

Mythology Reinterpreted

A Journey through Ancient Inspiration in Modern & Contemporary Art



Jorge Méndez Blake, *Amphitheater Reconstruction (We Sit, We Listen, We Discuss) VI*, 2023. Coloured pencil on paper, 150 x 280 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Mazzoleni, London – Torino.

Mazzoleni, London

8 October – 6 December 2024

Private View: Tuesday 8 October, 6 – 8pm

Mazzoleni, London is pleased to present the exhibition ***Mythology Reinterpreted: A Journey through Ancient Inspiration in Modern & Contemporary Art***. Opening on 8 October until 6 December, the exhibition strives to reinterpret the ancient through the lens of Italian artists **Giorgio de Chirico, Salvo** and **Giulio Paolini** and Mexican artist **Jorge Méndez Blake**. Guiding this revaluation of the ancient and drawing us back to the point of inspiration, a series of Roman artefacts will invite viewers to embark on a journey through the annals of art history, while simultaneously demonstrating their continual relevance in contemporary visual culture.

This exploration will be further enriched through an essay written for the occasion by Italian curator and researcher, Benedetta Casini as part of a wider exhibition catalogue. Casini observes “Among the works exhibited in *Mythology Reinterpreted*, one can discern a common approach among the protagonists of 20th Century art who have addressed the issues of time and history in a highly personal manner, arbitrarily expanding and contracting their boundaries. The depth of de Chirico’s metaphysics is juxtaposed by the seemingly “naive

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style” of Salvo, while Paolini’s reflection on identity and the double finds resolution in the 21st century with Mendez Blake’s journey to the origins of the democratic state.”

Giorgio de Chirico’s (1888 – 1978) metaphysical style urges viewers to contemplate the enigmas of time and existence through depictions of key signifiers from ancient civilisations. Through his work, de Chirico encapsulates the notion that the classical past is intrinsically woven into our identity, as also demonstrated in **Salvo’s** (1947 – 2015) conceptual and figurative practice. Literary references to the past can be found in Salvo’s conceptual practice, where his series of tombstones engraved with texts inspired by Aesop’s Fables, exemplify the moral connections and inspiration derived from ancient civilisations. Following Salvo’s return to painting in 1973, works such as **Una Sera (An Evening)** (2001) depicting classical structures as part of a hyper-saturated, imagined landscape demonstrate the classical pasts visual influence on the artist.

Giulio Paolini’s (b.1940) conceptual practice cites works from the past as a self-referential reflection on art history. **L’altra figura (The Other Figure)** (1983) is a key example, consisting of two classical plaster casts of an earlier Hellenistic bust, between which lie thirty-three fragments of a third identical bust. These Greco-Roman heads exemplify Paolini’s affinity with de Chirico, with the convergence of mystery, absence, melancholy and perspective as core elements of his work, as well as the timeless relevance of antiquity.

Engaging in dialogue with these Italian masters are works by **Jorge Méndez Blake** (b. 1974), a visual artist whose practice delves into language, text and the history of literature. Méndez Blake’s **Amphitheater Reconstruction (We Sit, We Listen, We Discuss) VI** (2023), a coloured pencil on paper work measuring 150x280 cm, reimagines the grandeur of ancient architecture as a space for collective reflection and dialogue. In this work, Méndez Blake converges his literary and architectural interests, exploring the amphitheatre as the birthplace of poetry and a symbol of the potential for communal discourse, where individuals sit, listen and engage in discussion as a community.

Mazzoleni will also exhibit at **Frieze Masters**, opening on 9 October, where the discourse on this subject will continue through the pairing of **Giorgio de Chirico’s Le muse inquietanti (The Disquieting Muses)** (1959) and **Andy Warhol’s Disquieting Muses (After de Chirico)** (1982). This unique opportunity to explore both the inspiration for Warhol’s work and the subsequent output, draws us once again to examine antiquity’s continual influence on the canon. These works will be exhibited in conjunction with works by Carla Accardi, Agostino Bonalumi, Salvo, Lucio Fontana and Enrico Castellani.

NOTES TO EDITORS

JORGE MÉNDEZ BLAKE

Jorge Méndez Blake (Guadalajara, Mexico. 1974) is a visual artist whose practice researches into language, text, and the history of literature, as well as the possibilities of translating writing into visual and spatial compositions. His work explores possible intersections, conflicts, and connections that new readings and translations generate between literature, visual arts, and architecture.

He was part of the 13th Havana Biennale, the National Gallery of Victoria Triennale in 2017 and the 13th Istanbul Biennale. His work has been shown individually at the Bass Museum (Miami), Palm Springs Museum, Kunsthalle Mulhouse, Marfa Contemporary, MCA Denver, MOLA Los Angeles, Museo D'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, besides MUAC, Museo Tamayo, SAPS, and MAM in Mexico City, and Museo Cabañas in Guadalajara. Between his recent publications are *Lenguaje Desmantelado / Dismantled Language* (Ediciones inacabadas, 2021), *Diálogos sobre un poeta, una manzana y una retícula* (Impronta Casa Editora, 2021), *Nao de China* (BOM DIA BOA TARDE BOA NOITE, 2018), *Otra literatura / Other Literature* (Ediciones MP, 2016).

MAZZOLENI

Mazzoleni is a leading Post-War Italian and contemporary art gallery based in London and Turin. With over 35 years of activity, Mazzoleni focuses on a museum-calibre exhibition programme and participates in the main international art fairs, including Art Basel, Frieze, and TEFAF, as well as Artissima, Artefiera and Miart. Most recently, the gallery has expanded its reach towards new art scenes with its participation in Frieze Seoul, Art Abu Dhabi and Art Dubai.

The Mazzoleni collection is exhibited in museums and institutions worldwide, such as: the Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo in Paris; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York; the Smithsonian Institution in Washington; The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg; Tate and the Estorick Collection in London, as well as Museo del Novecento in Florence, the GNAM in Rome, MADRE Museum in Naples, Triennale Milano and Palazzo Reale in Milan, and the Venice Biennale. Mazzoleni represents the Estate of Agostino Bonalumi.

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