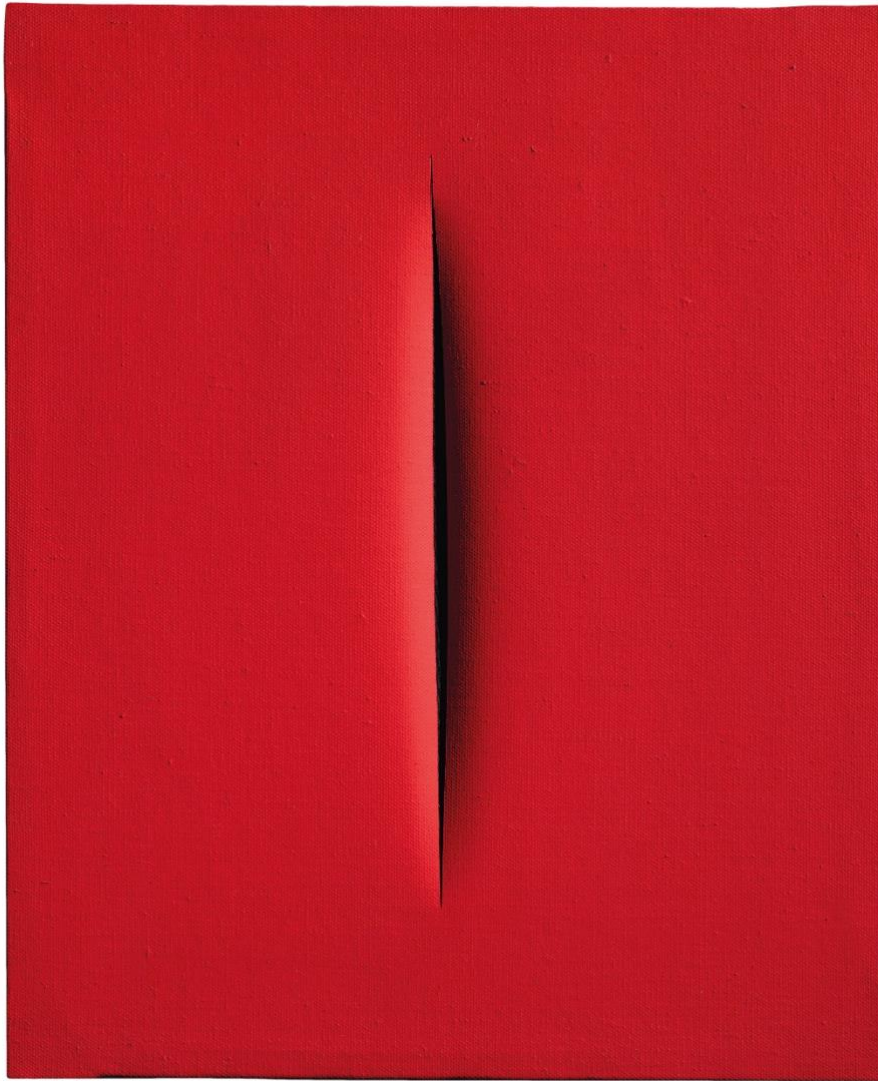


# BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Lucio Fontana, *Concetto Spaziale, [Attesa]*, 1967, waterpaint on canvas, 61.5 x 50 cm. (24 1/4 x 19 3/4 in.)

## FONTANA

**22 January – 28 February 2019**

**Cocktail Reception: 24 January 6-9pm**

Ben Brown Fine Arts and Colnaghi are delighted to present *FONTANA*, their first exhibition in partnership at the Colnaghi townhouse in New York. *FONTANA* re-examines the career of one of the most innovative artists of the twentieth century, Lucio Fontana, and features works spanning the artist's career, including seminal paintings, drawings and ceramics from the 1930s to the late 1960s, which champion his lifelong appetite for experimentation.

The exhibition explores Fontana's beginnings as a sculptor; the artist found great enjoyment working on ceramics throughout his career and the medium is arguably the domain in which he experimented the most artistically. Fontana learned his father's trade as a sculptor of graveyard memorials and his early sculptural works were reflective of this traditional and figurative influence which can be seen in

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his bronze *I Cavalli che Seguono la Vittoria* (Bozzetto) (1936) and terracotta bust, *El Rojo* (1941). By the time the war was over, Fontana's ceramics had reached the peak of baroque exuberance. Though the traditional subject matter continues in later works such as the exquisite polychrome glazed ceramic *Figura Femminile con Fiori* (1948) and *Corrida* (1948-1950), Fontana's ceramics became increasingly abstract and the finish, colour and texture is influenced by his theories on spatialism, as terracottas from the 1960s depict the cuts and buchi for which he is most widely known.

