



Alighiero Boetti, *Mimetic*, 1967, military camouflage fabric, 145 x 140 cm

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Arte Povera Charting a Revolution

14 OCTOBER - 12 JANUARY 2025

Opening October 14th 2024 from 6 to 9pm

16 avenue Matignon
75008 Paris

*To exist from outside the system amounts to revolution. (...)
Freedom, in the visual arts, is an all-contaminating germ.*

—Germano Celant, "Arte povera. Notes on a guerrilla war", *Flash Art*, 1967

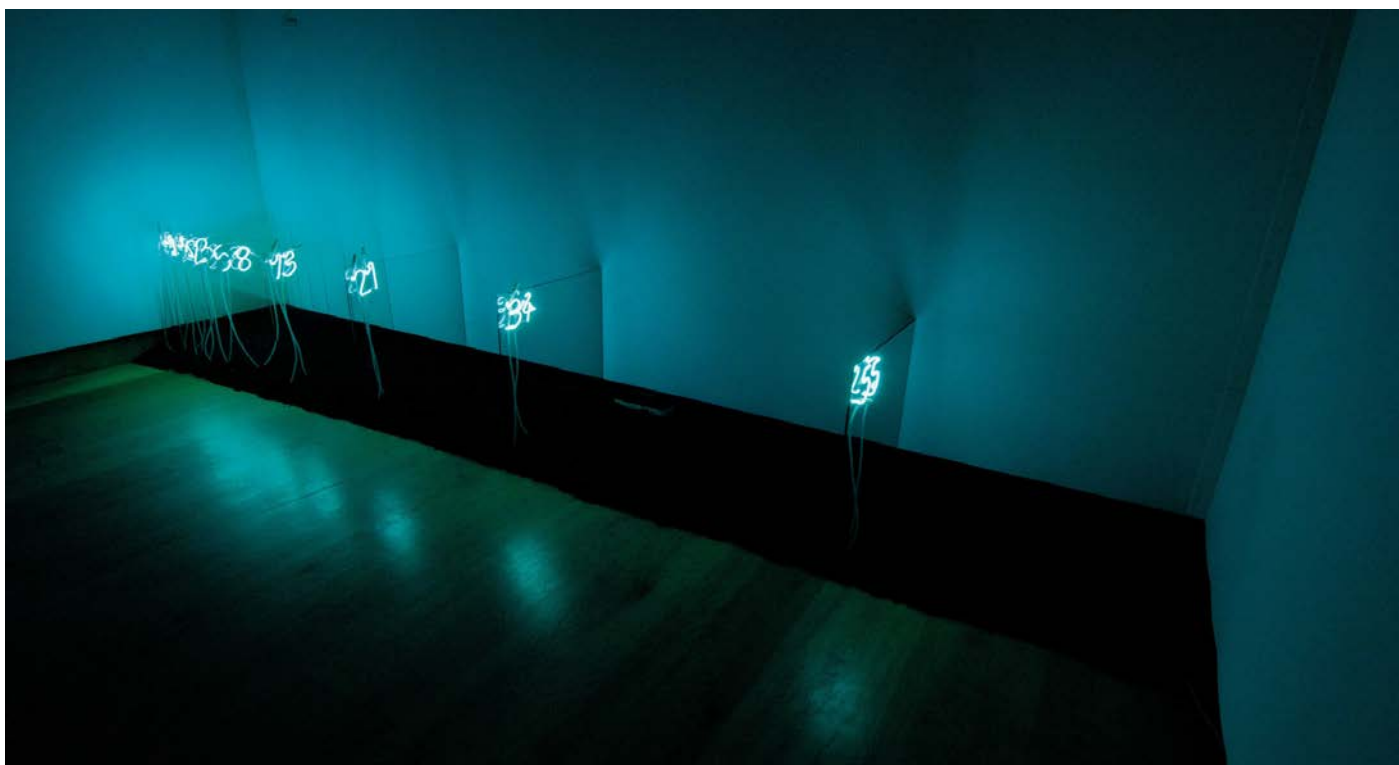
As Paris celebrates Arte Povera this fall, Tornabuoni Art joins the tribute with an exhibition of masterpieces by some of the key protagonists of the movement, including Alighiero Boetti, Pier Paolo Pistoletto, Luciano Fabro, Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Giulio Paolini, Pino Pascali, Giuseppe Penone and Michelangelo Pistoletto. Historical works and large-scale installations will be displayed in the gallery space on avenue Matignon and at the gallery's booth during Art Basel Paris.

