

Franco Angeli

4 Oct — 18 Nov 2017 at the Ronchini Gallery in London, United Kingdom

25 OCTOBER 2017



Franco Angeli. Courtesy of Ronchini Gallery

Angeli's self-taught practice began at the end of the 1950's with his first paintings taking the same approach as Alberto Burri. He notes: Matter for me is just a fragment of the enormous tear that overwhelmed Europe; my first paintings looked just like that, like a wound after you have removed the bandage...after the blood has dried and there is no longer a vivid red mark. (G. De Marco, *Piazza del Popolo: 1950-1960*, from *La Tartaruga – Quaderno d'arte e di letteratura*, n. 5/6, March 1989, pp. 105).

One of the most significant Italian artists of his generation, he was a seminal figure in the art world in Rome, regularly exhibiting at La Tartaruga, L'Appunto and La Salita. Angeli's work references socio-political issues with minimalist aesthetics that typify Italian artistic heritage. Yet his works shared a new vision, focusing on current events of social and political upheaval along with artists such as: Tano Festa, Mario Schifano, Pino Pascali, Jannis Kounellis, and Fabio Mauri. Angeli's works were further inspired by the 'eternal city' of Rome and its unique urban landscape.

A contemporary of Tano Festa, Francesco Lo Savio, Mario Schifano and Pino Pascali, Angeli's work is amongst the strongest of his generation, known for his bold, outspoken symbolism. Angeli began working in art in the 1950s as a reaction to the devastation of WWII and as a platform to expose his leftist/communistic views.

My first paintings are the proof of my everyday contact with the streets. I saw the ruins and the gravestones. I saw ancient and modern symbols such as the eagle and the swastika alongside the sickle and hammer; and then obelisks, statues and Roman she-wolves. All of these icons create such a dynamic and invigorating energy that help in my adventure with paint Franco Angeli (M. Calvesi, *Un pensiero sul Destino*, in *Franco Angeli. Quadri da una Collezione*, exhibition catalog, Galleria dé Serpenti, Roma, November 1991).

Angeli takes these iconic symbols and creates a new context, which then permeates into our unconscious. He does this by using unconventional materials such as: chalk, tulle, nylon socks, and industrial glaze, what is left are strong artworks that leave an imprint into the viewer such as *E da una Ferita Scaturí Bellezza* (1957); *Povera Francia* (1961); *Bella Ciao*; *Omaggio a Dine* (1963); *United States of America* (1965); *Natale di Roma* (1966); *Abbraccio Eterno* 1968-69). After eight years of investigative

work, the archive have been incredibly valuable in increasing the prestige of Italian art from that time, which has already been highlighted in exhibitions such as *The World Goes Pop*, (Tate Modern, London (2015-16) and *Imagine: New Imagery in Italian Art 1960-1969* (Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (2016)).

With works dissecting the church, morality, politics and social insecurity, his iconography investigates the state of dissolution of the time in different social sectors, but also seem so relevant in confronting the political uncertainty of contemporary society today. Shrouded and faded, the symbols are each covered by a veil of paint or tulle.

A veil that paradoxically wakes from an alert consciousness into a certain sharp numbness. A veil that keeps you away, but lets you in simultaneously. In this movement dwells the originality and the reverence of an extraordinary painter. (M. Calvesi, *Un pensiero sul Destino*, in Franco Angeli. *Quadri da una Collezione*, exhibition catalog, Galleria dé Serpenti, Roma, November 1991).

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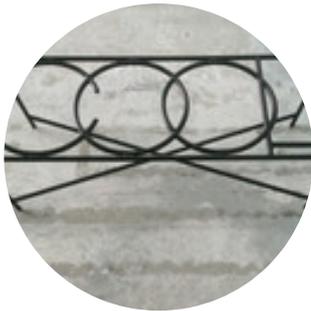
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Ronchini Gallery

Ronchini Gallery aims to discover and rediscover exceptional artists through presenting curated exhibitions from the gallery's stable of international artists and beyond.

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Location

London, United Kingdom

Founded in

1992





1. Franco Angeli. Courtesy of Ronchini Gallery
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