SI VIS PACEM

Carlo Bonfà | Curated by Jacopo Cenacchi

18 May – 15 June 2023

Si vis pacem, a solo exhibition by Carlo Bonfà, opens to visitors at Galleria Studio Cenacchi, Via Santo Stefano 63, Bologna, on Thursday 18 May 2023, from 4.30 to 7.30 pm. Owing to bad weather, the opening reception has been postponed to Wednesday 24 May at 6 pm.

Less than a year after the Mantua-born artist's death, this small exhibition pays tribute to his practice through a particular body of work.

The title recalls the Latin maxim Si vis pacem, para bellum — "If you want peace, prepare for war" — attributed to Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus. Most of the works address the theme of war. Through series entitled Anti-personnel Mines, Tanks and Combatants, Bonfà uses irony to expose the absurdity of all warfare. Rather than instruments of death, he creates "games" that overturn the meaning of the titles themselves.

Writing about the artist some years ago, Sandro Orlandi Stagl observed:

"Carlo Bonfà addresses war by creating objects with the shapes and appearances of military equipment, designed neither to harm nor to train anyone in the art of warfare. His strategies seek first to improve our relationship with ourselves and then with the world around us, prompting reflection on how harmful and absurd certain theories devised to resolve conflicts can be. [...]

"Stripped of their function, Carlo Bonfà's toy weapons have neither the symbolism of Dada nor the dynamism of Futurism. Instead, they become a kind of simulacrum whose appealing forms and vivid colours attract the viewer, disguising the real danger of what they represent. Their playful appeal removes their aggression and their identity as objects intended to inflict harm. He finds a way to express beauty where there is horror."

We present this exhibition at a moment when, alongside the wars closer to us — in Ukraine and Armenia — sleepwalking states are playing with the fire of mutual threats, edging towards a terrible conflict. Beyond its artistic importance, this is why we believe the exhibition matters. Indeed, why it is necessary.

CARLO BONFÀ

Born in Pegognaga, near Mantua, in 1944, Carlo Bonfà died in Mantua in 2022. He joined the Movimento Arte Etica in 2016, publishing his own ethical manifesto, StrAtego. In the 1950s he moved with his family to Verona, where he studied art.

In 1968, Galleria Ferrari organised his first solo exhibition, accompanied by a catalogue essay by Tommaso Trini. He subsequently exhibited there on several occasions and participated in historic exhibitions including Campo urbano in Como, Art Terminal at Toselli in Milan (1969) and Gennaio70 in Bologna (1970), where he also held several solo exhibitions. In the early 1980s, Renato Barilli and Francesca Alinovi included him in the Nuovi-Nuovi group.

STUDIO CENACCHI

Founded in 2016 out of Jacopo Cenacchi's longstanding research into and passion for contemporary art, Studio Cenacchi occupies approximately 150 square metres across three floors of the historic Palazzo Ghiselli Vasselli, in the heart of Bologna. Its vaults, surviving sixteenth-century frescoes and capitals provide an unusual setting for contemporary art, allowing the architecture to enter into dialogue with each exhibition.

The gallery works directly with the artists it promotes, or with their estates, presenting established and contemporary artists from Italy and abroad with a particular emphasis on quality, irrespective of medium or generation. It also offers art advisory services and visits clients' homes and workplaces to develop bespoke proposals for placing works of art.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Tempera — Giorgio Zucchini

Carnival — Francesco Bocchini

Sfioramenti — Morena Pedrini

Tutto il silenzio che c'era — Marco Rigamonti

La grafica — Sigfrido Bartolini

Kido, il suo Batik, la sua Arte — Kido Emiliani

I luoghi della polvere — Augusto Gadea

Berlin, Brandenburger Tor 1989 — Massimo Golfieri

Bologna, dalle periferie al centro — Maurizio Tangerini

Imago Pietatis — Elena Franco

Vanishing — Luigi Vigliotti

From London to Free Derry — Gian Butturini

Ars curandi — Elena Franco

Ad lunam — Daniele Cabri

Testa carbonara — Francesco Bocchini

Cinema interiore — Simone Martinetto

WEBSITE: studiocenacchi.com

USEFUL INFORMATION

TITLE: Si vis pacem

ARTIST: Carlo Bonfà

CURATED BY: Jacopo Cenacchi

VENUE: Galleria Studio Cenacchi, Via Santo Stefano 63, Bologna

OPENING RECEPTION: Wednesday 24 May 2023, 6 pm

DATES: 18 May – 15 June 2023

OPENING HOURS: Tuesday to Saturday, 4.30–7.30 pm; mornings and Mondays by appointment

SPECIAL OPENING HOURS: Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 May, 10 am–7 pm, during Diverdeinverde; closed Saturday 3 June

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