Fontana's first *ambiente spaziale* or 'spatial environment' was created in 1949. This infamous and transformative series continued until his death in 1968, and paved the way for a qualitative advance of 'spatial' character in the sphere of his further involvement in architectural-environmental works. We will present early examples of these works, including *Concetto Spaziale* (1951); gouache and graffiti on paper, with stark punctures opening the picture plane into infinity. One of the most significant examples of Fontana's white *tagli* paintings is *Concetto Spaziale, Attesa* (1966), an imposing single white cut which was exhibited as part of the artist's grand installation in the Italian pavilion at the 1966 Venice Biennale. This work has been in a private collection for nearly two decades. In 1966 Fontana presented an entire room of white *tagli* at the Venice Biennale; '[w]hite represented, as we know, for Fontana the "purest, least complicated, most understandable colour," that which most immediately struck the note of "pure simplicity," "pure philosophy," "spatial philosophy," "cosmic philosophy" to which Fontana more than ever aspired during the last years of his life.'<sup>1</sup> Following his acclaimed installation, Fontana won the International Grand Prize for Painting, signifying the height of his practice.

The exhibition is held at Colnaghi, 38 E 70<sup>th</sup> Street, New York and viewing is by appointment only.

The artist's work will also be included in the following exhibitions in New York:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2019/lucio-fontana-on-the-threshold>

## Ben Brown Fine Arts

Ben Brown Fine Arts opened its first location in the heart of Mayfair in 2004. The gallery has prominently positioned itself on the contemporary art scene with the representation of Ron Arad, Miquel Barceló, Tony Bevan, Yoan Capote, Rob & Nick Carter, Kitty Chou, Awol Erizku, Ori Gersht, Candida Höfer, Claude & Francois-Xavier Lalanne, Heinz Mack, Vik Muniz, Nabil Nahas, José Parlá, Ena Swansea, Djamel Tatah, Hank Willis Thomas, Gert & Uwe Tobias, Gavin Turk, Not Vital and Jan Worst. Also renowned for its strong expertise in 20th Century Italian Art, the gallery has been exhibiting the work of Lucio Fontana and Alighiero Boetti, amongst others, since its inception.

In 2009 the gallery took the first step in an international expansion with the opening of an exhibition space in Hong Kong. Brown's Hong Kong space was the first London gallery to open in the historic Pedder Building, offering a programme of western and international art exhibitions tailored to the Asian market. Since its establishment, the Hong Kong gallery has hosted exhibitions of gallery artists as well as presenting historically significant exhibitions of important modern artists, most notably Pablo Picasso, Alighiero Boetti and Sean Scully. It participates in major art fairs worldwide.

## Colnaghi

Founded in 1760, Colnaghi is among the oldest and most important galleries in the history of the art market. The gallery initially established itself in London as the premier dealer of prints but by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had begun dealing in Old Master paintings and drawings. Colnaghi soon

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<sup>1</sup> J. van der Marck & E. Crispolti, *Lucio Fontana*, Vol. I, Brussels, 1974, p. 137.

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developed important relationships with museums in Europe and with a new generation of collectors in America, including Isabella Stewart Gardener, Henry Clay Frick, Robert Sterling Clark, and Andrew W. Mellon. As Colnaghi's ties to the museum world strengthened, so did its commitment to scholarship—a commitment that remains a priority today. Throughout its long and varied history, Colnaghi has successfully evolved and adapted to changes in the market. The latest shift came in 2015 when the company was taken over by Jorge Coll and Nicolas Cortés, who had established themselves as a major force in the market for traditional art through their eponymous gallery. Colnaghi has since moved into a custom-built gallery in St. James's in London where they show important European Old Master paintings and sculpture, as well as art from the Spanish-speaking world. In 2017 Colnaghi opened a gallery in New York led by Carlos A. Picón, formerly the Curator in Charge of the Department of Greek and Roman Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, expanding their offering to include art of the ancient world. Also in 2017 the company announced the launch of the [Colnaghi Foundation](#), an independent, not-for-profit organisation established to promote Old Masters and Antiquities to a 21st century audience.

## FOR FURTHER PRESS INFORMATION AND ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

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