

CARDI GALLERY | LONDON

DIFFERENCE AND AFFINITY

AGNETTI BOETTI PAOLINI PRINI

curated by Piero Tomassoni

Cardi Gallery London is delighted to present a group exhibition of four preeminent Italian artists: Vincenzo Agnetti, Alighiero Boetti, Giulio Paolini, Emilio Prini. The first in a series of exhibitions aimed at showcasing the main themes of 1970's Italian art, *Difference and Affinity* traces an identity of Italian "conceptual" art.

Poetic, elusive, playful, at times romantic - Italian conceptualism is clearly distinct from its British and American variants. The latter are mostly concerned with language and processes, and have the dematerialisation of the work of art as their main aim ('Art as idea'). Italian artists, on the other hand, continue in the tradition of making artworks as tangible objects. The physical presence of the art object and the properties of its materials, a link with history and politics, the recognition of intrinsic aesthetic qualities: these elements remain fundamental in Italian art from the 1970's, even in its more "conceptual" variants.

Through many important works from the late 1960's and early-to-mid 1970's, this exhibition illustrates the common features among the artists showcased, as well as their individual specificities and what makes them unique and impossible to classify in a movement or tendency. This is a feature common to several Italian artists of that decade, including some that had begun their career or had touch points with Arte Povera, but then went on to forge their own very individual paths (Boetti, Paolini, Prini).

Vincenzo Agnetti (Milan, 1926 - 1981) was a poet and writer, as well as a visual artist. While words are central in his works, each artwork also has a rigorous and specific formal appearance, also due to the use of significant materials such as bachelite and felt. Maxims, axioms and aphorisms composed by the artist - or random series of letters produced by the artist-invented "Drugged Machine" - tend to constitute the main visual element of the work, to which the materials are integral.

Alighiero Boetti (Turin, 1940 - Rome, 1994) is considered one of the most versatile and influential Italian artists of the 20th century. His work, initially associated with Arte Povera for the use of simple and industrial materials (he then dissociated himself from the movement in the early 1970's), evolved throughout his career, in connection with his migration from Turin to Rome and his frequent travels and long stays in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the 1970's his work, predominantly inspired by politics, poetry, and mathematics, ranged from drawings and works on paper, to embroidery, to mail art.

Giulio Paolini (Genoa, 1940) is one of the most highly regarded living Italian artists. His practice focuses on deconstructing artworks and highlighting their constitutional elements. Through the use of drawing, photography, and installation, he explores the relationship between the viewer and the artwork, as well as

the correlations between artist, artwork and art history. Far from the political and formal stances of Arte Povera (albeit having participated to some of its exhibitions), Paolini cultivates a strong personal connection with the great masters of the past and a sense of belonging to the wider history of art.

Emilio Prini (Stresa, 1943 - Rome, 2016) was a key figure in the Roman and Italian art scene in the 1970's, and the few works he left behind (mostly photographs and works on paper) are significant traces of his passage and of his histrionic attitude. Whilst his wider purpose may be interpreted as the one of being absent or on "not-making" work, the artworks he did make often consisted in a reflection on the processes of art making and on the functioning of its tools (cameras, lights, audio recorders, etc.).

An essay by Piero Tomassoni accompanies the exhibition and explains in further detail the historical significance of the artists exhibited and of 1970's Italian "conceptual" art, as well as what distinguishes them from their contemporaries and from the leading movements of their time.

Cardi Gallery
22 Grafton Street
LONDON W1S 4EX, UK
t. +44 (0) 2034989633
mail@cardigallery.com
www.cardigallery.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cardigallery>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/cardigallery>
Instagram: <http://instagram.com/cardigallery>

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OPENING HOURS:

Wednesday, 20 June to Friday, 7 September 2018. Open Monday through Friday, 10 am – 6 pm;
Saturday by appointment only. The Gallery will be closed between Monday, 6 and 20 August, 2018.

Additional opening hours during MAW - Mayfair Art Weekend: Friday, 29 June 2018, 6 - 9 pm; Saturday, 30 June 12 am - 5 pm & Sunday, 1 July 12 - 5 pm

Exhibition Opening: Tuesday, 19 June 6 – 8 pm

PRESS CONTACTS:

mail@cardigallery.com

