



ISTITUZIONE
FONDAZIONE
BEVILACQUA
LA MASA

CONTINI
GALLERIA D'ARTE

Carla Tolomeo NEVER REST



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THE BEVILACQUA LA MASA FOUNDATION

Galleria di Piazza San Marco 71/c

Venice

in collaboration with

CONTINI ART GALLERY

JUNE 1 – JULY 28, 2019

From the first of June 2019, the **Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation** will host a one-man exhibition by **Carla Tolomeo** entitled *Never Rest*, in collaboration with the **Contini Art Gallery** and setup by Jean Paul Troili.

Carla Tolomeo, multi-faceted artist active both nationally and internationally, was born in Pinerolo, province of Turin in 1941. Her artistic formation in Rome was under the guidance of Giorgio De Chirico and later through her association with friends Renato Guttuso and Ugo Attardi; it was in Milan - her actual residence - that she would complete her artistic education bringing her skillful style to full maturity, with a transversal approach to painting, etching, sculpture, ceramic and the highest forms of creative design.

She received her first European recognition during the international exhibition *D'Après*, held in Lugano in 1971. From that moment on she prevalently worked in Europe; Vienna, Luxemburg, Geneva, Athens, Zagreb, Prague, Madrid and London were the most significant cities from 1976 to 1997. In 1986 Tolomeo's international fame began to spread with the realization of a large fresco dedicated to Monsignor Bogarín at St. John the Baptist Cathedral (*Cattedrale di San Juan Bautista de las Misiones*) in Paraguay. Her intense pictorial production was complemented by teaching the art of etching at the Academies in Brera and in Venice, and heightened by a profound study of classic literature and Japanese painting, particularly focusing on works by Kitagawa Utamaro.

Following the exhibition *Omaggio a Leonardo (Homage to Leonardo)* held at the Leicesters Galleries in London in 1997, her composite formation culminated with the creation of her first *objets d'art* or her "Chair-Sculptures", as she herself delightfully defines them. The inspiration from Japanese art style and the metaphysics of her first creation, the influence of the writings by Jorge Luis Borges (notably the *Manual of Fantastic Zoology*), and the admiration for the Gaudi's Catalan modernism, all found a common and unifying ground within the childhood memories of the artist. The result was an all-encompassing art form capable of synthesizing the various *anime* and her own personal history at the same time.

Tolomeo's creative process began with the restoration of an antique chair or with the creation of a new structure – a sort of "blank canvas" – upon which she develops the phase of studying the module and choosing the fabrics, which she equates to choosing the colors for a painting. The modules are designed, cut and assembled to create the sculptural forms which characterize her creative process. Enriched and personalized with her exclusive designs, brocades, lampas silks and moirés, Tolomeo's chairs are not simple objects of interior design, but uncommon forms of sculpture that elevates the person seated in them towards a dimension of totemistic immersion with nature and life.

The collection of the "Chair-Sculptures" presented in the gallery is an affirmation of their uniqueness – *unicum* – in the world of Contemporary art; a testimony of the creative strength of an artist who finds definition only in the non-definition of her unrelenting eclecticism.

The exhibition will present several documented works from 1976-79 such as paintings in honor of Vittorio Carpaccio, recent works of which some are inedited (the cycle of oil paintings which pays

homage to Pontormo). As a result, the artist reaffirms her long-standing love for painting which easily bonds with her eclectic, yet well-structured creative capabilities.

Countless cycles of pictorial works, marbles, etchings and water colors inspired by Charles Baudelaire, Francesco Petrarca and Paul Verlaine, the temperas and ceramics inspired by Borges, the etchings themed on the Divine Comedy and the life of Casanova (of whom Tolomeo is an enthusiast) and the latest scenographic projects for the opera *Turandot* designed for the 63rd Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago in 2017, all combine to make Carla Tolomeo an artist capable of incessantly reinventing her life and her art.

Biography

Carla Tolomeo was born in Pinerolo (Torino), but grew up and studied in Rome where she began her formation as a painter. At an early age, encouraged by Giorgio de Chirico and later by Guttuso, Gentilini and Attardi. In 1971 she began to exhibit in Lugano discovering Japanese painting as the primary source of her inspiration.

The illustrious and highly cultured Giovanni Testori later introduced her to the Cavour Gallery in Milan where she organized the exhibition, *Le storie di Erodiade (The Stories of Herodias)*.

Thus it was Milan where Carla began a new fervid artistic period gathering the fruits of her studies on works by renowned classic masters - Vittore Carpaccio, Albrecht Dürer and Leonardo.

Between 1976 and 1980 she created designs and oils as well as etchings that she exhibited in Europe – Vienna, Geneva, Zurich and Athens. For the biography of Giacomo Casanova, she dedicated designs and engravings accompanied with a text by Leonardo Sciascia.

Following a period of time spent in Paraguay, the artist found herself once again centered in Milan where in addition to her creative work she also taught etching at the the Academy in Brera as well as in Venice. In 1995, the artist exhibited a series of *Variazioni (Variations)* from works by Mantegna in Mantua. In 1997, she was invited to the Leicester Galleries in London with an important exhibition: *Omaggio a Leonardo (A Tribute to Leonardo)* and in 1999 her works were shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Rijeka; later she was invited to Zagreb as a guest at the Italian Institute of Culture.

In 1997 she began to exhibit her *Sedie (Chairs)* which would mark a turning point in her artistic production. With these creations – a pretext for refined pleasure that has been well-received world-wide – Tolomeo greatly surprised her collectors. As she herself wrote in the presentation of her first catalogue dedicated to the Chairs-Sculptures, her artistic philosophy consists in a *mutation-transformation* of the chair from an ordinary object to an artistic object, precisely beginning with one of the simplest domestic pieces of décor. Strengthened by her past experiences, her studies, the wealth of knowledge acquired through her research on Borges, her capability, her studies on Japanese painting and the teachings of her former master Giorgio de Chirico, Carla Tolomeo was able to transform the chairs into totems, wriggling fish, a flower of gigantic proportions and more...

Her Chairs-Sculpture consequently have become something magical – a *quasi* rediscovered infancy – with that twist of mischievousness from someone who has lived life intensely.

Carla Tolomeo. Never Rest

Organized by: The Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation in collaboration with the Contini Art Gallery in Venice and Cortina d'Ampezzo

Set-up/Display: Jean Paul Troily

Location: La Galleria in Piazza San Marco, 71/c - Venice

Inauguration: June 1, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. with the presence of the artist

Duration: June 1 – July 28, 2019

Opening hours: daily from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Info:

Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation

T. 041 520 7797

press@bevilacqualamasa.it

www.bevilacqualamasa.it

Contini Art Gallery

T. 041 523 0357

venezia@continiarte.com

www.continiarte.com

Catalogue available