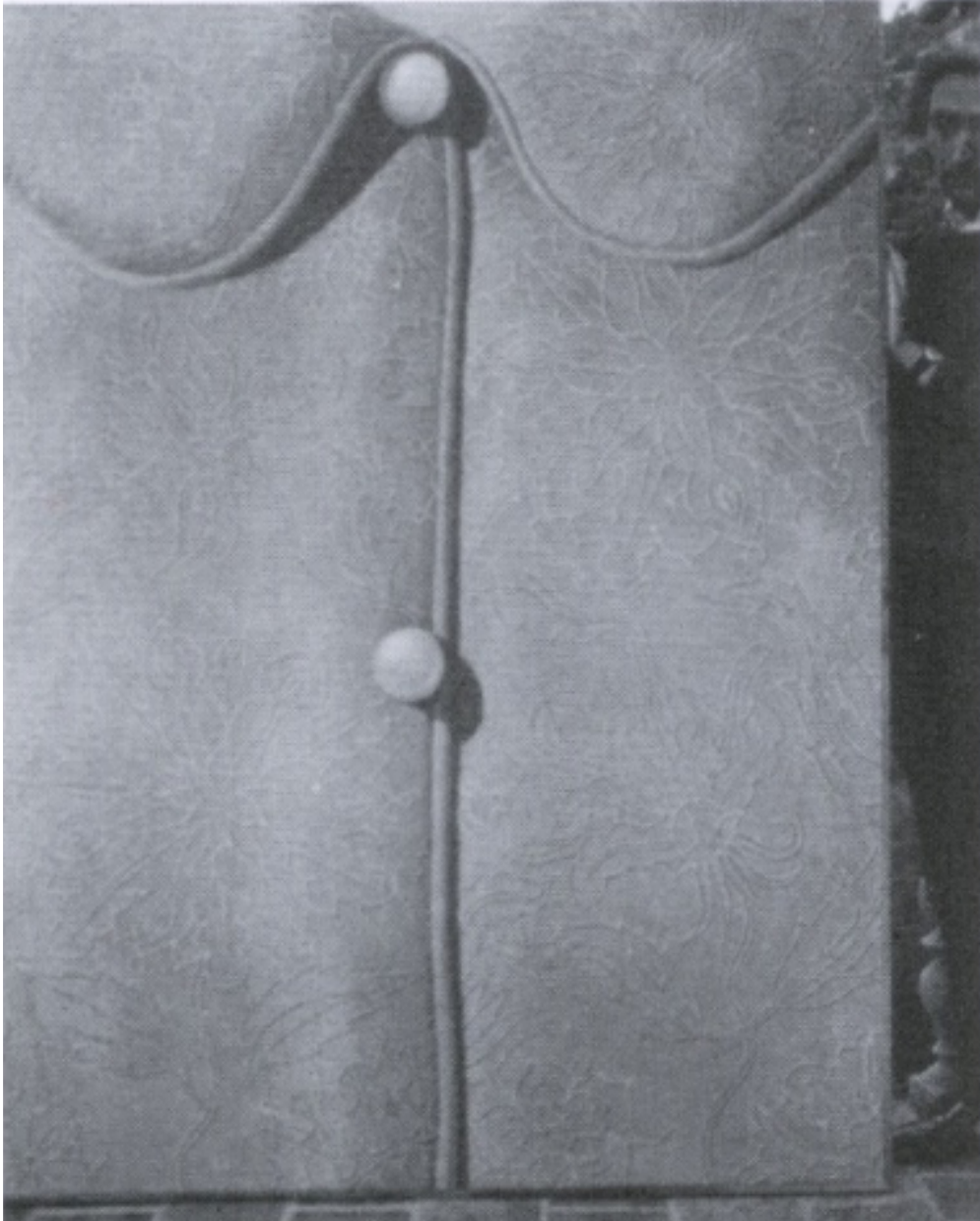


LUXEMBOURG + CO.

# OUT OF FASHION

2 Savile Row, London  
31 May – 26 July 2024



‘Art is art. Fashion is fashion.’ (Karl Lagerfeld)

Or is it?

A creative industry as much as a trendy disposition, fashion encapsulates the overlap between the seasonal (as well as daily) imperative to change clothes and the notion that taste is always evolving. Its relation to art, in turn, reveals that there is more in common between these two disciplines than either would like to admit. Both art and fashion are rooted in traditions of craft-making deeply linked with luxury, commerce, as well as public expressions of ethical and aesthetic values. Moreover, they also rely on rebellious acts of defiance against existing trends as means for growth and development while thriving on the principle of repetition of familiar historical themes.

