



Press release

Mimmo Rotella 2016

A number of galleries and foundations in Milan, commemorating ten years since the passing of Mimmo Rotella (Catanzaro 1918 - Milan 2006), have decided to pay homage to this important Italian artistic personality by organising a series of initiatives relating to his activities.

The aim of this series of events, supported by Cardi Gallery, Fondazione Marconi, Galleria Carla Sozzani and Robilant + Voena of Milan, is to highlight and showcase the multiform production of Rotella, who, in addition to his famous *décollages* and *retro d'affiches*, also created a series of works by experimenting with various techniques such as photographic reproductions, *artypos*, frottages, sculptures, *blanks* and *sovrappittura*.

"Mimmo Rotella 2016" is an initiative linked to the tenth anniversary of the passing of Mimmo Rotella. It involves a number of galleries and institutions in Milan, witnessing the relationship between the artist and the city where he worked and lived in his last years. The initiative is realized in collaboration with Mimmo Rotella Institute, set up in 2012 by Inna and Aghnessa Rotella with the aim of compiling the catalogue raisonné, improving understanding of the figure and the art of Mimmo Rotella and promoting his work at the national and international level. The Mimmo Rotella Institute is directed by Antonella Soldaini with the scientific support of Veronica Locatelli.

Schedule of Exhibitions

Cardi Gallery: *Mimmo Rotella. Blanks*

from September 20 to December 22, 2016

Opening: Monday 19 September 2016, 7 pm

Corso di Porta Nuova 38, 20121 Milan

Robilant + Voena: *The Maverick Mimmo Rotella*

from September 20 to October 28, 2016

Opening: Monday 19 September 2016, 7 pm

Via Fontana 16, 20122 Milan

Galleria Carla Sozzani: *Mimmo Rotella. Erotique*

from October 9 to November 13, 2016

Opening: Saturday 8 October 2016, from 3 to 7.30 pm

Corso Como 10, 20154 Milan

Fondazione Marconi: *Mimmo Rotella e Giorgio Marconi. Una storia d'arte e di amicizia*

from December 2, 2016 to February 4, 2017

Opening: Thursday 1 December 2016, 6 pm

Via Tadino 15, 20124 Milan

Cardi Gallery exhibits **Mimmo Rotella. Blanks**, a show devoted to a selection of 'coperture' (which means 'coverings') produced by Mimmo Rotella from the beginning of the 1980s.

If with the *décollages*—realized tearing posters taken directly from the street—the artist had discovered the infinite possibilities of the popular image, with the blanks he set out to explore the temporal and linguistic limits of this mode of communication.

The street and the city were once again sources of inspiration for the artist that, wondering around Milan, discovered that the posters were covered up by monochrome pieces of paper when the time of their display on the city walls was over. Fascinated by the hidden message, obliterated by a quite anonymous paper, he started to create the blanks: a procedure that cancel the chaos, the disorder, the superimposition shown with the *décollage* covering them with a new skin made up of monochrome tissue paper revealing the infinite possibilities of color, of transparency and of the essential act.

The blanks were shown for the first time in Milan in January 1981. Since then these works have been exhibited on very few occasions. So Cardi Gallery is trying to fill this gap and presenting to the public a little-known but actually crucial aspect of Mimmo Rotella's production.

A catalogue—the first publication to be devoted entirely to the subject—accompanies the show.

Robilant + Voena presents **The Maverick Mimmo Rotella**. The exhibition brings attention to a selection of works realized by Rotella from the first half of 1960s to the beginning of 1990s.

After the huge success get with the *décollages* and the *retro d'affiches*—deliberately not exhibited in this show—the artist was interested in a wide range of artistic procedures: by the 1960s he realized the photographic reproductions, for which he took advantage of the technological possibilities typical of the photographic medium. During the same period, he produced the *artypos*, using the printing proofs taken from typographies: some exemples of both techniques are exhibited.

Between the late 1970s and early 1980s the artist further developed the photographic reproduction technique and produced some pieces with the most incisive images of the Italian 'years of lead'.

During the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the following decade, Rotella returned to painting, influenced—as during the first part of his career—by the style of the street, but also by the US graffiti: he obtained the *sovrappitture* placing a pictorial sign of great visual impact on posters and *décollages*. Eclectic artist, in 1990 he turned his hand to sculpture, realizing a ceramic series called *Replicanti*, also present in the exhibition.

The Galleria Carla Sozzani displays the exhibition **Mimmo Rotella. Erotique**, that includes a selection of works realized with the techniques of photographic reproduction and frottage, focused on eroticism. These pieces were made between the end of the 1960s and the following decade, when the artist lived first in New York City and then mainly in France, between Paris and the French Riviera becoming involved with the atmosphere and international glamour of Gassin, Ramatuelle and Saint-Tropez.

After 1968 the so-called 'sexual revolution' had definitely dismantle the bourgeois morality. The 'liberation of eros' was theorized as a liberation not only of sexuality, but also as a vehicle to unleash all the creative energies restrained by social conditioning mechanisms. Rotella was sensitive to the analysis and exploration of the erotic dynamics: "Next to my work, I count a lot on my erotic life which I never omit, because it also serves as inspiration and, perhaps, as the work at the same time. On this fact my life is focused, it relies on these erotic adventures, then at some time, they become the basis for my future work and present actions."

The exhibition organized at **Fondazione Marconi** is entitled **Mimmo Rotella e Giorgio Marconi. Una storia d'arte e di amicizia**. It pervades all the rooms of Via Tadino and represents the occasion to recall the long and fruitful relationship between the artist and Giorgio Marconi. The two met during the 1960s, when Rotella often travelled between Rome and Milan: the artist and the art dealer started their collaboration with the exhibition *Rotella 'coperture' 1980* (1981), then developed over the years with a series of pivotal exhibitions such as: *Cinecittà 2*

Cine Rotella (1984); *Rotella. Décollages 1954-1964* (1986); *Mimmo Rotella. 'Sovrapitture 1987'* (1988); *Lamiere* (travelling exhibit in Naples, at Show Room Castelli, 1989); *Avanguardia '60 Baj Rotella Spoerri* (1990); *Mimmo Rotella. Ready Made 1990-1991* (1991); *Rotella for Swatch* (1994); *Mimmo Rotella. L'arte oggi* (1999). Even after the passing of the artist, the Fondazione Marconi continues to set up solo exhibitions dedicated to Rotella's production, such as *Mimmo Rotella. Opere 1949-1998* (2010) and *Mimmo Rotella. Retro d'affiche* (2013).

The Marconi collection includes works from the first *décollages* realized at the beginning of the 1950s to the *sovrappitture* of the 1980s and 1990s. Among the works on show: *Estropeado* (1960), *Le cachet* (1960), *Scotch Brand* (1960), *Il punto e mezzo* (1962), *Mitologia* (1962), *Viva America* (1963), the great *blank Senza titolo* (1981), *La lezione di anatomia* (1987).

The huge and significant selection encourages a further and in-depth study of the artistic contribution of Rotella, developed with different techniques and various languages during the entire course of his career.

Information:

Mimmo Rotella Institute: info@mimmorotellainstitute.it | +39 02 38230082 | www.mimmorotellainstitute.it

Press office - "Mimmo Rotella 2016":

Maddalena Bonicelli: maddalena.bonicelli@gmail.com | +39 335 6857707