

# APALAZZOGALLERY

**“Il volto sinistro dell’arte”. Romana Loda e l’arte delle donne**

**APALAZZOGALLERY, Brescia**

**3 October – 30 November 2020**

**Curated by Raffaella Perna**

Apalazzo Gallery is proud to announce the opening on Saturday 3 October of the exhibition *Il volto sinistro dell’arte. Romana Loda e l’arte delle donne* (‘The Left Face of Art: Romana Loda and the art of women’) curated by Raffaella Perna, conceived to shed light on the pioneering activity in the promotion of female artists carried forward throughout the 1970s by Romana Loda, gallerist and curator, who passed away ten years ago. Founder of the Galleria Multimedia, based initially in Erbusco and then in Brescia, Loda represented an original figure on the Italian panorama and a key cultural point of reference across the Brescia territory for a whole generation of female artists, who found a figure ready to support radical exhibition projects, given over – especially between 1974 and 1978 – exclusively to women’s research.

The exhibition intends to recount Loda’s experience, in particular her commitment alongside female artists, starting from the exhibition *Il volto sinistro dell’arte*, which she herself organised in 1977 at the Galleria De Amicis in Florence. The exhibition featured the work of sixteen female artists, from or resident in Italy and active in the 1960s and ’70s, operating in many different areas of research, from kinetic art to the ‘Scuola di Piazza del Popolo’, from visual poetry to conceptual art. Today these artists are brought together once again: Marina Apollonio, Mirella Bentivoglio, Valentina Berardinone, Tomaso Binga, Renata Boero, Dadamaino, Giosetta Fioroni, Lucia Marcucci, Libera Mazzoleni, Verita Monselles, Stephanie Oursler, Lucia Pescador, Sandra Sandri, Suzanne Santoro and Grazia Varisco.

Right from the title of the exhibition, Loda set out to dismantle the stereotype that historically attributes the feminine sphere to the left side of the body – symbolically linked to intimacy, passivity, sentiment and witchcraft – and the male sphere to the right-hand side – associated instead with action, rationality, scientific knowledge and the public sphere. Although it was held in a gallery in Florence which had only recently opened, the exhibition attracted the attention of the press: along with the positive comments of the

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more learned critics, out-of-hand condemnation came from articles in *La Nazione* and *Paese Sera*, which in Loda's exhibition project saw "a feminist and not an artistic operation," thus deeming the two terms antithetical *per se*. At the time, this show and more in general Loda's curatorial work contributed to fuelling the debate – still raging – on the ambivalent statute of shows held only by female artists, drawing attention not only to the discrimination suffered by female artists, but also the difficulty in identifying new exhibition models and new canons of critical interpretation unlike those of the male approach.

In empathy with the intellectual curiosity and forward-looking gaze typical of Romana Loda, and in the belief that the re-enactment of an exhibition cannot simply be translated into an acritical rehash of the past or a purely philological exercise, the exhibition at Apalazzo Gallery aims to reinterpret Loda's original project through a new relationship between the works and the seventeenth-century spaces of the gallery, as well as through a different and broader selection of works. Together with the works or the series already displayed at the time by Loda – like for example *LUCA, 2,49* by Libera Mazzoleni, *Bianca Menna e Tomaso Binga. Oggi spose* by Tomaso Binga (for the first time featuring the display originally created by the artist in 1977 on the occasion of the exposition of her work, with the presents and telegrams she received during her 'wedding-performance'), *Successo* by Mirella Bentivoglio, *Ex Radicibus* by Renata Boero, the verbal-visual collages by Lucia Marcucci or the silver paintings by Giosetta Fioroni – the exhibition also features works that the artists would have liked to display in *Il volto sinistro dell'arte*, but which for various reasons were excluded, such as *Il bacio* by Mazzoleni, or which document a different moment of their work believed to be particularly meaningful, as in the case of the work *La somiglianza è un furto* by Valentina Berardinone, or the paintings by Lucia Pescador.

On the occasion of the exhibition, a catalogue will be published, with critical texts by Raffaella Perna, issued in collaboration with the Galleria dell'Incisione in Brescia.

## **Artists on show:**

Marina Apollonio, Mirella Bentivoglio, Valentina Berardinone, Tomaso Binga, Renata Boero, Dadamaino, Giosetta Fioroni, Lucia Marcucci, Libera Mazzoleni, Verita Monselles,

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Stephanie Oursler, Lucia Pescador, Sandra Sandri, Suzanne Santoro and Grazia Varisco.