

LUXEMBOURG & DAYAN

For Immediate Release
Media Contact
Andrea Schwan, Andrea Schwan Inc.
info@andreaschwan.com, +1 917 371.5023

LUXEMBOURG & DAYAN PRESENTS EXHIBITION DEVOTED
TO MARIO SCHIFANO, ONE OF ITALY'S MOST SIGNIFICANT
POST-WAR PAINTERS

Mario Schifano: The '60s

November 6, 2014 – January 10, 2015
Luxembourg & Dayan
64 East 77th Street
New York City

NEW YORK... Luxembourg & Dayan is pleased to announce an exhibition of seminal works by Mario Schifano (1934-1998), one of Italy's most significant postwar artists. Schifano was a radical figure who considered painting to be the frontier of the avant garde, an intrinsically human art form capable of capturing the beating pulse of contemporary culture. His prodigious talent, somewhat obscured in his day by an eccentric personality and self-destructive drive, was at its height in the 1960s, a decade in which he experimented extensively with ever-changing media and techniques, traversing a wide spectrum of styles that he made entirely his own.

Beginning November 6, 2014, Luxembourg & Dayan will invite new assessment of this iconoclastic artist's contributions with ***Mario Schifano: The '60s***. By focusing upon the years when his artistic output was at its most intense, the exhibition captures Schifano's extraordinary range and his ability to encapsulate the charged history and aesthetic contradictions of a nation trying to break free of the recent grip of Fascism and the terrible weight of centuries-old artistic traditions amid rapidly changing socio-economic tides.

On view through January 10, 2015, ***Mario Schifano: The '60s*** is an adapted version of the exhibition ***Mario Schifano: 1960-1967***, recently presented to critical acclaim at Luxembourg & Dayan London. The New York City show is organized in collaboration with Giorgio Marconi, Schifano's gallerist during the late 1960s, and is accompanied by the catalogue produced for the London show. The book features a new text by Claire Gilman (PhD Columbia University),





who is currently curator at The Drawing Center, New York.

Works featured in ***Mario Schifano: The '60s*** have important early provenance, with some having passed through the hands of such legendary dealers as Marconi and Ileana Sonnabend and important collections, such as Franchetti Collection in Rome.

Mario Schifano: The '60s explores the artist's varied output in an attempt to penetrate the nucleus of his approach. The major ruptures of Schifano's career played out to greatest effect throughout the decade of the 1960s, a period in which he also created his most compelling and ingeniously experimental works of art – paintings that employed a plethora of media and formats. By focusing on paintings from this decade, Luxembourg & Dayan hopes to reveal the crux of a career that at times aligned with, and other times stood at odds against, the European avant garde's project at large.

Schifano cherished artistic expression above all else. This attitude manifested itself primarily in his work as a painter but also in stints as a filmmaker and musician. As soon as Schifano gained support from one circle of critics and intellectuals, he broke free to explore less trodden ground. Once he had risen to fame in the early '60s via highly gestural monochrome paintings featuring uneven surfaces, he rejected acceptance with a sharp turn toward a more figurative style. In his subsequent phase, Schifano embraced such popular culture idioms as corporate logos and took up an expanded arsenal of materials in a dramatic shift that alienated many of his proponents. The label that Schifano earned – and that still is most affixed to the artist – is that of an Italian variant on American Pop Art. But this label seems ill-fitting and outdated: Rather than the glossy veneer of consumer culture associated with Pop Art, Schifano evoked and inscribed upon his canvases the wildly varying surfaces upon which everyday life manifested itself through the shifting content on billboards, motorway signage, apartment windows, and television screens.

In 1962, *New Realists* opened at Sidney Janis Gallery in New York City, heralding a new generation of American Pop Art and French Nouveau Réalisme. The exhibition featured Mario Schifano, a young painter little known outside of Italy, who was having his international debut alongside such artists as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Arman, and Yves Klein. In the two years leading up to this landmark exhibition, Schifano had already developed

a unique painterly approach that shared affinities with the movements on both sides of the Atlantic. His 'Monochrome' series (1960-1961) rejected painting's purity in favor of such unconventional materials as wall paint, enamel, wrapping paper, and dirt, hewing to the Nouveau Réaliste penchant for concrete and often discarded everyday materials. By 1962, Schifano was incorporating advertising logos and bits of text into his canvases, a procedure that corresponded to the American Pop Art's fascination with emblems of consumer culture.



Shortly after his international debut, Schifano began using the genre of landscape painting as a ploy – a type of conventional drop cloth, in essence, for radical experimentation. His 'Paesaggio anemico' (Anemic Landscape) works from the mid-60s feature outlined mechanical landscapes altered through plastic layers bolted onto canvas and intercepted with additional layers of whitewash, giving the appearance of having been bleached with ammonia. Schifano's material investigations and questioning of the artist's authority were further pushed to the extreme in the 'Tuttestelle' (All Stars) paintings of 1967. In these works he employed spray paint, stencils, and plastic shreds to create comic-like compositions of palm trees and starry skies.

A breakthrough moment materialized in 'Paesaggi TV' (TV Landscapes) created in 1970. This series of black canvases features rounded-corner squares of photographic emulsion in psychedelic colors as titillating as anything on a television screen. Schifano's hybrid photographic paintings serve as fascinating, prescient examples of the appropriation art that would come to the fore in subsequent years.

Mario Schifano's refusal to adhere to a specific style or method of operation resulted in an oeuvre of astonishing breadth, an art that revels in its own voraciousness for experimentation. With a truly post-modernist verve, Schifano considered the past to be "a find, not to throw away but to recuperate" in the service of a constant search for the new.

Luxembourg & Dayan is located at 64 East 77th Street between Madison and Park Avenues. The gallery is open to the public Tuesday - Saturday, 10am - 5pm.

Particolare di esterno, 1962. Enamel on paper laid on canvas. 63 x 55½ in. Private collection.
Propaganda, 1965. Enamel and graphite on canvas and perspex. 31½ x 39¾ in. Private collection.
Tuttestelle, 1967. Enamel spray on canvas and perspex. 39¾ x 51½ in. Private collection.
Paesaggio TV, 1970. Enamel, aniline, and emulsion on canvas with perspex. 16 ½ x 19 ¾ in. Private collection.
 All images Mario Schifano © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ SIAE, Rome