

PRESS RELEASE

PIERO MANZONI

Achromes: Linea Infinita

9 February – 9 April 2016

Private View: Monday 8 February 2016, 6 pm – 8 pm



Mazzoleni London is pleased to announce an exhibition of Piero Manzoni (1933–1963) that will bring together two of the artist's most well known series of works, the *Achromes* (1957–1963) and the *Linee* (1959–1963). This is the first exhibition to focus uniquely on the relationship between these two bodies of work and will include a recently rediscovered and never before exhibited *Linea*, as well as a key example of the *Line of Infinite Length* series. Other highlights will include two *Achromes* that are rarely exhibited in public. A number of further examples from each series will expose the shared qualities, both conceptually and materially, of these works that were of crucial relevance to Manzoni's development as an artist. The exhibition will mark the anniversary of Manzoni's death on 6 February 1963 at the age of 29 and will also form part of a series of exhibitions in 2016 celebrating 30 years of Mazzoleni Art.

Piero Manzoni was one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century, known for his radical and playful spirit, which has precipitated much international research. He is best known for *Fiato d'Artista* (Artist's Breath, 1960), works that consisted of balloons inflated by the artist, *Merda d'Artista* (Artist's Shit, 1961), sealed cans of uncertain contents, and *Sculture viventi* (Living Sculptures, 1961-62), people the artist designated works of art by signing his name on them. All of these series commented on the consumer society of postwar Italy but, above all, transformed the body and its component parts into works of art.

This exhibition will bring to the fore the *Achromes* and *Linee*, in order to focus on Manzoni's commitment to developing forms that created an intrinsic link between materials and the idea of the 'infinite'. From 1959 Manzoni focused entirely on manifesting the infinite, saying in his 1960 text *Free Dimension* that 'this indefinite surface, uniquely alive, even if in the material contingency the work cannot be infinite, is, however, infinitable, infinitely repeatable, without a solution of continuity.'

The exhibition will include a number of *Achromes* from the 1950s and the 1960s. 'Achrome' means 'colourless' or 'neutral' and the *Achromes* series consists of a number of pale works constructed in a wide variety of materials. Manzoni produced *Achromes* using kaolin, stitched canvases, stones, expanded polystyrene balls, expanded polystyrene and phosphorescent paint, examples of which will appear in the exhibition. The works' lack of colour and the simplicity of their materials lent them the capability to be endlessly repeatable, and thus infinite, almost like atoms. Curator of the exhibition, Gaspare Luigi Marcone, said that 'For Manzoni, the total experimentation presented in the *Achromes* is itself a line of infinite research.'

The *Linee* were the first three-dimensional works that Manzoni produced, seeking to escape the bi-dimensionality of the painting medium. The first *Linea* was produced in the spring of 1959 and consisted of one black horizontal line on paper. The unseen *Linea* (c.1960) in the exhibition will be an example of this style. From the summer of 1959, Manzoni also went on to create longer *Linea*, scrolls that were rolled up in black cylinders with labels indicating the length of the piece and the date of its creation. In 1960 Manzoni radicalised this concept by creating several *Linea di Lunghezza Infinita* (Lines of Infinite Length), which consisted only of black cylinders with labels stating 'Contains a line of infinite length. Piero Manzoni '60'. A rare example of this series will appear in the exhibition and Manzoni said of these works that their 'only dimension is time.'

The exhibition will also include a wide collection of unseen archival material, which aims to demonstrate both the artist's extensive exhibition activity throughout the 1950s and the 1960s and the

consistently theoretical and investigative nature of his activities as an artist. Manzoni's own handwritten letters and notes will be shown alongside rare exhibition catalogues and invitation cards as well as photographs of the artist at work.

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Notes to Editors

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The exhibition is curated by Gaspare Luigi Marcone.

About Piero Manzoni

Piero Manzoni (1933–1963) was one of the most influential artists of the 20th Century. During his short but striking artistic career, he produced several groundbreaking series of works, including the *Achromes* (1957–1963), the *Linee* (1959–1963), the *Fiato d'Artista* (1960), the *Sculture viventi* (1961–1962), the *Merda d'Artista* (1961) and the *Socle du Monde* (1961) which transformed the whole world into a work of art. With Gianpaolo Maccentelli Manzoni made four short films about certain cycles of his works (*Linee*, *Corpi d'Aria*, *Consumazione dell'arte Dinamica del pubblico*, *Divorare l'arte*, *Sculture viventi*) over the period 1959-1961. Manzoni exhibited in almost 80 shows around the world, in Amsterdam, Anvers, Basel, Berlin, Brussels, Chicago, Copenhagen, Düsseldorf, London, Milan, Rome and Taipei. Together with Enrico Castellani (b.1930), he founded the Galleria Azimut and magazine *Azimuth* in Milan from 1959 to 1960. He died in Milan in 1963 aged 29 as a result of a heart attack.

About Mazzoleni Art

Mazzoleni Art was founded in Turin in 1986, by Giovanni and Anna Pia Mazzoleni and will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2016. In the past three decades Mazzoleni has organised more than 150 solo and group shows, championing the work of postwar Italian artists. In October 2014, the gallery opened a Mayfair-based London outpost, under the directorship of Luigi Mazzoleni. The gallery participates in fairs in London, Hong Kong and New York, amongst others.

The gallery evolved from the private collection of Giovanni Mazzoleni, which was begun in the 1960s and brought together works from several of the most important international movements including Surrealism, Futurism and Abstract Art. Postwar Italian art and Arte Povera soon became the primary focus of the collection and, with the welcoming of Giovanni's sons Davide and Luigi to the gallery in the 1990s, became the core of Mazzoleni's curatorial programme.

Today the Turin-based gallery takes up three floors of Palazzo Panizza, looking out upon the historic Piazza Solferino and occupying part of the original 19th century foyer of the Alfieri theatre. The London gallery, established to extend the reach of this important group of artists and to develop new and existing overseas relationships, is situated on Albemarle Street in the heart of Mayfair's artistic district. The 3,000 square foot space continues to present a programme focused on museum calibre postwar Italian Art and Arte Povera, working in close collaboration with artists' estates and foundations.

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Opening Hours

Monday – Friday: 10am – 6pm

Saturday: 11 am – 5 pm

Sunday: closed