



Tornabuoni Art, Michele Casamonti, ph Sara Rania

Lucio Fontana: rediscovery of a masterpiece with Tornabuoni Art Gallery of Paris

By Sara Rania

The art world has recently gone through a great thrill: the discovery of a forgotten masterpiece. An inner earthquake that involves one of the most known Italian artists of all time, Lucio Fontana.

From 26th April to 21st June 2014 Tornabuoni Art Gallery of Paris hosts, in conjunction with the major retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville in Paris, the exhibition "Lucio Fontana. Autour d'un chef-d'oeuvre retrouvé". About twenty works that trace the creativity of the founder of spatial current. A long trip from the ceramics to the Baroque period, from the craters to the known cuts renowned all over the world as "Concetti Spaziali" and above all on the masterpiece rediscovered after more than forty years being held in a private collection. "Le Jour" (The Day) is the painting born out from the artist's hands and now exposed in the Gallery of Avenue Matignon. To tell the story of this exceptional painting two protagonists have to be included: the Gallery owner Michael Casamonti, whose intuition permitted the re-appearance of the canvas and its revelation to the public and Francesca Piccolboni, the present Manager/Director.

Michael Casamonti demonstrates a great spark of enthusiasm when he recounts the strange circumstance of the re-appearance of the painting: "In the modern and contemporary art there is not much space for discovery and it is usually reserved for the antiques. It is something very unlikely for a Gallery owner, especially for important authors. This is the reason why this kind of revelation is a great satisfaction, personal and professional, for someone that does this kind of job".

An event to be placed in perspective that also aims to convey the humility and the great artist's attention to emerging trends: "Fontana, at the time recognized artist recognized all around the world, a guest in the Venice Biennale, teacher at the Academy of Brera and recognized spiritual leader of an entire generation, took a plane to respond to an invitation of an unknown Jef Verheyen, a twenty nine year old artist living in Belgium. The invitation was accepted with the utmost dignity, justifying it by acknowledging that they had the same idea of space, even though Fontana had opened this same road ten years before.

On the thread of emotion Michele Casamonti, enchanted by "a signature singing", takes us back to the great conceptual substance of the artist, able to intertwine the project both in the present and in the future: "Fontana has been studied so much in Italy, while no-one had thought to do research outside of Italy, or in Northern Europe where he rarely went. Finding this video was then really a wonderful event that has allowed us to further highlight the undisputed value of one of the milestones in the history of art that has allowed to furthering highlight the undisputed value of one of the milestones in the history of art. The road to Fontana is not over and we will continue to follow it".

At first sight it is a strange picture, with some structural inconsistencies that had raised initial doubts on the Tornabuoni Art Direction, specialized in works of prestigious Italian artists and particularly related to Fontana.



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Francesca Piccolboni sums up the purpose of first refusal: “The frame is different than the rectangular ones regularly used by Fontana, where he easily proceeded with holes and cuts”. “Le jour” loom has a cross structure and the person who proposed it, not knowing their origin, has been unable to explain the reason of this considerable diversity “. Focusing on the character of the invaluable contribution video that accompanied the valuable authentication Madame Piccolboni adds that this is the only case in which the historical document and the work produced are united. The movies show Fontana signing lithographs rather than the ones showing the craters, indeed do not provide a direct operative link with these works”.

“Le Jour”, one of the largest gold paintings of Lucio Fontana has a curious history. The work dates back to November 12th 1962. It was made in Belgium at the home of the collector Louis Bogaerts, from a painting of his friend Jef Verheyen: today the only painting whose genesis has been documented in front of a camera. A video shows us the act of drilling, as evidenced by the broadcast that appeared shortly after on local television BRT / VRT, and now screened in the MaM and Tornabuoni Art, in a joint tribute. These frames, accompanied by the artist’s voice describing the action in French but characterized by a strong Italian inflection, were shown in 2007 at the Palais de Tokyo. Immediately jumped to the expert eye of Valerie da Costa, they have accelerated the process of identification. Those circumstances allowed Casamonti to confirm his insights, and to acquire the work and then let the Fontana Foundation authenticate it. At that time the Foundation was not aware of its existence but finally it was brought to International headlines, with the edifying aim to see it exposed in an important museum. Until now, two institutions have shown their interest. Stay tuned!