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Libri d’artista dalla collezione Consolandi. 1919-2009/

Artist's books from the Consolandi collection. 1919-2009

Palazzo Reale | Milan

24 March-23 May 2010 extended to 6 June

Milan, on 25.5.2010 – As a tribute to the extraordinary character of Paolo Consolandi, the Council of Milan extended the duration of the exhibition from 23 May to 6 June 2010.

For the first time Palazzo Reale in Milan presents an exhibition dedicated to artist's books.

From 24 March to 6 June 2010 the exhibition “Libri d’artista dalla collezione Consolandi. 1919–2009/Artist's books from the Consolandi collection. 1919–2009” shows a collection of volumes from the precious collection of artist's books which Paolo Consolandi has built patiently and with passion during his life since the '60s.

It is a rare collection, jealously preserved and not well known by the general public, which goes from the historical avantgardes to the present day: small jewels, considered almost as family members which until now had never been shown to the public in such a heterogeneous group.

Promoted by the Culture Department of the Council of Milan and produced by Palazzo Reale in cooperation with Acacia, Associazione Amici Arte Contemporanea Italiana (Friends of the Italian Contemporary Art Association), the exhibition curated by Giorgio Maffei and Angela Vettese holds more than 130 artist's books, made during a 90-year-long period. An exhibition that goes from the book by Fernand Léger and Blaise Cendrars of 1919 to that by Sophie Calle of 2007 and that by Sabrina Mezzaqui, the last acquisition of 2009.

“There are on show volumes which are unique or in limited edition, which tell the story not only of the Twentieth Century - through a point of view that goes from writing to image, from the word to its creative paging - but which also represent other aspects: the making of new shapes and graphic images, of several materials and contents”, as the member of the Council of Milan Massimiliano Finazzer Flory explains.

With the exhibition “Libri d’artista dalla collezione Consolandi. 1919–2009/Artist's books from the Consolandi collection. 1919–2009”, the Council of Milan dedicates to the Consolandi collection a first important homage, choosing to display the most peculiar and unusual part. Among its different sections the most peculiar is, in fact, the one that holds the artist's books that are unique or in limited edition. So they are not works where the artist is the illustrator, but they are a testimony of a full and independent creativity. The author decides the shape, the dimension, the materials and the content, allegorical or abstract, regardless the needs of the publishing market and with a great freedom even from the mechanisms of the art world which influence painting and sculpture.

This practice has a great tradition behind it, from the Illuminated manuscripts up to the beginning of the Twentieth Century with irreverent volumes of surrealist collages or books where the artist has declared his style freely and fully with the only constraint being the page, like in the cases of Joan Mirò and Fernand Léger.

During the second half of the Twentieth Century the artist's book has been the means of expression where the most advanced experimental attitude of the conceptual avantgardes found expression.

Very often the material gains a special relevance, so much so that these books look like a complex assemblage. In some other cases the artist remakes drawings in his own hand which all together tell a story (such as for William Kentridge) or favours formal methods like the reproduction of intentionally standard photocopies (Alighiero Boetti and his “111”) or like advertising pages chosen by others (Maurizio Cattelan and the magazine “Permanent Food”).

The exhibition is mostly chronological. There are extraordinary works, among which stand out the ones by Léger, Mirò, Picasso, Max Ernst and the more mature works of Futurism. Then there is the season dedicated to Abstract and Informal Arts where the works are more copious: Fontana who works in that border territory between book and art's multiple or Munari who gives the *coup de grace* to the traditional readability of books; or even Burri who meets the writing by Villa and Novelli battling with his own. There are just a few examples of the European postwar period with Arman, Alechinsky and Tàpies and immediately the collection reveals its true inclination towards the experimentation of languages: Warhol, Ruscha, On Kawara, Agnetti, Richter, LeWitt, Boltanski, Beuys, Boetti, Paolini, Gilbert&George and the whole group of conceptual, minimal, poor art and fluxus artists who rule the artistic scene for almost two decades. The collection of the '80s is obviously fragmentary, as the international correspondent painting is disjoined in its languages. Up to the contemporary section of the present masterpieces - Mezzaqui, Cattelan, Kiki Smith, Dzama, Kentridge, Hirst and many more - which reveals the design behind the collection of Paolo Consolandi and his strong drive to pursue the most recent generations.

His collecting is parallel to the works, a complementary life, a subtle and intimate way to follow the course of changes in art in the Twentieth Century.

The catalogue Charta, with texts by Giorgio Maffei and Angela Vettese, which accompanies the exhibition, tells the story of an extraordinary passion.

The exhibition is made with the support of VHERNIER Italian Jeweller by Passion and BANCA FINNAT.

**NAME** Libri d’artista dalla collezione Consolandi. 1919-2009/

Artist's books from the Consolandi collection. 1919-2009

**CURATED BY** Giorgio Maffei and Angela Vettese

**VENUE** Palazzo Reale | Piazza Duomo 12 | Milan

**DURATION** 24 March-23 May 2010 extended to 6 June 2010

**PRESS CONFERENCE** Tuesday 23 March | 12pm | Palazzo Reale Conference Room

**GRAND OPENING** Tuesday 23 March | at 6.30pm (invitation only)

**OPENING HOURS** Monday from 2.30pm to 7.30pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from 9.30am to 7.30pm

Thursday and Saturday from 9.30am to 10.30pm

**ENTRANCE FEE** Free

**INFO** www.comune.milano.it/palazzoreale

**CATALOGUE** Edizioni Charta, with texts by Giorgio Maffei and Angela Vettese

**EXHIBITION PRESS OFFICE**

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