

“POST ZANG TUMB TUUUM. ART LIFE POLITICS: ITALIA 1918–1943”
FONDAZIONE PRADA, MILAN
18 FEBRUARY–25 JUNE 2018

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

The title of the exhibition is a reference to the literary work *Zang Tumb Tuuum* (1914) by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, in which the author of the Futurist Manifesto and leader of the movement applied the poetic technique of “words in freedom,” marking a radical break with the tradition of his time. Marinetti is examined as a transitional figure between two periods – the years that preceded and followed World War I – and alongside protagonists such as Margherita Sarfatti and Giuseppe Bottai, as one of the leading lights of the unique cultural climate in Italy in the 1920s and 1930s, in which the avant-garde co-existed with tradition, utopia with realism, and modernity with the “return to order.”

Staged in the Fondazione Prada exhibition spaces, the show starts in the Galleria Sud with the reconstruction of a photograph showing Marinetti in his home in Rome. The first group of works displayed includes the paintings *Ritratto di Marinetti* (Portrait of Marinetti) (1921–22) by Rougena Zatkova and *Temporale patriottico (Ritratto psicologico)* (Patriotic Storm [Psychological Portrait]) (1924) by Fortunato Depero, both visible in the vintage photograph. In another archive image, used as an iconographic source for the second part of the show, Marinetti is portrayed in a domestic setting with a maid, while Umberto Boccioni’s famous *Dinamismo di un footballer* (Dynamism of a Soccer Player) (1913) is hung behind them.

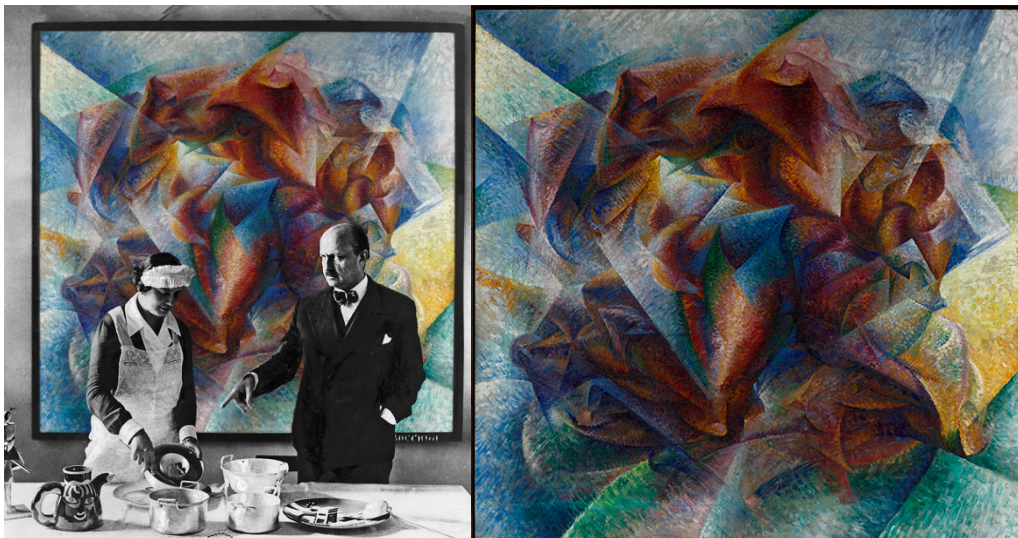


Image 1

These first two focal points – which are effective examples of the methodological approach of the exhibition concept – introduce a vast array of solo and group shows, artist studies and private commissions that marked the artistic and cultural dialogue of the 1920s, including the “Das junge Italien” exhibition at the Nationalgalerie in Berlin (1921), which presented works

by Giorgio Morandi, and the Maison Rosenberg in Paris, whose Hall of Gladiators, designed and painted in 1929 by Giorgio de Chirico in the home of Léonce Rosenberg, a prominent art dealer and gallery owner of the period, has been reconstructed for the exhibition.

