

Press Release

ARTE POVERA / Postwar Italian Art from the Margulies Collection
The Margulies Collection at The Warehouse
through April 30 2022



Jannis Kounellis, *Untitled*, 1960, mixed media on paper laid down on canvas, 63 x 75 inches

Miami--Currently on view through April 30, 2022, The Margulies Collection at the Warehouse presents *Arte Povera / Postwar Italian Art from the Margulies Collection*, a historically significant exhibition of Italy's highly innovative twentieth-century art movement, as seen through the lens of one of its earliest and most significant American collectors. The exhibition features 18 major works spanning six decades, from the early 1960s through the 2000s by seven of the most prominent artists associated with the group of Italian artists jointly known as "i poveristi": Alighiero Boetti, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Luciano Fabro, Jannis Kounellis, Giulio Paolini, Michelangelo Pistoletto, and Mario Merz.

In addition to the powerful and iconic Arte Povera works on view, the exhibition includes didactic materials about the history of the dealers, collectors, gallerists and curators who supported these Italian artists at the critical early stages of their careers. A twenty-minute video plays on a loop, telling the story of the life and times of the influential dealer and collector Christian Stein whose seminal gallery in Turin and Milan nurtured and preserved the early activities and vision of the Arte Povera artists. Additionally, the exhibition includes an array of educational materials that give the viewer an overview of what was happening in Postwar Italian art, most notably the activities of the community of galleries in Turin and the dealer Gian Enzo Sperone, along with a tribute to the late Italian curator Germano Celant who is today considered one of the most influential curators of our times.

“We wanted to give our audience the backdrop of the social reawakening that defined Italy in the 1960s when Italians began to embrace an identity characterized by industrialization which at the same time paid homage to the country’s rich cultural heritage. It was important to us to explain the context of how this disparate group of artists, living and working in isolation in different regions of Italy rejected the values of established culture and embraced new creative possibilities by confronting longstanding notions of how art could be made and exhibited,” says longtime curator Katherine Hinds who organized the exhibition. “Our mission with our exhibitions at the Warehouse is always educational and we think the Arte Povera exhibition fulfills our mission perfectly by bringing together these influential and important Postwar Italian artists who have never been seen before in this region of the United States.”

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Upon entering the Warehouse, visitors first encounter two marble sculptures with a combined weight of two tons by Luciano Fabro. The phrase *Il giorno mi pesa sulla notte* (day weighs on my night in English) is written in lead on a marble fragment which sits on top of a broken marble column resting on glass marbles. The artist says, “These works are born of a kind of observation of the relationship between the cosmos and the image, or between order and image. What intrigues me is that the image of the cosmos is formless at first and gains form only through knowledge. I have often called the state of mind of this everyday sensation ‘Day weighs on my night’.”

Overhead hangs a rare seminal work from 1960 by Jannis Kounellis. One of a series of mixed media on paper laid down on canvas works that the artist completed in the early 1960s, Kounellis himself considered this particular work to be the most beautiful in the series. This work along with several others by Kounellis, Mario Merz, Luciano Fabro, and Giulio Paolini were transported from the private collection to the Warehouse especially for the exhibition.

Nearby, a separate room lined in black cloth displays three works that incorporate neon light, electrical current and transformers with a forty-foot work by Mario Merz that

includes the Fibonacci series in neon, a mathematical sequence in which every number is the sum of the preceding two. The neon light marks what Merz described as an “ecstatic act of artistic production”. Adjacent to the Merz are two works by Pier Paolo Calzolari who in addition to neon script, uses a thin layer of ice in his work. Utilizing copper pipes and refrigerating units combined with lead, leather, and a mattress, the artist achieves a dreamlike visual landscape where the frost is “the purest form of white”.

As Michelangelo Pistoletto puts it, “as far as I am concerned...all forms, materials, ideas and means are available and to be used.” The exhibition continues with two works by Pistoletto which incorporate mirrors. A two-panel work, *Two Less One* (2009) preceded the famous performance by Pistoletto at the 53rd Venice Biennale where the artist smashed a room lined with mirrors. Nearby a large-scale work by Jannis Kounellis is comprised of steel panels weighing 1,500lbs onto which the artist arranges vintage musical instruments such as a guitar, flute, trombone, trumpet, violin, cello and drum. Below, ten copper pots and pans hang from industrial steel hooks indicative of Kounellis’ artistic practice that incorporates performance, sound, and classical music.

