

HERO: 'Almine Rech's Italian in London 1960s modernism takes over the power-gallerist's first London space', by Tempe Nakiska, June 14, 2014.

London has won over Almine Rech Gallery, expanding from the established Paris and Brussels locations to an intimate third space on Savile Row. The strength of Almine Rech lies in its stellar roster, with represented and exhibited artists including the likes of Hedi Slimane, Anselm Reyle, Joseph Kosuth, Richard Prince, Katja Strunz and many more.

London is kicking off with a modernist bang, the space's first exhibition exploring the oft-overlooked 1960s Italian minimalist art scene. As curator Natacha Carron explains, it's not a new area of interest for Almine Rech, following on from exhibition showcasing the likes of Castellani and Bonalumi. Yet it's the intimacy of the space and a fresh perspective that gives this installation a fresh, and distinctly Italian-in-London, feel.



Turi Simeti, *'Trittico nero'*, 1976.
Almine Rech Gallery



Agostino Bonalumi, *'Superficie Bianca'*, 1967.
Almine Rech Gallery.

TN: What kind of space are you dealing with, in Almine Rech's first London gallery?

NC: The space in London is deliberately much more intimate than the ones in Paris and Brussels and is located on the first floor which will allow the presentation of a limited number of more important works. Considered a cabinet de curiosité for connoisseurs and experienced art collectors. The space will also be used for the main artist represented by the gallery to show different aspects of their work.

TN: How did this specific theme and exhibition come about?

NC: Almine Rech's interest in Italian post war art scene is not new, having previously exhibited shows with Castellani and Bonalumi. It's a continuation of Almine's early interests in minimal art and conceptual art (Donald Judd, James Turrell, Mac Craken and Dewain Valentine). Just like conceptual and minimal art modernity appears as a search for monochrome, space, light, rhythm...



Dadamaino, 'Volume',
1959.
Almine Rech Gallery.

TN: How do these concepts tie together?

NC: It is therefore necessary to imagine what could be the decisive impact of space, technology and science fiction at this time in the minds of artists, opening up new creative fields to explore beyond human boundaries. Space, light becoming the material of the painting. Relief shape in association of monochrome gradually become a disposition in order to operate modulation on the canvas and give to see and feel the movements in which light play an essential role.

TN: What are the connecting factors between all the Italian artists shown in the exhibition?

NC: The link is Fontana and the place Milan. Over the 1960s all the artists became a group... I should say a family. They were all trying to achieve a new revolution in art: instead of working on a support they were working on the very support. They were defined by Gillo Dorfles as 'objectual artist', that is creators of picture-object. Which, with their mix of colour and mater, went beyond figurative and abstract paintings.

TN: How were these artists pushing the boundaries of art in their time, in the context of 50s modernism?

NC: European avant-gardes were vastly underestimated after the war, most of the attention was focused on the United States. Early developments overseas, particularly in Italy were neglected. Few realised that Fontana's inaugural gesture of cutting the canvas was the starting point for an entire group of important artists. The grail they were searching was the void. (An ambition which was certainly influenced by buddhism). They were to reach it not by working on a support but by working the support itself.

Pittura Oggetto runs until 27th July at Almine Rech Gallery, 11 Savile Row Mayfair, London W1S 3PG.