

LAUNCH OF SR CONTEMPORARY ART BERLIN



Franco Fontana, Mari 2, 2005, Courtesy SR Contemporary Art Berlin ©Franco Fontana

DEVELOPING ITALIAN EXPERIMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY UP TO NOW *DECEMBER 5, 2017 - JANUARY 27, 2018*

SR Contemporary Art is pleased to announce the inaugural opening of its new Berlin gallery space in Charlottenburg with *Developing*, an exhibition examining the evolutionary history of Italian experimental photography from the 1960s to the present. The survey features work by gallery artists **Franco Fontana, Luciano Romano, Alessandra Baldoni, Franco Grignani, Patrizia della Porta, Occhiomagico, Ivan Piano** and **Barbara La Ragione**.

SR Contemporary Art was founded in Milan by Sabrina Raffaghello in 2001 as a platform for exhibiting contemporary and historical positions in Italian photography. It has since expanded its mission to include multimedia and video works by international artists, while still remaining true to its original, core vision. The gallery is committed to the primacy of the image in contemporary art, a status it

seeks to articulate through its unique vantage point as purveyor of preeminent positions within the trajectory of Italian image production.

The origins of modern experimental photography in Italy can be traced back to the 1960s, a period characterized by a synthesizing of historical and outside influences, leading to new kinds of expressive and concept-based imagery. In the 1970s, a heightened interest in research and intellectualism furthered these trends, prompting the inclusion of images as constituent elements in other media such as visual poetry and installation art. The rise of consumerism in the 1980s shifted the focus towards color and a renewed interest in landscape as subject matter, presented in a distinctively personal, Mediterranean style. While the 1990s saw the emergence of the semiotic value of the image, since 2000 and the advent of the digital revolution, Italian photography has been increasingly defined by subjectivism, a fragmenting into myriad styles and interests.

Developing presents this historical trajectory through the positions of eight artists whose individual languages attest to the breadth, diversity, and experimental nature of new and established approaches within Italian photography.

Franco Fontana's (b. 1933 in Modena) imagery evolves out of a belief in art's ability "to make visible the invisible." His native country often features prominently in his photographs, but in a manner that transcends the specifics of place. The facades of buildings, fields, or oceanscapes are recast as juxtaposed blocks of saturated or muted color, merging macrocosm and microcosm in a unified contemplative gesture.

Luciano Romano (b. 1958 in Naples) explores the variable language of the image in works encompassing his interests in architecture, form, and space. Interior views of towering stairwells and receding oculi recall geometric spirals or repetitive natural formations, creating contrasts of enclosure and expanse.

Alessandra Baldoni (b. 1976 in Perugia) finds inspiration for her images in language. Presented in combination with short script-like phrases, they explore the nature of memory, dreams, fairytales, and love. Enchanting and ethereal, the works seek to tell about the soul, creating existential geographies with universal appeal.

The work of **Franco Grignani** (b. 1908 in Pieve Porto Morone, d. 1999) is rooted in Constructivism, Op Art, and abstraction. Interested in the nature of visual perception, the focus of his optical experimentations ranged from permutations to dissociations, periodic tables, "psychoplastics," hidden diagonals, and symbolic and hyperbolic structures.

Patrizia della Porta's (b. 1954 in Milan) imagery unveils and immortalizes the harmony, inner beauty, and soul of architecture. Blending Zen lyricism and abstract minimalism, her photographs convey both the essence of buildings, their precision, excitement, and clarity, as well as that of the void, as potential everything, an awareness of which leads to perfection and the harmony of balance.

The work of **Occhiomagico** (Giancarlo Maiocchi, b. 1949 in Milan) is deeply influenced by symbolism, surrealism, psychedelics, and metaphysics. Staged landscapes, imaginary objects, and the female body produce an illusionism that conveys a sense of intimacy and lingering expectation.

Much like a DJ, **Ivan Piano** (b. 1975 in Naples) produces works of layered stratifications through a process of copying, joining, and remixing. Transcending constructive logic, his imagery upends conventional aesthetic canons to propose a reality split between abstract forms and the floating dimensions of a parallel reality, where dreams and madness merge.

Barbara La Ragione (b. 1974 in Naples) employs classic analogue photography to redefine the (self) portrait as an expression of contemporary being. Dolls, masks, and projected images combine to produce a haunting impression of identity, one shifting between ambivalence, surface, and artifice.

As curator and founder of SR Contemporary Art, Sabrina Raffaghello has extensive experience working in both the public and private art sector, including launching the Biennale di Alessandria for contemporary videography in 2011 as well as forming international alliances between the gallery and the National Art Museum of China in Beijing and the Guangdong Museum of Art in Guangzhou. Strongly committed to her artists, her decision to open a second gallery space in Berlin reflects her ongoing mission to create greater awareness of the unique contributions of experimental Italian photography to contemporary art dialogue. Berlin's unrivaled status as Europe's most intriguing and active hub for the production of art as well as the innovative ways of collecting and presenting art make it the perfect location for SR Contemporary Art's newest addition to the international scene, one that seeks to contribute to the complexity of all art forms on display in Berlin today.

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