

# The GARDEN of DELIGHTS

## by CARLA TOLOMEO



*Three Yellow Roses, 2015*

Late 1800-style sofa, lampas silk, silk velvet, shantung, passementerie, cm 124x84x55

**Museum of Music and Theatre of Saint Petersburg**

**14<sup>th</sup> MARCH – 15<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2017**

The Contini Art Gallery, in collaboration with the Art Holding Gallery of Tatiana Nikitina, is pleased to present the exhibition "The Garden of Delights by Carla Tolomeo", hosted at the Museum of Music and Theatre of St. Petersburg from March 14th to May 15th, 2017.

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The exhibition transcends beyond national borders the enchanted artistic world of Carla Tolomeo, an artist with exceptional imagination, characterized by extraordinary materials, vibrant colors and unique shapes.

The works in Carla Tolomeo: "The garden of delights" range from the whimsical and wondrous to luminous and legendary from drawings to sculptures, proving the possible fusion of various art forms. The show brings together around fifty chairs-sculptures, depicting the artists' favorite subjects: turtles, fish, butterflies, flowers and moons, and ten other artworks on paper.

The exhibition relies on a handful of interconnected ideas and opinions to reveal the intellectual depth and reach of Carla's engagement with the worlds of myth, legend, and cultural archetypes. Many works by Carla are set in fantastic surroundings depicting empty rooms inhabited by lonely chairs, sofas and couches - dreamscapes populated by unique creatures, combinations of animals, flora and moons.

Tolomeo owes much of her training and artistic development to her mentor Giorgio De Chirico that had noticed her talent already as a child. Carla passed through various stages in her evolution as an intellectual, an artist and a woman and viewers will see several of these stages throughout the works in this exhibition.

Carla Tolomeo has shifted from paintings to objects. She is no longer represents, but presents. She has emerged from the surface of illusion to create chairs, which are real and yet at the same time unreal.

Tolomeo transforms simple textiles to vibrant and luxurious live sculptures. The chair itself is the story of a unique painter: cultured and inquisitive. The chair conceals an ambiguous anthropomorphism: they are themselves and yet 'something else' at the same time. Ordinary furniture becomes endless new forms of seduction, stretching upwards with mysterious volutes in the shape of luxuriant flowers, leaves and exotic moons. The Chairs are a distant descendant of Surrealism.

"I've tried to explain others and understand myself, but the phenomenon eludes me. I just know that, when I concentrate on my work, unusual, fascinating, and mysterious shapes materialize before my eyes. When my pencil seeks inspiration on a blank sheet of paper, the drawing it creates will be a chair. What I mean is that I feel the urge to add four legs to whatever shape my frenzied imagination brings to mind. And it becomes a chair."

*Carla Tolomeo was born in Pinerolo (Piedmont). She moved with her family to Rome, where she started painting. She alternated her academic studies with painting, encouraged by her maestros who, in those years, helped her with her studies: she was thus able to enter the studios of Guttuso, Gentilini, Attardi and Pirandello. De Chirico himself had noticed her talent as a child. Tolomeo owes much of her training and artistic development to him. Fame and appreciation in Europe started to arrive when she was invited to the international "D'Après" exhibition in Lugano 1971. Immediately after, she made her solo debut in Rome at the "Lo Spazio Gallery". Since then she had exhibited her works in more than hundred solo exhibitions. She has mainly worked abroad in various significant cities such as Vienna, Geneva, Zurich, New York, London and Paris. She had also made some important appearances in Italy: her paintings are exhibited in the most important collections of contemporary art and were shown in Palazzo Reale (Milan, 1993); in the Casa del Mantegna (Mantua, 1995) and they are still to be found in "Palazzo di Giustizia" in Milan. Poetry has often been a source of inspiration for Tolomeo's work. As early as 1981, she was a member of the "Casanoviani" group of scholars studying the life and works of Giacomo Casanova. She was to dedicate a series of forty drawings (1981) and twenty-two etchings (1983) to the Venetian writer, with a presentation in the folder by Leonardo Sciascia.*