Additionally, included are works by Alighiero Boetti who explored systems of knowledge, classifications and sequences, including one of the artist’s well-known collaborations with Afghan women working in the Royal School of Needlework in Kabul. Other works by Giulio Paolini and Gilberto Zorio explore pictorial space culling equally from the banalities of everyday life and the rich expanses of art history.

A STATEMENT FROM THE COLLECTOR

Everybody loves Italy, the most beautiful of all European countries. What makes Italy so interesting to me is the pursuit of the endearing simple pleasures of everyday life combined with a passion for excellence in design, architecture and the arts. Who can resist the lyrical lifestyle of the small villages where one can experience the fantastic cuisine of the trattorias and small cafés, the vibrant and friendly effervescence of day-to-day life of the Italian populous? At the same time there is a love of luxury, a love of the grandeur of high design, an electric atmosphere.

This is the culture out of which the Arte Povera artists, who worked in isolation from each other, simultaneously developed similar ideas about rejecting the commercialization of luxury goods, and rang in a new era of artistic practice that embraced industrialization and everyday materials while paying homage to the country's rich cultural heritage. The materials used were burlap, plaster, wax, neon, glass, cotton, steel, iron ore, animals, branches, mirrors, common fabric and leather, musical instruments, pots and pans. When the influential Italian critic and curator Germano Celant introduced the term Arte Povera or "poor art" in 1967 he was talking about a group of young artists based in Milan, Genoa, Rome and in particular Turin.

The first gallerists like Christian Stein and Gian Enzo Sperone sold works sporadically to Italian collectors who were buying the works and probably didn't really know why. The first Arte Povera work I added to the collection was a Kounellis I acquired in 1988 from Ileana Sonnabend. The work had a wonderful vibrancy to it and I began to sense that this was something of significance to pursue for the collection. A 1984 igloo by Mario Merz from the Collection of the late, great collector Gerald Elliot followed. The Merz igloo added such grit and substance to the collection with its neon Fibonacci numbers and drooping wires and wax and glass. In other words, anything goes. And that began a great pleasurable journey to collect Arte Povera which subsequently led me to explore the influence of some of the Italian artists that predated Arte Povera like Manzoni and Fontana. Today I continue my travels to Italy and elsewhere searching anywhere I can to find works from early Italian collections that were put together in the 1960s and 1970s. Today these works are very difficult to come by.

It is with great pleasure that we present this exhibition at my Warehouse in Miami this season. I wish to thank my longtime curator Katherine Hinds and her excellent staff for putting together such a momentous exhibition. Arte Povera has never been exhibited in this part of the United States before. It is our hope that our audience will become inspired to seek out other opportunities to study and visit Arte Povera Collections such as the superb Magazzino by Nancy Olnick & Giorgio Spanu in Cold Spring, just outside New York City, one of the finest collections of its kind and the Ingvild Goetz Collection in Munich Germany that was exhibited in the ground breaking Arte Povera show at Hauser & Wirth in 2017.

Martin Z. Margulies, 2022

COMMENTS FROM THE ARTWORLD ON THE EXHIBITION

“The Arte Povera installation, like everything else in your ‘Warehouse’, was extraordinary to see.”

- *Max Hollein, Art Historian and Director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC, December 2021.*

“The time we spent together talking about Jannis Kounellis and your relation (and love) with Arte Povera, is definitely one of the highlights of the whole week and more.”

- *Vincenzo de Bellis, Curator and Associate Director of Programs of Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, December 2021.*

“Your collection is an amazing achievement and it is wonderful that you share it with the art community.”