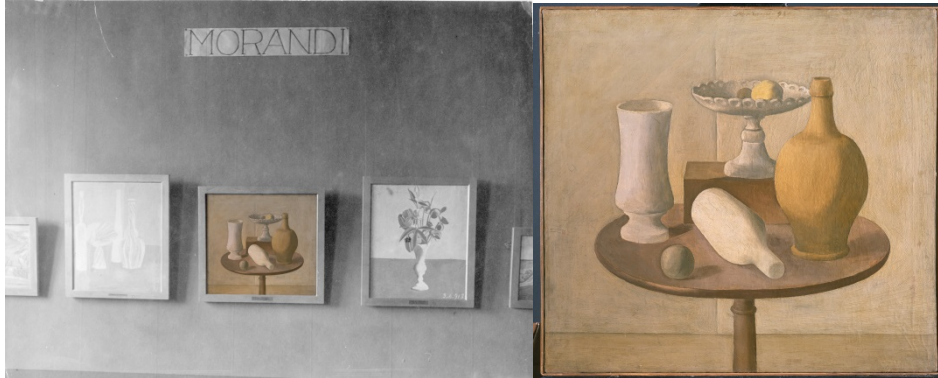


Image 2

The exploration continues with the analysis of great public exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale and the Rome Quadriennale. It traces the most important editions of the Venetian exhibition of those two decades, highlighting the key moments for the international recognition of figures such as the sculptor Adolfo Wildt, with the reconstruction of the room devoted to him at the 1922 Biennale, Felice Casorati (1924), whom the Futurists presented for the first time at the 1926 Biennale, Carlo Carrà (1928), Turin's Gruppo dei Sei and the Italian painters of Paris together in the "Appels d'Italie" exhibition (1930), Mario Sironi and Arturo Martini (1932), and the exponents of Aeropittura (1934). The Rome Quadriennale, founded in 1931 with the intention of boosting the national art system, is examined in further detail with the reconstruction of the room devoted to Gino Severini at the 1935 edition.



Image 3

Another central aspect of "Post Zang Tumb Tuuum. Art Life Politics: Italia 1918-1943" is its use of archive materials such as catalogues, photographs, and historical documents to reconstruct the first and second "Novecento Italiano" exhibitions at the Permanente in Milan, devised by Margherita Sarfatti, the leading figure of the artistic movement of the same name that aimed to revive the primitive and Renaissance tradition. The exhibition also features several key episodes in the promotion and propaganda of Italian art abroad

between the late 1920s and the 1930s: from the display of works by Felice Casorati, Fausto Pirandello, and Arturo Tosi at various editions of the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh to the solo exhibition of Carlo Carrà at the Umelecka Beseda artistic forum in Prague; and from the “L’Art Italien des XIXe et XXe siècles” exhibition at the Jeu de Paume in Paris (1935) to Giorgio de Chirico’s participation in the landmark show “Fantastic Art: Dada, Surrealism” at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City (1936–37).



Image 4

The Scuola Romana, at the time intent on developing a critique of the “return to order” of the Novecento group and reworking Expressionism in an Italian style, is explored with a specific focus that combines works by Mario Mafai, Antonietta Raphaël, and Scipione with an extensive collection of photographs, letters, and other documents from the period. The exhibition also examines the role of private galleries like the Milione in Milan, La Cometa in Rome, and Il Cavallino in Venice, which also made extensive use of publishing to promote an experimental kind of art, such as the innovative research carried out by Lucio Fontana, Fausto Melotti, the abstractionists, and the artists of the Corrente movement.



Image 5

The function of architecture and urban planning in the formation of an Italian cultural identity is also investigated in the exhibition. This perspective is translated both in the creation of public buildings and in the conception of ephemeral architecture, such as the experimental design of museum exhibitions and exhibitions of the applied arts – the Monza Biennale – and events aimed at the general public like the “Esposizione dell’Aeronautica Italiana” (1934) and the “Mostra Nazionale dello Sport” (1935), by figures such as Giovanni Del Debbio, Figini and Pollini, Adalberto Libera, Giovanni Muzio, Marcello Piacentini, Gio Ponti, Carlo Scarpa, Giuseppe Terragni, and the architects of the BBPR group. The exhibition presents three particularly symbolic and innovative architectural designs of the 1930s: Terragni’s Casa del Fascio in Como, Piacentini’s Palazzo di Giustizia in Milan (housing works by Carrà and Sironi), and Ponti’s Palazzo Liviano in Padua, decorated with a large mural by Massimo Campigli and an imposing statue by Arturo Martini.



Image 6

The 1932 “Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista” is the main subject of the section of the exhibition housed in the rooms of the Deposito. The monumental project staged at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni and subsequently at the Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna in Rome was, by order of Mussolini, the focus of the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of Fascism.

The exhibition became a powerful propaganda tool for the regime through the declaration of a national language, merging modernity and references to Roman history, and was ultimately the most important result of a strategy of aestheticization of politics and the masses.

The Podium of the Fondazione Prada commemorates the imposing E42 project promoted by Mussolini from 1935 onwards on the urging of the Mayor of Rome, Giuseppe Bottai. The project was designed to allow the Italian capital to host the 1942 Universal Exposition and celebrate the 20th anniversary of the March on Rome. The doomed plan constituted the greatest artistic and architectural ambitions of Fascism, but was never implemented due to the outbreak of World War II.

Photography is featured in the exhibition not only as documentation, but also as a form of artistic expression and through the medium of portraits embodying power and culture, with the display of works by brothers Anton Giulio and Arturo Bragaglia, Luxardo and Ghitta Carell.

Social unrest and the tragic stories of political prisoners and opponents of the regime are documented with drawings and letters from prison by artists like Carlo Levi and Aligi Sassu. The climate of the imminent end of Fascism is represented by the controversial 1942 Premio Bergamo award won by Renato Guttuso's *Crocifissione* (Crucifixion) despite the censorship and accusations of the regime, and the display of Mino Maccari's derisory drawings of the *Dux* series (1943).

