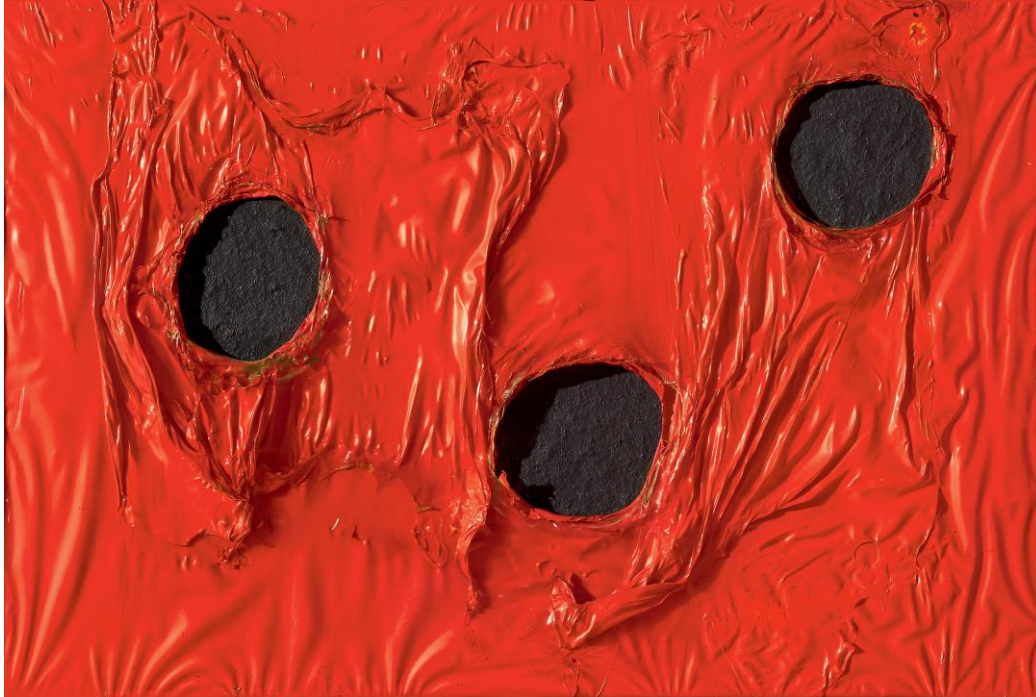


Mazzoleni at Art Basel 2025 ***Theatre as a Place for Art***



Alberto Burri, *Rosso Plastica*, 1968. Plastic, acrylic, and combustion on cellophane, 51 x 75 cm.
Courtesy of Mazzoleni, London – Torino.

Art Basel 2025 | Messe Basel, Basel, Switzerland

Galleries | Booth E11, Hall 2.0

Public Days: 19 –22 June

Mazzoleni returns to Art Basel in June 2025, in both the Galleries and Unlimited Sectors. Within the Galleries Sector, the project ***Theatre as a Place for Art***, explores the question: *What is an art fair, if not a stage for performance?*

Through the works of renowned 20th Century Italian masters – **Giorgio de Chirico** (1888–1978), **Lucio Fontana** (1899–1968), **Alberto Burri** (1915–1995), **Piero Manzoni** (1933–1963), **Fausto Melotti** (1901–1986), **Agostino Bonalumi** (1935–2013), and **Salvo** (1947–2015) – the exhibition space transforms into an immersive setting, inviting visitors to experience and interpret. The booth structure, directly inspired by Burri's original design for ***Teatro Continuo* (1973)**, serves as both the scenery and wings of the presentation.

Mazzoleni Art LTD

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Giorgio de Chirico was a prolific figure in the theatrical arts, collaborating with renowned writers, directors, and musicians, including the likes of Luigi Pirandello. In 1942 he wrote: *"We love the 'unreal.' We love everything that reminds us of our life, but that 'is not our life.' We love make-believe."* His entire oeuvre reflects this deep connection with theatrics, as in the iconic ***Gli archeologi – Amore e Musica*** (1930s). In this work, two faceless mannequins are seated side by side, each enclosing a metaphysical landscape within their torsos. Their bodies serve as the starting point for a perspectival stage set, composed of archaeological motifs and dreamlike architectural fragments.

Lucio Fontana designed the costumes and set for *Portrait of Don Quixote* at Teatro alla Scala in 1967. Commentary by Massimo Mila in *Espresso Magazine* noted that *"Fontana turned the stage into the interior of a huge box, inhabited only by abstract forms."* This idea of the "box" seems directly connected to ***Concetto spaziale, Teatrino*** (1965), which is characterised by 'wing'-type frames made of lacquered and shaped wood, in uniform colours. These *Teatrino* works represent a hypothesis of spatial figuration where a monochrome background, pierced with holes, is presented as a kind of "sky".

Alberto Burri's passion for theatre, deepened by his marriage to choreographer Minsa Craig, is also evident in his numerous stage designs. Burri's debut in the performing arts was in 1963 at La Scala in Milan. In 1969, he designed the scenery and costumes for *L'avventura di un povero cristiano* by Ignazio Silone, presented at the acclaimed *Dramma Popolare* festival, in San Miniato (Pisa). The images of the show reveal the artist's signature use of burlap, combined with red and white plastic combustions, as seen in ***Rosso Plastica*** (1968).

Fausto Melotti's poetic language often echoes the rhythm and abstraction of musical and theatrical composition. In ***La creazione del mondo*** (1978), the sculptural elements evoke a stage where myth and material coexist. The figure, part totem, part actor, emerges from golden planes like a character poised for performance, a silent theatre suspended between movement and stillness.

Further emphasising the fair booth as a theatrical stage, **Piero Manzoni's *Base Magica – Scultura vivente*** (originally dated 1961, exhibition copy) will also be exhibited. Visitors are invited to step onto this pedestal and become protagonists of their own "performance". *"Any person or object placed on it, as long as it remained there, became a work of art,"* wrote the artist.

END OF RELEASE

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MAZZOLENI

Mazzoleni is a leading Post-War Italian and contemporary art gallery based in London and Turin. With over 35 years of activity, Mazzoleni focuses on a museum-calibre exhibition programme and participates in the main international art fairs, including Art Basel, Frieze, and TEFAF, as well as Artissima, Artefiera and Miart. Most recently, the gallery has expanded its reach towards new art scenes with its participation in Frieze Seoul, Art Abu Dhabi and Art Dubai.

The Mazzoleni collection is exhibited in museums and institutions worldwide, such as: the Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo in Paris; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York; the Smithsonian Institution in Washington; The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg; Tate and the Estorick Collection in London, as well as Museo del Novecento in Florence, the GNAM in Rome, MADRE Museum in Naples, Triennale Milano and Palazzo Reale in Milan, and the Venice Biennale. Mazzoleni represents the Estate of Agostino Bonalumi.

Art Basel 2025 | Messe Basel | Booth E11, Hall 2.0

VIP Days (by invitation only): 16 – 18 June 2025

Vernissage (by invitation only): 18 June, 4pm to 8pm

Public Days: 19 – 22 June, 11am to 7pm

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