In 1967, *Flash Art* published "Arte Povera. Notes on a guerrilla war" a provocative text by the Italian art critic Germano Celant, which brought together the works of Turin-based artists who were pushing the boundaries of art and its institutions. Although they never signed a manifesto, many of the artists mentioned in the article continued to exhibit together under the banner of the movement theorized by Celant. And although some distanced themselves from the Poverist aesthetic over time, their practice continued to bear the influence of those formative years.

Rather than offering a synthesis of the movement, *Arte Povera. Charting a Revolution* aims to evoke the radical spirit of its participants through a carefully curated selection of significant works by some of its key exponents. Starting from the experiences that preceded the theorization of Arte Povera and continuing beyond its last official exhibition, Tornabuoni Art seeks to evoke the revolutionary spirit that infused the movement and profoundly changed the nature of art.

The exhibition will begin with *Alfabeto di Kounellis* (Kounellis' Alphabet), a series of canvases featuring stenciled and hand-written letters and symbols extracted from urban signage, which were activated by the artist, who sang the letters in a performance in his studio. Such works embody the early stages of a reflection on the experience of daily life, which is at the heart of Arte Povera.

Among the movement's protagonists, Mario Merz is one of those who most extensively explored the artistic potential of the world around us. This is exemplified by the six-meter long, untitled installation from 1971 presented at Tornabuoni Art, which showcases the poetic potential of natural materials, such as earth, and industrial materials, such as neon. These elements are combined through the mathematical model of the Fibonacci sequence, an essential theme in Merz's work, symbolizing the infinite generative power of nature.



Mario Merz, *Senza titolo (Untitled)*, 1971, soil, glass, neon, variable dimensions

Another of the leading artists of the movement, as well as a key figure in the gallery's programming, Alighiero Boetti will be represented in the exhibition by works from the late 1960s. Emblematic of the period, *Manifesto* (1967), which lists the members of Arte Povera and *Mimetico* (1967), exhibited in at the Galleria Bertesca in Genoa in 1967, offer a fresh perspective on the artist's entire production. They challenge the established view that there was a clear break in Boetti's career between the sculptural years of Arte Povera and the two-dimensionality that characterizes his works from the 1970s onward.

As noted by Agata Boetti, director of the Alighiero Boetti Archive, in the publication accompanying the exhibition, "If we look closely at the works from the 1960s, we see that the fundamental concepts of Boetti's practice are already present." Chance, time, and writing—such themes are fundamental to the artist's most famous series, such as the later *Mappe*, of which a remarkable example will be exhibited at the Tornabuoni Art stand during Art Basel Paris 2024.

A testament to the enduring influence of Arte Povera on the artists who participated in the movement, *Casa di Lucrezio* (1981-84) is considered Giulio Paolini's *magnum opus*. On display at Tornabuoni Art will be the version with eleven pedestals, bearing as many busts of the Latin poet Lucretius in various states of fragmentation. A version with four pedestals can be found in the permanent collection of the Castello di Rivoli in Turin. The series references to the omnipresence of classical culture in Italy, and pays particular homage to Lucretius's poem *De Rerum Natura*, which presents an Epicurean view of reality, composed equally of matter and void.

It is this simultaneous presence of fullness and emptiness that, according to the art critic and president of the Fondazione Alberto Burri, Bruno Corà, characterizes the otherwise disparate works of Arte Povera "from an organic, physical standpoint". This visual language, which invites experience and leaves room for the audience, can also be found in the work of Luciano Fabro, Pino Pascali, Michelangelo Pistoletto, and the other artists featured in the exhibition. It defines a movement that is both eclectic and inclusive, rebellious and poetic, and whose anticipation of some of the most pressing issues of our time—the notion of "fine art", ecology, and colonialism—have ensured its continued relevance to contemporary art.

The exhibition will be followed by a new publication edited by Forma Edizioni, available in English, French, and Italian. This collective work is intended to capture the multifocal spirit of the movement and will include a series of interviews with Bernard Blistène, Agata Boetti, Bruno Corà, Valérie Da Costa, Sébastien Delot, Marc Donnadieu, Elena Geuna, and Sébastien Gokalp. Each author not only provides an in-depth analysis of the movement, but also shares their personal connection to its artists, offering a unique perspective on Arte Povera and its place in the contemporary art world.

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