 300 pages, 150 illustrations).

Press Release

April 2008

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Location

ZKM | Museum of Contemporary Art

Duration

5 April–24 August 08

Opening

4 April 2008

Time

6 p.m.

Location

ZKM_Foyer

Press conference

4 April 2008

Time

11 a.m.

Location

ZKM | Museum of Contemporary Art

Press contact

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An accompanying program will feature films on the theme of Rome in the 1950s, including, among others: Roberto Rossellini *Roma, città aperta*, Federico Fellini *La dolce vita*, Pier Paolo Pasolini *Accattone*.

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Guided tours: Sat, 2 p.m.

Artists in the exhibition:

Getulio Alviani • Giovanni Anceschi • Enrico Baj • Franco Bemporad • Remo Bianco • Alberto Biasi • Agostino Bonalumi • Davide Boriani • Alberto Burri • Arturo Carmassi • Nicola Carrino • Enrico Castellani • Ettore Colla • Gianni Colombo • Roberto Crippa • Dadamaino • Gabriele De Vecchi • Lucio Del Pezzo • Agenore Fabbri • Lucio Fontana • Pinot Gallizio • Edoardo Landi • Ugo La Pietra • Francesco Lo Savio • Edgardo Mangucci • Piero Manzoni • Enzo Mari • Gino Marotta • Sandro Martini • Manfredo Massironi • Fabio Mauri • Mattia Moreni • Ennio Morlotti • Pierluca • Enrico Prampolini • Andrea Raccagni • Mimmo Rotella • Angelo Savelli • Salvatore Scarpitta • Paolo Scheggi • Giuseppe Spagnolo • Giuseppe Uncini • Grazia Varisco

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