

Fontana and Burri take centre stage in London's galleries

Italian auctions trigger a surge in the country's post-war art, and the city's dealers answers the demand

by **ERMANN0 RIVETTI** | 24 September 2015



Lucio Fontana, *Concetto Spaziale, La Fine di Dio* (1963). Photo: courtesy of Tornabuoni Art

Tornabuoni Art opens its London space on Albemarle Street on 8 October with an exhibition of more than 50 works by Lucio Fontana. The star of the show is a rare, white, egg-shaped canvas from Fontana's *La Fine di Dio* series (1963). The artist made 38 such pieces and they are rarely offered on the market. There is no word on the asking price, but another work from the series, in black, is the star of Sotheby's upcoming Italian sale and is estimated at £15m-£20m, while the auction record for the artist is \$21m.

The gallery lent important works for a Fontana survey at the Musée de l'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 2014, and it's fair to assume that it will be lending to the upcoming show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, scheduled for 2017. "The post-war art world is becoming more and more Italian, with current research focused on the 1950s and 1960s Milanese scene," says Michele Casamonti, the head of Tornabuoni.

Alberto Burri's year

The Turinese dealer Mazzoleni Art, meanwhile is staging an overview of work by Alberto Burri at its gallery on Albemarle Street from 2 October. Burri's highly sought-after burlap sack and combustion pieces will be on display along with his lesser-known collages and paintings. However, two large and extremely rare cracked canvases from his *Cretti* series are the stars of the show. No work from this series has ever been publicly sold (most are in museums), and the price for either of these would eclipse the current auction record of £4.7m. "We have the top works from each of his artistic periods," says Luigi Mazzoleni, the head of the London gallery.



Luigi Mazzoleni with the two star works from Alberto Burri's "Cretti" series

The gallery's timing couldn't be better. As well as a strong presence in Christie's and Sotheby's Italian sales this year, Burri is the subject of a major retrospective at the Guggenheim New York (9 October–6 January 2016)—his largest US show in 40 years—to which the gallery has lent works.

New names

Robilant + Voena and the newly opened Cortesi gallery are promoting lesser-known Italian post-war artists this season. The former is opening a show of work by the Milanese artist Gianni Colombo at its Dover Street space from 2 October.



Gianni Colombo, Topoesthesia—three contiguous zones (programmed itinerary) (1965-70). Photo: courtesy of Robilant + Voena

Colombo, who has never had a solo show in the UK, is known for his experiments with kinetic and immersive art, and the show's centrepiece is the immersive installation Topoesthesia—Three Contiguous Zones (Programmed Itinerary) (1965-70). This is the first time the piece has been shown outside Italy and the gallery aims to find an institutional buyer.



Grazia Varisco, Reticolo frangibile. Quadrato rosso in quadrato nero (1968). Photo: Thomas Libis, courtesy of the artist

Cortesi gallery is opening a show of work by Grazia Varisco, another kinetic artist, who worked closely with Colombo, at its Maddox Street space from 1 October.

collection to a single institution.

Luxembourg & Dayan is hosting a single collection show of more than 70 works by Alighiero Boetti at its Savile Row gallery from 13 October. Alma Luxembourg says she hopes to sell the entire



Alighiero Boetti, Mappa (1963-64). Photo: courtesy of Luxembourg & Dayan