

PRESS RELEASE

**Monica Bonvicini**

***Unrequited Love***

**Opening reception September 19, 7pm – 9pm**

**September 20 – November 23, 2019 | Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 1pm / 3pm – 7:30pm and by appointment**

Galleria Raffaella Cortese is pleased to present *Unrequited Love*, the second show by Monica Bonvicini, which develops across the gallery's exhibition spaces in via Stradella as if it were three solo exhibitions.

For years, the artist has been carrying out photographic documentation of family houses in Lombardy that were designed and built towards the end of the 1960s for the 'traditional' family of the time. The current appearance of these buildings, once rigorously identical in all their parts, reflects the economic and demographic changes of their communities in the past fifty years, resulting in discordant and incompatible aesthetics that create unusual and curious juxtapositions. Three of the houses that make up the photographic series *Italian Homes* (2019) cover the walls of the space in Via Stradella 1; the series will be shown in its entirety on the occasion of the artist's solo exhibition at OGR – Officine Grandi Riparazioni in Turin this fall. Placed on top of this wallpaper, three large scale works on paper from 2002, *Places of ID (Three People at the...)*, *Pin Up Girl*, and *Vitruvius*, offer intriguing relationships between architecture, history, and sexuality. From the wall to the right, a cast bronze hand emerges at an unusual height; *Grab Them by the Balls #2* (2019) suggests a clear answer, not without humor, to the patriarchal power that diminishes female reality.

The underground space at number 7, left completely dark, is illuminated by the suspended sculpture *Bent on Going* (2019), an array of LED light tubes connected by an intricate weave of electric cables. Light installations are among the most recognizable works by the artist, who employs light for its powerful ability to define spaces, although light itself is immaterial. New drawings from the *Hurricanes and Other Catastrophes* series, begun after Hurricane Katrina (New Orleans, 2005), are shown on the wall. With this series of drawings, over ten years ago Monica Bonvicini started to raise awareness on the ever so urgent issues of Capitalocene and climate change. Recent events, such as the unprecedented destruction of the Bahamas caused by Hurricane Dorian and the Global Climate Strike on September 20th, show us that ecological concerns are inevitably and strongly political and economic.

In via Stradella 4 a large screen-print on aluminum plates, conceived by the artist on the occasion of her recent solo show *I Cannot Hide My Anger* at Belvedere 21 in Vienna, almost entirely covers the central wall of the space. Monica Bonvicini has employed Marlboro advertising imagery in her practice since 1993; the screen-printed image is in fact from a poster of the time. The cowboy riding his horse next to a wooden fence and barbed wire is a figure that is even more disturbing today, considering the migratory flows that affect the border between Mexico and the United States as well as European territory. The iron and blown glass sculpture *Fleurs du Mal (pink)* is also from 2019. Pink glass objects hang from the hooks of a structure that recalls as an overblown portrait of Marcel Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* (1914). This image describes a domestic environment that, like the prairie overseen by the Marlboro Man, is risky territory; Diane Williams' words that give the exhibition its title prove this.

This is unrequited love, which is always going around so you can catch it, and get sick with it, and stay home with it, or you go out and go about your business getting anyone you have anything to do with sick, even if all that person has done is push the same shopping cart you pushed, so that she can go home, too, and have an accident, such as leanin over to put dishwasher powder into the dishwasher, so that she gets her eye stabbed by the tip of the bread knife, which is drip-drying in the dish rack.

From *The Collected Stories of Diane Williams*, 2018.

Born in Venice in 1965, Monica Bonvicini studied art in Berlin and at Cal Arts, Valencia, CA. Since 2003 she holds a position as Professor for Performative Arts and Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Beginning in October 2017 she assumes the professorship for sculpture at the Universität der Künste, Berlin. She lives and works in Berlin.

Monica Bonvicini emerged as visual artist and started exhibiting internationally in the mid-1990s. Her multifaceted practice—which investigates the relationship between architecture, power, gender, space, surveillance and control—is translated into works that question the meaning of making art, the ambiguity of language, and the limits and possibilities attached to the ideal of freedom. Dry-humored, direct, and imbued with historical, political and social references, Bonvicini's art never refrains from establishing a critical connection with the sites where it is exhibited, the materials that comprise it, and the roles of spectator and creator. This approach, which has been at the core of her production since her first solo exhibition at the California Institute of the Arts in 1991, has formally evolved over the years without betraying its analytical force and inclination to challenge the viewer's perspective while taking hefty sideswipes at socio-cultural conventions.

Bonvicini has earned several awards, including the Golden Lion at the Biennale di Venezia (1999); the Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst, from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (2005); the Rolandpreis für Kunst for art in the public from the Foundation Bremen, Germany (2013), and the Hans Platschek Prize for art and writing, Germany (2019). Her work has been featured in many prominent biennials, including Berlin (1998, 2004, 2014), La Triennale Paris (2012), Istanbul (2003, 2017), Gwangju (2006), New Orleans (2008), and Venice (1999, 2001, 2005, 2011, 2015). She has had solo exhibitions at Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2002); Modern Art Oxford, England (2003); Secession, Vienna (2003); Staetisches Museum Abteiberg (2005, 2012); SculptureCenter, New York (2007); Art Institute of Chicago (2009); Kunstmuseum Basel (2009); Frac des Pays de la Loire, France (2009); Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel (2011); Centro de Arte Contemporaneo de Málaga, Spain (2011); Deichtorhallen Hamburg (2012); Kunsthalle Mainz (2013); BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art, England (2016); Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (2017); and Belvedere 21, Vienna (2019).

In 2012 Bonvicini has been appointed Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic.

Her most recent monographs have been published by Phaidon, London in 2014; Kerber Verlag, Bielefeld in 2017; Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne in 2019.

Sculptures created by Bonvicini are now permanently installed in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London; the harbor at the Oslo Opera House, Norway; and the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art.

This year Associazione ACACIA – Amici Arte Contemporanea Italiana has awarded the 2019 Premio ACACIA alla Carriera to artist Monica Bonvicini. On this occasion, the work *15 Steps to the Virgin*, part of the installation created in 2011 for the 54th Venice Biennale, is exhibited in the Fontana Hall of Milan's Museo del Novecento from October 11th to 23rd, 2019.

## **GALLERIA RAFFAELLA CORTESE**

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