



MAZZOLENI

LONDON – TORINO



Colour in Contextual Play

An Installation by Joseph Kosuth

Works by Enrico Castellani, Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein, Joseph Kosuth, Piero Manzoni

Curated by Cornelia Lauf

Neon in Contextual Play

Joseph Kosuth and Arte Povera

Works by Pier Paolo Calzolari, Joseph Kosuth, Mario Merz, Emilio Prini

Text by Cornelia Lauf

31 October 2017 – 20 January 2018

Private View: 30 October 2017, 6 – 8 pm

MAZZOLENI TURIN is proud to present a double project with American conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945), opening in October at its exhibition space in Piazza Solferino. ***Colour in Contextual Play. An installation by Joseph Kosuth***, curated by Cornelia Lauf, exhibited last Spring in the London premises of the gallery to international acclaim, includes works by Enrico Castellani (b. 1930), Lucio Fontana (1899–1968), Yves Klein (1928–1963), Piero Manzoni (1933– 1963), and Kosuth himself. This project, installed in the historic *piano nobile* rooms of Mazzoleni Turin, runs concurrently with a new exhibition, ***Neon in Contextual Play: Joseph Kosuth and Arte Povera*** devised especially for Mazzoleni Turin and installed in the groundfloor space, is focused on the use of Neon in the work of Joseph Kosuth and selected Arte Povera artists Mario Merz (1925-2003), Pier Paolo Calzolari (b. 1943) and Emilio Prini (1943-2016).

Colour in Contextual Play juxtaposes monochrome works by Castellani, Fontana, Klein and Manzoni with works from Kosuth's 1968 series 'Art as Idea as Idea'. This series made a conceptual investigation into the relationship between words, ideas and objects. It comprised photographs of dictionary definitions of words

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including ‘meaning’ and ‘idea’. For ‘Colour in Contextual Play’ Kosuth creates a site-specific installation that places the examples ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘grey’, ‘red’, ‘green’, ‘yellow’ and ‘violet’ in company with works by the other artists utilising those colours. Colour, or its absence, is a theoretical as well as aesthetic consideration in all the works on display. The artists share an uncompromising analysis of conceptual structures that interrogate the nature of space, colour, form and time. From raised canvases punctuated by nail points (Castellani), to an indigo so profound it received its own Pantone number (Klein), explorations of the space beyond colour (Fontana) and natural colour that was also a non-colour (Manzoni), each artist explored the nature of vision in depth over the course of their careers.

The artist selection in *Colour in Contextual Play* was the suggestion of Emilio Prini. Lauf initially invited Prini to mount a monographic exhibition for Mazzoleni London, but in typical fashion, Prini counter-proposed a quintet of artists including himself. A few months before his untimely passing in 2016, Prini requested that Joseph Kosuth, a long-standing colleague, replace him. Cornelia Lauf has stated: “Thus, one of the most important proponents of the Arte Povera group extended the notion of Italian art, to show the transnational dialogue uniting artists, evidenced also by his selection of Yves Klein.” Prini’s lifelong adherence to subtraction and economy distinguish him as one of the most radical, though least-known, members of Arte Povera, a movement identified by the influential art historian and curator, Germano Celant, in 1967. Prini often reflected on colour himself, confirming this exhibition’s theme as a fitting theoretical matrix uniting all of the artists.

Arte Povera is the link that unifies this project with the new concurrent parallel exhibition *Neon in Contextual Play* devised by Joseph Kosuth especially for the Mazzoleni Turin space. Turin is particularly important for Kosuth for being the location of his first solo exhibition in Italy, *15 Locations 1969/70 Art as Idea as Idea 1966 – 1970*, in 1970. Moreover, as Arte Povera was arguably one of Turin’s major contributions to art history, with many of the artists within the group calling it home, it seemed a fitting schema for Kosuth to create a second project with his neon works alongside those by Arte Povera artists who also used the industrial material from the late 1960s. Included are an important Fibonacci sequence work by Mario Merz titled ‘Piccolo caimano’, 1979, on loan from a private collection, and two works by Pier Paolo Calzolari. A work by Emilio Prini – the 1967 ‘Gradino tipo per porta’ is additionally a poignant homage to the artist behind the genesis of this exhibition project and an important physical manifestation of his imprint on the conceptual structure behind it.

Joseph Kosuth’s works in neon include the 1965 ‘One and Eight A Description’, and the 1966 ‘Object and Subject’. As Cornelia Lauf has suggested in her text for the accompanying book, they represent the artist’s early attempts to distil meaning and create a contemporary language after the seeming exhaustion of painterly pictorial modes. Kosuth’s centrality within the early understanding of *Arte Povera* as an international movement is underlined in Lauf’s text as much as by the dynamic installation.

The two exhibitions together examine thoroughly the connections created from the dissemination of words, objects, colour and light that engender new perspectives of perception and interaction between language and reality. Kosuth has often stated that his work is centred on exploring the limits of language. This is clearly in evidence in these installations as colour and light challenge the capacities of language at a primary level.