The present exhibition brings together a select group of works that were executed across the span of 400 years in which careful observation of patterns and symbols was employed in order to link with or oppose the fashion of a specific time and place. Made directly ‘out of fashion’, the works on display are historical documents of important trends. But they are also contentious statements whose status is in constant flux depending on the spirit of the moment as well as our capacity to see beyond it.

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**DOMENICO GNOLI (1933-1970)**

*Robe verte, 1967*

Acrylic and sand on canvas

73 x 55 in. (185 x 140 cm)

A painter of exceptional skill, Domenico Gnoli had a short-lived career before he passed away at the age of only thirty-six in 1970. Within a short period of time, however, Gnoli developed a unique and remarkable visual vocabulary that remains unparalleled to this day. Gnoli’s fascination with fashion and style as manifestations of class consciousness and personal identity led him to explore clothing items, furniture, textiles and even hair styles as tokens of the Italian bourgeoisie, its tastes and tendencies and the way that ideology and aesthetics are tied together.

Invested in the meticulous painting of details and patterns, Gnoli’s subjects tend to appear as if slightly too large for their own frames. This compositional play generates a confusion of scale, which, along with the depiction of shadows, textures and very minimal human presence, amplifies the codes of a society obsessed with fashion.

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**RUDOLF STINGEL (b.1956)**

*Untitled, 2010*

Oil on canvas

66 x 48 in. (167.8 x 122 cm)

Rudolf Stingel’s work is characterized by a career-long interest in patterns and repetition, drawing on found, or indeed appropriated patterns and imagery. However, his search to exploit the potential of ornamental design as vehicle for formal exploration also continues to confirm that pattern is appealing to Stingel not least because of the provoked coincidence, or anomalies that it enables.

Using wallpaper textiles or carpets as the formal source for several of his painting cycles, Stingel draws the viewer’s attention not only to the aesthetic traditions from which these emerge, and to which they are embedded, but also the tension between wall and floor, tactility and illusion.





ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)  
*Mimetico*, 1981  
Camouflage fabric  
51 1/8 x 58 5/8 in. (130 x 149 cm)

In 1966, on the occasion of Alighiero Boetti's first solo exhibition at the Galleria Christian Stein, Turin, the artist prepared a series of new sculptures and paintings, all executed with industrially manufactured materials. Among these was a large painting made from military camouflage fabric, which the artist found aesthetically pleasing, and fulfilling much of what modernist abstraction aspired to achieve. The *mimetico* (mimetic) paintings soon evolved into an ongoing series by Boetti, in which developments in camouflage fabric styles, or differences between various types of the material and its patterns were always apparent. Revolutionary works, the *mimetico* paintings appeared more than a decade before Andy Warhol famous camouflage paintings, and served as precursors to new trends in fashion during the 1970s when military attire made its way into punk culture.

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BALTHASAR VAN DER AST (1593/4-1657)  
*A Still Life of Fruit in a 'kraak' porcelain Dish, with Shells and Roses*, c.1640  
Oil on panel  
26 7/8 x 37 7/8 in. (68.3 x 98.7 cm)

Still-life painting as an independent genre first flourished in the Netherlands during the early 1600s. Its rise reflects a process of urbanisation in Dutch and Flemish society, which brought with it an emphasis on wealth as reflected in the home through personal possessions, and in effect also trade. Exotic fruit, seashells, flowers, as well as vases, plates, tablecloths and other textiles initially gained prominence within religious pictures, only gradually becoming the subject of paintings in their own right. The tendency marks a fundamental turning point in the canon of European painting, shifting attention from historical narratives or religious and ethical morals to expressions of taste, wealth and the temporal nature of all earthly possessions.

This elaborate still life oil on panel was executed by Balthasar van der Ast during his years in Delft (1632-57), indicating the artist's success in securing the support of wealthy and sophisticated patrons during his time there. The painting is among his largest and most ambitious works.

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EUGEN KNAUS (1900-1976)  
*Gummibaum*, 1931  
Oil on canvas on wood  
39 1/4 x 29 3/4 in. (99.7 x 75.6 cm.)

The autodidact painter, Eugen Knaus, had been loosely associated with artists of the German Neue Sachlichkeit tendency. In this painting from 1931 Knaus depicts a rubber plant (*Ficus elastica*), which became a new symbol of middle-class bohemian aesthetics during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Like 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch still-life subjects, the rubber plant suggests an insight into the taste and lifestyle of its proprietors. Its patterns and colour shades, albeit more coarse and monotonous, nevertheless evoke the continuing dependency between fashion, nature and a cyclical, or seasonal trajectory.

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