



fiera internazionale d'arte
moderna e contemporanea
international exhibition
of modern and contemporary art
Bologna
02/05.02.2018

ARTE FIERA 42

Like last year's edition, the 42nd Arte Fiera will be a compact show: 182 exhibitors, of which 152 galleries, 10 operators from the print and handicraft sectors in the *Printville* area, and 20 publishers and institutional players.

Our art trade show is especially focused on Italian operators and their, often international, scope.

This year's edition sees a special focus on gallerists proposing monographic shows of particular artists who have been selected to exhibit in the sub-section *Modernity*. Others have been chosen to exhibit in Bologna's splendid old town venues as part of the *Polis* section whose programme takes trade-show visitors often to little known places not usually on the tourist route or closed to the public.

The MAMbo Museum will host a selection of films entitled *La comunità che viene*. Curated by Mark Nash, it looks at the city's communist legacy and will appropriately be screened on the wall that usually displays Renato Guttuso's *I funerali di Togliatti*. Collegio Venturoli, Bologna's historic and magical artists' residence, will host one of the performances curated by Chiara Vecchiarelli in the *Special Projects* series: *Performing the Gallery*, which looks at the role played by art galleries. Like the film series, *Special Projects* will also be present in the trade-show grounds. Indeed, both the fair itself and the 'extra-mural' activities are intertwined, the art exhibition combining commercial features and a wide cultural programme reaching into the urban fabric of its host city. Once again, but more so this year, Arte Fiera has mobilized the city and its various players – among them the University, Bologna's Film Library, the Opera House and the new Agro-food Centre FICO - in an all-embracing programme.

At the fair itself, Halls 25 and 26 are wholly given over to Arte Fiera. Visitors are welcomed by the extensive, *Printville* section curated by a+mbookstore. This huge covered square places international publishing companies alongside a plethora of industrially produced and handmade objects, artefacts with no claim to being 'unique works', rather demonstrating that visual art does not have to be a one-off piece but can also be a hybrid amalgam.

The art show's in-depth cultural programme includes an international meeting sponsored by Venice's Luav and Bologna University, to be held in the fair grounds. Its theme – the relationship between exhibitions and trade fairs – is a highly topical issue today when these two activities seem almost to overlap.

With the exception of the four Emerging Galleries in the *Nueva Vista* section curated by Simone Frangi, the rest of the exhibition mixes modern and strictly contemporary art. Now that many of the key figures of the post-war experimental art movements – from Conceptual Art to Arte Povera – are no longer with us, it is natural to ask where they should be placed in the wider context. This in turn begs the question of how to



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place galleries that mainly show early 20th century art but also do not hesitate to propose new names and young artists.

The *Photo* section curated by Andrea Pertoldeo has also been distributed over the two halls to underline that no hierarchy or ranking exist among the different artistic techniques. Our basic tenet is that over the last century visual art has acquired an unprecedented freedom in its ability to embrace all expressive languages and techniques.

The deliberate mixing of timeframes in the manufactured and handicraft exhibit is intended to stimulate dialogue between current work and past identities, encouraging visitors to seek out similarities, recurrent features and new trends. Naming one of the artwork areas *Modernity* reflects the same thinking: not seeing 'modern' in contrast to 'contemporary' but as art which, regardless of when it was created, is topical and relevant. In this way, Arte Fiera is the expression of a city that has always embraced culture and knowledge yet never been a slave to learning, living its circumstance with the joyful conviviality it is rightly famous for. We trust that the commercial side – an essential aspect of any trade show – will reflect the vitality of the city and its acute sense of excellence.

Angela Vettese
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