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The installations call to mind other cross-historical exhibitions by Kosuth, including 'The Play of the Unmentionable' at the Brooklyn Museum (1990) and 'The Play of the Unsayable: Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Art of the 20th Century' at the Vienna Secession and the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels (1990), as well as installations of Magritte, Ad Reinhardt and others.

The exhibitions are accompanied by fully illustrated books: one dedicated to the Colour section, and one dedicated to the Neon installation. This double volume publication, created by Joseph Kosuth, is published by NERO and includes essays by Cornelia Lauf, an interview with Joseph Kosuth, and selected artist writings with texts both in English and Italian.

Works by Joseph Kosuth - Courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma Milan/Naples.

About Joseph Kosuth

Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945, USA) is one of the pioneers of Conceptual Art and Installation Art, initiating language based works and appropriation strategies in the 1960s. His work has consistently explored the production and role of language and meaning within art. His more than forty-year inquiry into the relation of language to art has taken the form of installations, museum exhibitions, public commissions and publications throughout Europe, the Americas and Asia, including seven Documenta(s) and nine Venice Biennale(s), one of which was presented in the Hungarian Pavilion (1993). Awards include the Brandeis Award, 1990, Frederick Wiseman Award, 1991, the *Menzione d'Onore* at the Venice Biennale, 1993, and the *Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres* from the French government in 1993. In June 1999, a 3.00 franc postage stamp was issued by the French Government in honour of his work in Figeac. In February 2001, he received the *Laurea Honoris Causa*, doctorate in Philosophy and Letters from the University of Bologna. In October 2003 he received the Austrian Republic's highest honour for accomplishments in science and culture, the Decoration of Honour in Gold for services to the Republic of Austria. In 2012 Kosuth received *La classe des Arts de l'Académie Royale* from the Académie Royale Sciences des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts of Belgium. In 2015 the Instituto Superior de Arte, at the University of Havana, awarded him an *Honoris Causa* doctorate, presented during the 12th Havana Art Biennial where he exhibited an extensive installation at the Biblioteca Nacional.

In 2015 Kosuth revealed *A Monument of Mines*, a major site-specific installation for the new cultural centre in Kongsberg, Norway. Recently, Kosuth unveiled 'One Field to the Next' a permanent large-scale work at the Taipei Main Station. In October 2016 Kosuth's *ni apparence ni illusion*, which opened at the Musée du Louvre, Paris in 2009 was inaugurated as a permanent installation.

About Cornelia Lauf

Independent curator and art historian with thirty years' experience in contemporary art, Cornelia Lauf began her career at the Guggenheim Museum, and has edited publications, and produced exhibitions for institutions in Europe and the United States. Recent works include "Wall to Wall: Carpets by Artists," (Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland), a traveling exhibition on certificates of authenticity by artists (De Vleeshal, Middelburg, traveling to The Drawing Center, New York, SALT, Beyoglu, Istanbul, among others), and extensive publishing and editorial work in the field of artist's books (Imschoot, uitgevers; Three Star Books). Lauf is currently working on a publication on Emilio Prini, as well as projects devoted to craft by artists, in Baku, Azerbaijan and the Middle East. She advises private collections in the United States, and specializes in custom commissioned contemporary artworks, produced in collaboration with heritage artisans.

About Mazzoleni

Mazzoleni was founded in Turin in 1986 and opened a Mayfair-based London gallery in October 2014. Over the past three decades Mazzoleni has organised solo and group exhibitions of more than 150 prominent Italian and international artists from across the 20th century. The gallery evolved from the private collection of Giovanni and Anna Pia Mazzoleni who have been collecting since the 1960s. The collection brought together significant works from important



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international art movements including Surrealism, Futurism and Abstract Art. Italian Post-War art quickly became the primary focus of the collection and became the core of Mazzoleni's curatorial programme when Giovanni's sons Davide and Luigi joined the gallery in the 1990s. Today the Turin gallery takes up three floors of Palazzo Panizza, overlooking the historic Piazza Solferino and occupying part of the original 19th century foyer of the Alfieri theatre.

The London gallery is situated on Albemarle Street, in the heart of Mayfair's historic art district. The 3,000 square foot space – designed by architect David Trad – hosts exhibitions across two levels, presenting a programme focused on museum-calibre Post-War Italian art and art from the Seventies, working in close collaboration with artists' estates and foundations.

Recent critically acclaimed exhibitions have included the major solo Alberto Burri exhibition in 2015, 'Piero Manzoni. Achromes: Linea Infinita', curated by Gaspare Luigi Marcone in collaboration with the Piero Manzoni Foundation, 'Fontana/Melotti. Angelic Spaces and Infinite Geometries', curated by Daniela Ferrari of the MART Museum Trento/Rovereto in 2016, 'Mazzoleni 1986-2016. 30 years of Art, 30 Italian Artists' a majestic show celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Turin space and 'Light in motion: Balla Dorazio Zappettini', now on show in the London gallery. All exhibitions are accompanied by fully illustrated monographs, often featuring newly commissioned research contributing to current critical and art historical discourse. Mazzoleni is present at international art fairs, including London, Basel, Hong Kong, New York and Miami.

Mazzoleni

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Opening hours:

Tuesday to Saturday 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. / 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.

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