- *Jeffrey Deitch, Art dealer, Curator, and Founder of Deitch Projects, NYC, December 2021.*

“I had the most wonderful visit to your collection. It was astonishing to see the Arte Povera exhibition. As always Katherine Hinds and your staff superbly curated and installed the exhibition and provided very informative texts and videos. The exhibition also provides an important context of your outstanding Kiefer collection. Presenting your collection of such historically significant works to the public is a real gift to South Florida as we rarely get to see these works in such depth and in such a monumental scale. I would also like to commend Jeanie Ambrosio on her curation of the New Objective photography exhibition. It’s another important historical exhibition and important contribution to the broader understanding of art in South Florida.”

- *Bonnie Clearwater, Director and Chief Curator of Nova Southeastern University’s Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale. January 2022.*

“I wanted to congratulate you on this incredible installation of *Arte Povera*. To visit your foundation was really one of the highlights of my visit to Miami.”

- *Thaddaeus Ropac, Thaddaeus Ropac Galerie, Paris, Salzburg, London, January 2022.*

“Margulies Collection at the Warehouse, an enthralling 55,000-square-foot space in the vibrant Wynwood neighborhood. Right now, it is hosting (until April 30) an ambitious exhibition on *arte povera*, with works by Alighiero Boetti, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Luciano Fabro, Jannis Kounellis, Giulio Paolini, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Mario Merz and Gilberto Zorio.”

-Dani Levinas, El Pais Newspaper, Madrid, Spain. December 2021.

“La mostra più bella della Miami Art Week? É Italiana.....Uno degli eventi da non perdere in questa Miami Art Week 2021 parla italiano. Attingendo a opere mai viste prima dalla collezione privata e da nuove acquisizioni, infatti, la bellissima Margulies Collection in piena Wynwood presenta uno spaccato di Arte Povera inedita, un tributo postumo a Germano Celant.”

“The best show of Miami Art Week? She is Italian.....One of the events not to be missed in this Miami Art Week 2021 speaks Italian. Drawing on never-before-seen works from the private collection and new acquisitions, in fact, the beautiful Margulies Collection in Wynwood presents a cross-section of unpublished Arte Povera, a posthumous tribute to Germano Celant.”

-Raffaella Garrelli, ArtsLife The cultural revolution online, Milan, Italy. January, 2022.

IMAGES FROM THE EXHIBITION



Pier Paolo Calzolari
Untitled (l'aria vibra), 1970
Melton, refrigerating unit and copper pipes, neon,
transformer, lead
67 x 30 x 10 inches
Collection Martin Z. Margulies



Pier Paolo Calzolari
Untitled (Cinghie), 1971
Leather, refrigerating unit and copper pipes, neon,
transformer, lead
130 x 59 x 14 inches
Collection Martin Z. Margulies



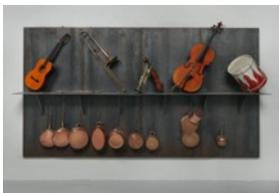
Alighiero Boetti
Without Title, 1988
Embroidery on fabric
44 7/8 x 44 7/8 inches
Collection Martin Z. Margulies



Jannis Kounellis
Untitled, 1960
Mixed media on paper laid down on canvas
63 x 75 inches
Collection Martin Z. Margulies



Jannis Kounellis
Untitled, 1999
Plates, iron shelves, bags and plaster
142 x 79 x 22 inches
Collection Martin Z. Margulies



Jannis Kounellis
Untitled, 1993
steel panel, musical instruments, copper pots, hooks
79 x 142 x 20 inches
Collection Martin Z. Margulies



Michelangelo Pistoletto
Two Less One, 2009
Golden wood and mirror
Each 70 7/8 x 47 1/4 inches
Collection Martin Z. Margulies



Arte Povera / Postwar Italian Art from the Margulies Collection, Installation view, artworks pictured by: Jannis Kounellis, Luciano Fabro, Giulio Paolini, and Michelangelo Pistoletto



Arte Povera / Postwar Italian Art from the Margulies Collection, Installation view, artworks pictured by: Giulio Paolini, Jannis Kounellis and Michelangelo Pistoletto



Arte Povera / Postwar Italian Art from the Margulies Collection, Installation view, artworks pictured by: Jannis Kounellis and Michelangelo Pistoletto



Arte Povera / Postwar Italian Art from the Margulies Collection, Installation view, artworks pictured by: Alighiero Boetti, Mario Merz and Pier Paolo Calzolari