

Press release

**Lucio Fontana | Enrico Baj | Piero Manzoni**  
**Curated by Gaspare Luigi Marccone**

**15 October – 19 December 2020**

**Private View: Thursday 15 October 2020, 10.30am-8.30pm**

Mazzoleni is pleased to announce the opening of the Fall exhibition season of the Turin gallery with a project curated by Gaspare Luigi Marccone, reuniting three undisputed masters of Post-War Italian art, **Lucio Fontana** (1899-1968), **Enrico Baj** (1924-2003), and **Piero Manzoni** (1933-1963). The presentation is a homage to 1958, an important year in which the differing research of all three artists was displayed and published together. The exhibition is accompanied by the book by Marccone *Fontana Baj Manzoni 1958 – 2018*, published by Carlo Cambi editore, 2018.

In 1958, two exhibitions were presented in Italy under the title *Fontana Baj Manzoni*, both accompanied by a critical text by Luciano Anceschi. The first was held at the Galleria Bergamo in the city of Bergamo from the 4th to the 17th of January, the second at the Galleria del Circolo di Cultura in Bologna from the 23rd of March to the 8th of April that year. Almost certainly the Bologna exhibition was the first time in which Manzoni presented his new 'white works', subsequently entitled *Achromes*. Along with its importance to Manzoni's career, 1958 was also a very significant year for Fontana's research. Following the invention of the "holes" in 1949, the founder of Spatialism began to work on his first *Concetto spaziale, Attese* featuring "cuts" in the canvas and in 1958 a room was devoted to his work at the Venice Biennale with an overview of his revolutionary approach. The September of that year saw the publication of the third issue of the "nuclear" periodical *Il Gesto* edited by Baj, Manzoni and Sergio Dangelo. The cover of the magazine, conceived by Fontana, was riddled with a series of "holes" while reproduced inside were the latest works by contemporary artists and poets (Gillo Dorfles, Jean Dubuffet, Marcel Duchamp, Asger Jorn and others).

The works on display examine this key moment in art history with pieces from 1958 as well from before and after this date in order to shed light on the paths followed by the artists. Focussing on their use of radical new methods and experimentation with materials that eventually defined their 'signature' work, the show will traverse art movements such as Spatialism and Nuclear Art. The presentation reflects the dynamic exchange of avant-garde ideas brought about by rapid technological and cultural transformation in Italy during this period.

One of the most innovative artists of the twentieth century, Fontana was the founder of Spatialism – he began puncturing holes in the surface of his work to investigate space beyond a flat surface. The presentation features a striking *Concetto Spaziale. Barocco*, 1956, oil, holes, mixed media and glitter on canvas.

Also on display will be major works by Enrico Baj, artist, writer and co-founder of the Nuclear Art Movement with Sergio Dangelo. As an author, he was a leading promoter of the avant-garde and responsible for publishing the 'nuclear' periodicals and manifestos. His vivid paintings, collages and outspoken writings challenged

artistic and political orthodoxies. Like Fontana and Manzoni, Baj also pursued an approach 'beyond painting', using fabric, buttons and decorative objects to create his work. He will be represented by several pieces, including *Peinture nucléaire*, 1952, and *Testa Montagna*, 1958, major examples of his pioneering ideas and artistic practice.

The presentation includes one of Piero Manzoni's formative works – close to the aesthetics of the Nuclear Art Movement – *Untitled*, 1956, oil and tar on canvas and an *Achrome* in stitched canvas and mixed media from 1960. Manzoni's personal curiosity, collaboration and frequent trips around Europe became critical in defining this new geography of art. After experimenting with spreading gesso on canvas (1957-1958), Manzoni decided to work with kaolin, a material used in the production of ceramics, into which he would dip the canvas, which when mounted onto a frame and dried would assumed the puckered quality used to create his *Achromes*. Following these experiments, Manzoni continued to produce *Achromes* with very different materials – including sewn cloth, polystyrene and phosphorescent paint – in parallel with other radical works (*Linee*, 1959, *Fiato d'artista*, 1960, *Basi magiche*, 1961, *Merda d'artista*, 1961), redefining the concept of art.

In parallel, in the rooms on the first floor of the gallery will be presented a selection of masterpieces by great Italian artists from the Mazzoleni collection; this group show, featuring works mainly realized between the 1950s and 1970s, will provide an opportunity to analyse exchanges, influences and connections and to reconstruct the fertile historical-artistic context of Italian artistic research.

### **Mazzoleni**

Mazzoleni was founded in Turin in 1986 by Giovanni and Anna Pia Mazzoleni, as a natural evolution of their private collection started in the 1950s. The historic Turin space, which occupies three floors of Palazzo Panizza, overlooking the city-centre Piazza Solferino, has since 2014 been flanked by the London gallery in Mayfair. Over the past three decades Mazzoleni has organised solo and group exhibitions of more than 200 prominent Italian and international artists from across the 20th century with an exhibition programme focused on museum-calibre Italian art from the Post-War period and recently the contemporary panorama, working in close collaboration with artists' estates and foundations. All exhibitions are accompanied by fully illustrated monographs, with authoritative critical texts. Under the leadership of Davide and Luigi Mazzoleni, in recent years Mazzoleni has intensified its international activities, participating in numerous art fairs, including Art Basel (Basel, Miami and Hong Kong), Frieze Masters (London), TEFAF (Maastricht and New York) and FIAC (Paris).



**MAZZOLENI**

LONDON – TORINO

NOTES TO EDITORS

*Lucio Fontana | Enrico Baj | Piero Manzoni*

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To make an appointment for the Private View please contact:  
[torino@mazzoleniart.com](mailto:torino@mazzoleniart.com)

Address: Mazzoleni, Piazza Solferino, 2 – 10121 Torino

Gallery hours: Tue– Sat 10.30AM – 12.45PM / 3.45PM – 7PM

Sunday closed, Monday by appointment

Admission: free

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