



ARTE FIERA 2013

Notes by Claudio Spadoni and Giorgio Verzotti artistic directors

ARTE FIERA 2013 confirms its role as the first Italian art exhibition. First (and certainly) because it is the oldest, having reached its 37th edition, but above all first because Arte Fiera's primary goal has always been to promote Italian galleries, even if there has never been a lack of major foreign galleries.

The continuation of the economic crisis that has affected Italy since 2008 strengthens, rather and weakens, our conviction that Arte Fiera's strength is the Italian spirit, and that this strength must be channelled to enhance the structures and stars of the Italian art system, which has fallen into a by-now global context.

We can think of Bologna in the same way as Arte Fiera, dedicated to "Italian genius," understood as a set of widely acknowledged values to be strongly defended, especially in times of crisis like these. The fall that many denounce and use to define the current condition (economic but also psychological) of Italy must be fought with every means available: with our culture and especially with the visual culture for which Italy has always been famous. The battle must be sustained by every cultural institution, public and private, precisely because of the meagre support that Italian art has received from the government, at least since World War II.

There are good reasons to fight this battle: all over the world, 20th and 21st century Italian art continues to receive maximum attention, as shown during the last several years by the results of international auctions for works by contemporary masters such as Fontana and Manzoni, plus rising prices for works by Alighiero Boetti thanks to publication of his general catalogue.

But most of all, the recognition of Italian art by major institutions is measured on the basis of exhibitions by galleries and museums. A perfect example of this is the opening last May of several New York galleries exhibiting some of Italy's greatest artists, presented in lavishly produced shows. In cooperation with the Fontana Foundation and curated by Germano Celant, Larry Gagosian's Chelsea gallery presented a true, museum-level retrospective to the American public, with a large number of works that included a few "Ambienti Spaziali." The Marianne Boesky Gallery exhibited recent and non-recent works by Pier Paolo Calzolari, while Marian Goodman offered a one-man show to Giuseppe Penone, with whom she has worked for years. The small Luxembourg/Dyan gallery offered works by Domenico Gnoli from 1964-69, and New York also showed interest in the finest new art, with Lara Favaretto's one-woman show at PS1 in Long Island City, associated with the Museum of Modern Art, and shortly before that with the Cattelan show at the Guggenheim. In July, MOMA will present the travelling exhibition of works by Alighiero Boetti, organized in cooperation with the Museo Nacional Reina Sofia (Madrid) and the Tate Modern (London).

And there's more: in early 2013, the Panorama Museum in Bad Frankenhausen (Germany) will present an exhibit on the influence of Giorgio de Chirico's metaphysics on later generations of Italian artists – an exhibit that Italian museums have never even thought about!

ARTE FIERA 2013 reflects these excellences: our avant-garde movements have always been one of its strengths and still make it the top event on the Italian Exhibition calendar, with participating galleries adding works by Fontana, Manzoni, the Arte Povera movement (especially by Calzolari from Bologna) and the Transavanguardia. In other words, the two groups that have achieved the greatest success in Italy and abroad. But other comments can be made about the participation of artists in Arte Fiera: there is interest in reconsidering our recent past, a trend observed at other international exhibitions as well, starting with the 2012 edition of Frieze in London with the Frieze



Masters show, a separate wing devoted entirely to the recent and remote past, but focusing especially on the 1960s and '70s.

Here in Bologna, a great deal of space will be devoted to trends (both Italian and foreign) arising in the late '50s and continuing throughout the '60s and '70s, inspired by Visual Rationalism, Concrete art, and Kinetic art, and based on analytic trends in painting and sculpture, on Conceptual Art and, in general, on the experimentalism of the age.

Many artists from these generations will be presented in the **SOLO SHOW** section (new for 2013), where galleries will exhibit works by a single artist.

In 2013, the Fair's "Italian spirit" is especially emphasised by the programme of **collateral events**. Several conferences will discuss the Italian art system, with the participation of leading artists and critics, and the new **ITALIAN STORIES exhibit** within the Exhibition will re-examine the history of Italian art from the viewpoint of Laura Cherubini and Lea Mattarella, two guest curators. The exhibited works are selected from the ones presented by participating galleries, so that the Exhibition itself is, in a certain sense, contextualised in the exhibit.

An art fair is not a museum or a foundation: it is an event linked to the art market and to its agents, but is not limited to the economic and business aspects that are natural parts a work of art, which is also intellectual property to be enjoyed by the widest possible public, not just by its owner.

An art fair should also be an opportunity to meet the public and to popularise modern and contemporary art, including the most avant-garde and experimental or created by young and as-yet undiscovered artists. At Arte Fiera, these artists are presented by **young galleries** in the section traditionally devoted to them, as well as by established galleries together with well-known artists. This attention to young artists is confirmed by the **Euromobil under 30 Prize and by the Furla Prize**, as well as by **ART CITY Bologna**, coordinated by Gianfranco Maraniello, Director of Mambo, which will make Bologna a lively contemporary art laboratory on 25, 26 and 27 January.

As a result, Arte Fiera 2013 will be a large show open to everyone, offering a very wide selection and a panorama of Italian and foreign works from the entire 20th century up to today.

We want to emphasise that the Fair's Italian focus does not imply less interest in foreign galleries. On the contrary, their presence will be encouraged starting with the next edition. Our attention to internationality has already been demonstrated by the participation of the Sapone di Nizza Gallery and of the Michael Kewenig Gallery (soon to open a new space in Berlin) in the Evaluation Committee.

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