

# Saudi Gazette

## ArtInternational: Trending Tornabuoni Art

by Miriam Nihal



Tornabuoni Art decided to exhibit at this year's ArtInternational in Istanbul following its phénoménal debut success. The fair supports the gallery's increasingly international approach. Michele Casamonti, founder of Tornabuoni Art, spoke to Saudi Gazette in about the fair and its development. "In 2009, we opened a gallery in Paris and next year we will open a new space in Mayfair, London. Istanbul is fast growing market with a fresh and multi-cultural approach.

The audience in Istanbul was very open to and inquisitive about what we presented to them. We want to share the Paris gallery's collection with as many people as possible, not just collectors but also those with a passion for art. We have exhibited at fairs in Asia and the US and ArtInternational felt right for the Middle-East market.

The Italian artists we represent, of which a selection of the best was on show in Istanbul, were part of a revolution for art, not just in Italy but in Europe as a whole.

They experimented with new techniques and approaches which enabled the next generation of artists to widen their scope of creativity.

Casamonti said the Middle East is a large global region with many different cultures and approaches. "In addition, things are changing very quickly and we are meeting more and more collectors from the area who are interested in the gallery's artists. The collectors are particularly interested the Italian artists because there is a Mediterranean connection, and they like to learn more about the story behind movements such as Spatialism.

His gallery opened in Italy over thirty years ago and has seen an increasing trend of collectors from the Middle-Eastern customers.

“For Tornabuoni Art things have changed a lot with appreciation for Italian art. This year the Musée d’Art Moderne was proof of this.

Also, the European market has become more connected because of easier travel and the internet. This in turn has encouraged more galleries to take an international approach.

The art market in Europe is strong but the art world as a whole is more and more global.” Speaking about an art medium that is currently trending now, Casamonti explained that there seems to be more demand for crossovers between media. “It is something that has definitely been popular for Tornabuoni Art.

The artists that our gallery focuses on are known for their experimentation with the blurring of sculpture and painting, taking 2D painting into the third dimension. This can be seen in the Italian monochrome works we presented at ArtInternational in Istanbul, artists such as Lucio Fontana and Agostino Bonalumi were the first artists to manipulate the canvas in this way and as a result changed the way people see its function.”

In 2015, Tornabuoni Art is opening a new gallery space in London on Albemarle Street, in the heart of the Mayfair district. “It will be an important step for the gallery as it will signify our first move outside mainland Europe, but the vision of the gallery will still remain the same. ”

### Participating artists

**Lucio Fontana** (1898-1968) began puncturing the surface of the paper or canvas in the late 1940s, blurring the distinction between two and the three dimensions. His desire to expand the traditional parameters of the painting was later combined with the, then, new monochrome European painting style established by artists such as Piero Manzoni and Yves Klein.

**Enrico Castellani** (b.1930) founder of the Azimut gallery in Milan, alongside Piero Manzoni and Agostino Bonalumi, iconically combines with great elegance and symmetry, undulations on the surface of the canvas with his monochromatic signature. He abandons all chromatic, figurative implications in painting in order to create art that represents nothing, but simply exists.

**Dadamaino** (1930-2004) cut elliptical holes in thinly painted monochromatic black or white canvases, claiming that the decisive impulse for the drastic “tabula rasa” was inspired by the work of Lucio Fontana. She proclaimed her loath of the “the material” stating that she had “always sought the immaterial”.

**Agostino Bonalumi** (1935-2013) worked essentially with monochrome, playing with relief and tension, light and shadows on the coloured surface created by structures and frames placed at the back of the canvases. The result allows the viewer to actively participate in each dimensional piece.

**Turi Simeti** (b.1929) followed in the footsteps of Agostino Bonalumi and Enrico Castellani by devoting his work with rigor and rationality to the association of monochrome and a geometric shape, the ellipse, which gradually became his signature.

**Alberto Biasi** (b.1937) co-founder of the Gruppo N was one of the artist to experiment with Kinetic Art in Europe. After the break-up of the group, he explored transitional spaces and shapes and started working on harmonic forms of iridescent colours combining twisted moving lamels, “dynamic forms” of torsion. Biasi elaborates his works using monochrome to create impressive plastic and colourist effects. Alongside these masters of the 20th Century Italian art.

**Francesca Pasquali** (b.1980), profoundly influenced by informal art theories, seen in the vibrant, intrinsic expressive power of everyday objects she uses. The monochromatic fields of utilitarian materials appear to be organic, similar to coral or bacterial growths, yet the viewers are always aware of the “sculptures” inorganic and plastic state, by the nature of the material used.