The entire exhibition narrative, which winds between the Galleria Sud, the Deposito, the Galleria Nord, and the Podium, is marked by thematic in-depth studies of intellectuals, writers, and thinkers, such as Piero Gobetti, Curzio Malaparte, Alberto Moravia, Luigi Pirandello, and Lionello Venturi, who actively criticized or silently opposed Fascism or, on the contrary, supported the regime and its cultural and artistic expressions with varying degrees of conviction.

Captions:

Image 1

From left to right:

Rendered photographic image for "Post Zang Tumb Tuuum" (Fondazione Prada, Milan, 2018)
Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in his home (from "Wiener Illustrierte Zeitung" and "Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung", 1934) in the background *Dinamismo di un footballer* by Umberto Boccioni, 1913.
Ullstein Bild / Archivi Alinari
© 2017. Digital Image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York / Scala, Firenze

Umberto Boccioni

Dinamismo di un footballer, 1913

Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York

© 2017. Digital Image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York / Scala, Firenze

Image 2

From left to right:

Rendered photographic image for "Post Zang Tumb Tuuum" (Fondazione Prada, Milan, 2018)
Installation view of "Das junge Italien" at Nationalgalerie Berlin, 1921
Among the exhibited works, *Natura Morta* (1920) by Giorgio Morandi - for the work © Giorgio Morandi by SIAE 2018

Giorgio Morandi

Natura morta, 1920

Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

Copyright: MiBACT - Pinacoteca di Brera, Archivio Fotografico

© Giorgio Morandi by SIAE 2018

Image 3

Installation view of Il Quadriennale, Roma, 1935

Room II: solo show by Gino Severini

Among the exhibited works, *La Bohémienne* (1905) by Gino Severini - for the work © Gino Severini by SIAE 2018

Photo Giacomelli Carboni, Venezia (La Quadriennale di Roma)

Courtesy Fondazione La Quadriennale di Roma

Image 4

Rendered photographic image for "Post Zang Tumb Tuuum" (Fondazione Prada, Milan, 2018)

Installation view of "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism" at MoMA, New York, 1936-1937

Among the exhibited works, *Le caserme dei marinai* (1914) by Giorgio De Chirico - for the work © Giorgio De Chirico by SIAE 2018

© 2017. Digital Image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York / Scala, Firenze

Photo Soichi Sunami

Image 5

From left to right:

Brochure of Galleria della Cometa on the occasion of the exhibition by Carlo Levi in 1938 - for the work © Carlo Levi by SIAE 2018

Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni culturali – Direzione Musei, Ville e Parchi Storici – Musei di Villa

Torlonia – Biblioteca e Archivio della Scuola Romana

Carlo Levi

L'arciprete di Aliano, 1936

Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderna di Palazzo Lanfranchi, Matera

Su concessione del Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo

Archivio fotografico Polo Museale della Basilicata

© Carlo Levi by SIAE 2018

Image 6

"Mostra nazionale dello sport" (National exhibition of sport), Triennale di Milano, 1935

Set-up by studio BBPR

Archivio fotografico © La Triennale di Milano - Photo: Crimella

THE PUBLICATION

The “Post Zang Tumb Tuuum. Art Life Politics: Italia 1918-1943” exhibition will be accompanied by a scientific book, published by the Fondazione Prada. Lavishly illustrated, it will include an essay by the curator Germano Celant and 15 critical texts by scholars, historians, and critics of art and architecture such as Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Francesca Billiani, Maristella Casciato, Daniela Fonti, Emilio Gentile, Romy Golan, Mario Isnenghi, Lucy Maulsby, Antonello Negri, Elena Pontiggia, Sileno Salvagnini, Jeffrey Schnapp, Francesco Spampinato, Marla Stone and Alessandra Tarquini. The publication is completed by an in-depth overview through 64 case studies edited for the occasion by Fabio Benzi, Giorgina Bertolino, Silvia Bignami, Nicoletta Boschiero, Paolo Campiglio, Alberta Campitelli, Nicoletta Cardano, Ester Coen, Roberto Dulio, Massimo Durante, Danka Giacon, Elena Gigli, Claudio Giorgione, Eugenio Lo Sardo, Chiara Mari, Stefano Marson, Marta Mazza, Lucia Miodini, Francesca Romana Morelli, Marta Nezzo, Mattia Patti, Paola Pettenella, Stefano Poli, Assunta Porciani, Paola Redemagni, Valerio Rivosecchi, Katherine Robinson, Carlotta Rossi, Paolo Rusconi, Alberto Salvadori, Luigi Sansone, Dieter Scholz, Francesca Serrati, Carla Sonogo, Attilio Terragni, Francesca Zanella and by the curatorial department at Fondazione Prada.