

BEN BROWN

- *Press Release for immediate release* -

1 March – 21 April 2007

Mimmo Rotella – Early Works 1954 – 1967

The impact of Rotella as one of the pioneering artists of the 20th century is evidently present throughout contemporary landscapes of visual culture. Rotella's eye for "reporting" culture and commentary on cultural politics (through his canvases of torn down, then collaged posters from the streets of Rome) have made an immeasurable impact on the theoretical discourse surrounding modern artistic production techniques. His work is famous in suggesting a concept of 'fresh vision' on accepted reality and poetic inspiration in what appears banal.

Ben Brown Fine Arts is pleased to present, for the first time ever exhibiting in London: Mimmo Rotella showing key works from 1954 – 1967. The show presents a scope of work that constitutes a testimony regarding artistic practices of the later half of the twentieth century through to present day.

In 1945 Rotella moved to Rome where his work had begun to experiment with pictorial expression of neo-geometrical matrix. In 1951 he exhibited in Paris at "Salon des Realistes Nouvelles". He then traveled to America where he was introduced to the protagonists of new currents such as Rauschenberg, Oldenburg, Twombly, Pollock and Klein. He returned to Rome where he began experimenting with what he called "Zen Illumination" this was what led to the discovery of the advertising poster as artistic expression and the origin of a language that Rotella is famous for creating: "d collage".

Rotella made his name in the 1950s by ripping posters from the walls of Rome by night where he became known as the "poster ripper", he adopted collage here as used by the cubists and subverted it with Dadaism. Rotella exhibited the "torn poster" for the first time in an exhibition entitled "Esposizione d'arte attuale" (1955). After this he produced the famous Cinecitt  series. Choosing both the figures and faces of film posters he transformed them into ingenious, provocative and amusing collages including "Marylin" (1963), which became an iconic image of urban culture. In this Period he also made use of "retros d'affiche" using the verso of the posters with the result of non-figurative and monochrome works.

In the 1960's he joined the "Nouveau Realisme" group with artists such as Klein, Tinguely, C sar and Dufrene. American Pop art, along with Abstract Expressionism and the work of Italian artists such as Fontana and Burri played an important role in directing Rotella's pictorial orientation, taking part in the famous 1961 Parisian exhibition entitled "A 40 degrees au-dessus de Dada".

Rotella exhibited extensively around the world until his death in 2006 and since has been the subject of many retrospectives throughout the United States. The artist's work is included in many prominent public collections including, Museum de Arte Moderne de la Ville, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Rotella participated in landmark exhibitions of the twentieth century including the "Art et Pub" exhibition held at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the "High and Low" exhibition held in New York at the Museum of Modern Art in 1990.

To bring the work to Cork Street is an honor in presenting this innovative artist's legacy as a central figure of New Realist group, pioneering work in recontextualisation, appropriation and commercialisation. Concepts that are rife in the language of Contemporary art and its institutions today.

Catalogue available with text written by Alberto Fiz.

For further details contact: Ben Brown Fine Arts @ 020 7734 8888 or info@benbrownfinearts.com