

## **LUCIO FONTANA & ICO PARISI**

**October 4<sup>th</sup> – November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**by appointment only**

*With the opening exhibition of the new space of **Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M.** in Milan, the director **Alessia Calarota** continues the tradition of dialogues that has always distinguished the activity of the historical gallery. Art and Architecture will be the main theme of this exhibition focused on **Lucio Fontana**, great Master of the XX Century Art, who will be exhibited together with the famous architect **Ico Parisi**. The exhibition will in fact show a corpus of rare works, realized by Lucio Fontana for the "**Monumento dei Caduti alla Resistenza**" in 1962, interesting testament of the monument conceived by both artists in Cuneo but never realized.*

In a dialogue between art and architecture looking to a relationship with the Italian institutions and museums, **Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M.** presents in its new location in Milan the **Monumento dei Caduti alla Resistenza** of 1961-1962. It is a museum group of works, precious testament of the never realized monument in Cuneo that won a public contest and involved one painter, one architect and one sculptor. In fact in these four works on paper, realized by Lucio Fontana, it is evident that the project included the architectural scenery by Ico Parisi, a sculpture by Francesco Somaini, and the cut and the holes by Fontana himself in the opposite concrete.

The artwork matches well with the interest shown by Fontana for the architectural space as testified by his *Ambienti spaziali* - rooms and corridors projected and conceived by the artist since the end of the 1940s – and with the interest of Ico Parisi in creating an architectural work that would integrate art. His idea was so developed over the 1960s involving the main artists of that period - such as Lucio Fontana and Fausto Melotti - and reaching its peak in *Operazione Arcevia* (1973-76). Here Parisi draws a rural village, with an artisan and agricultural vocation, immersed in the hills of the Marche, for a 'existential community'. The project is characterized by the abundance of artistic presences, as those by Michelangelo Antonioni, Alberto Burri, Tonino Guerra, César and Rod Duddly.

As **Flaminio Gualdoni** writes in the catalogue promoted by **Franco and Roberta Calarota** and edited by **Skirà** in 1999: "*The encounter between Fontana and Parisi is inevitable. At the Triennale in 1951 the artist realizes the fundamental ceiling in neon, in a period in which, thanks to the relationship with Luciano Baldessari, his contamination with the architectural experience – which started in the 1930s – reaches unprecedented levels of intensity. Parisi is present at the same Triennale mainly with furniture, among which there is a desk whose sides are decorated with reliefs by Vittorio Tavernari, the same author whose big sculpture is laying under Fontana's ceiling in neon. The encounter happens in that unique atmosphere. And it will lead not only to the work for Parisi's home but also to another fundamental moment of the postwar debate: the contest for the "Monumento ai Caduti della Resistenza" in Cuneo. The project proposes a structure digged in the ground and inhabited by a groove traced in concrete by Fontana and placed under an intense plastic form by Somaini. This is the year 1962: the project, widely considered to be the best, is finally abandoned, "italico more". Many works by Fontana are accumulated in Parisi's house. In addition to the tile hanged on the terrace's balustrade, now lost, there are two extraordinary oil paintings, one is black and hanged in the bedroom in the place where once there were popular artworks, the other one is pink, setted over the table-shelf in the living room. Then there are two ceramics on the shelf in the living room, dated 1957 and 1958, and, furthermore, drawings".*

### **SHORT BIOGRAPHIES**

**Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M.**

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**Ico Parisi (Palermo, 1916 - Como, 1996)**

Domenico Parisi, known as Ico, was born in Palermo in 1916 but he moves early in 1920 to Como where he starts to get interested into photography and cinema before founding the "Studio La Ruota" in 1948 together with his wife Luisa Aiani and directing his activity towards design and interior architecture. The prestigious commissions will not be slow in coming: from the furnishings of the Libreria dello Stato in Milano to the building design. In his activity he loves to involve from the very beginning artists like Lucio Fontana, Fausto Melotti and Francesco Somaini. The artists' involvement will get more and more intense over the years, as far as changing in the depth Parisi's attitude towards architecture. Parisi soon becomes the trustworthy designer for companies like Cassina, M.I.M., Singer, Altamira, Longhi, Cappellini. His relationships with art critics like Pierre Restany and Enrico Crispolti get into projects suspended between art and architecture, as *Ipotesi per una Casa Esistenziale* (1972) and *Operazione Arcevia Comunita' Esistenziale* (1974), where also Alberto Burri and Michelangelo Antonioni are involved. *Operazione Arcevia*, commissioned by the manufacturer Italo Bartoletti, takes part to the Venice Biennale in 1976 and is exhibited at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome (1979). From the end of the 1970s, he moves towards installations and performances, dealing with issues connected with cars and means of communication. He takes part into Documenta Urbana in Kassel (1982) and into the exhibition "Les années 50" at the Centre Pompidou, Paris (1988). In 1986 there is his first anthological exhibition at the Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea in Milan, followed by two shows at the Galleria Civica in Modena, which receives his graphic archives in 1994. The curator of these two exhibition is Flaminio Gualdoni, director fo the Galleria. Parisi donates his Fondo Ico and Luisa Paris to the Pinacoteca Civica in Palazzo Volpi in Como in 1995. He passes away in Como on December 19, 1996.

**Lucio Fontana (Rosario di Santa Fé, Argentina, 1899 – Comabbio 1968).**

Lucio Fontana was born on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1899, in Rosario de Santa Fé, Argentina, but he moves to Italy at an early age with his father. In mid 1927, after a period back in Rosario, he returns to Milan in order to enroll at the Accademia delle Belli Arti di Brera, where he follow the lessons of the sculptor Adolfo Wildt. In 1930 there is his first solo show at the Galleria del Milione: these are the years of his first experimentations in the theme of human figure. In 1940 he returns to Argentina and he writes, together with other prominent personalities, the *White Manifesto*. On the same year he coins the terms "Spatial Concept". Once back in Italy, in 1947 he signs the *Spatialism Manifesto*: breaking the canvas with holes and cutes, he goes beyond the traditional distinction between painting and sculpture. The first testament of this is the *Holes* serie, where the holes are realized with a pick. On a similar note, there are the serie *Stones*, *Impastos* and *Baroques*. The famous *Cuts* are from 1958 and are followed by the group of sculptures known as *Nature*. Over the 1960s, Fontana continues his research on tears with the series *Oils* and *Metals*, followed by the group *The End of God* (1963-1964) and *Little Theaters* (1964-1966). In 1966 he wins the prize for the XXXIII Venice Biennale creating, together with the architect Carlo Scarpa, a white lighted environment paced with intense canvas crossed by an unique cut. Finally, in 1967 there is the series of the *Ellipses*, where Fontana reiterates his research on monochromaticism and the tearing of the supports. During his life, Fontana has been painter, sculptor, ceramist, mosaicist and has been dealing with architecture. He passes away on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1968 in Comabbio (VA).

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