

## Günther Förg / Lucio Fontana Bronze/ Terracotta

Massimo De Carlo Gallery is proud to present *Günther Förg/ Lucio Fontana: Bronze/Terracotta*. The exhibition, by combining Günther Förg's unique sombre bronze paintings and Lucio Fontana's early ceramics, aims to explore how Förg and Fontana reflected on materiality and on the gesture (that lies within it). Both artists use ancestral materials such as bronze and terracotta: the tangibility that the artists have applied to these mediums in each work manages to translate the sense of metaphysical in the vocabulary of art.

*Günther Förg/ Lucio Fontana: Bronze/Terracotta* attempts to recreate an imaginary dialogue between the two artists: Günther Förg's bronze paintings were inspired by Fontana's ceramics, the physicality of his bronze works resonating the idea of Fontana's terracotta, both artists questioning the idea of sculpture, painting and object-hood.

The exhibition showcases a series of works by the eclectic German artist Günther Förg, who was highly inspired by abstract influences and modernism, which represent the different ways in which the artist interacted with bronze. In the 'bronze paintings' the artist challenges and evolves from the stereotypical notion of canvas by using bronze as the base for these works: the result is that these dimensional pieces have an immersive character, where the painterly gesture combined with the physicality of bronze draws the viewer to a reflection on the sublime and sobriety. The question of how these pieces are defined as paintings rather than sculptures is brilliantly resolved by the artists idea of making each piece unique, the original plaster often destroyed in order to enhance the notion of uniqueness.

Works such as the cast bronze mask , inspired by the death masks, introduce a more sculptural and decorative element, which is key in the ceramic works by the Italian artist Lucio Fontana. Fontana is best known for his iconic slashed monochrome canvases 'Concetto Spaziale', so it is a pleasure to show works such as his early ceramics, which precede the works mentioned above, shedding new light on the practice of one of the founders of Spatialism.

Here his usual minimalist and rigorous approach to art is questioned by the artist himself, as through the roughly hand made ceramics he explores different ways of concretizing his research in uniting time and space, challenging in a modern key a more classical medium. The ceramics sit on the boundary between sculpture and craftsmanship: in some works the traits of his *concetto spaziale* are more recognizable, while others seem to act as a homage to his fascination with baroque.

Sadly Günther Förg passed away on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 and we would like to dedicate *Günther Förg/ Lucio Fontana: Bronze/Terracotta* to his memory.

## Gunther Förg

Günther Förg (1952–2013) was born in Füssen, Germany in 1952. His work has been shown in important institutions such as Museum Brandhorst, Munich, Germany (2014); Museo Carlo Bilotti, Rome, Italy (2013); Fountain Beyeler, Basel (2009); Langen Foundation in Neuss (2007); Kunstmuseum Basel (2006); Gemeentemuseum The Hague (2006); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2002); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía/Palacio de Velázquez, Madrid (1998); Toyko Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (1991); Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach (1989) and SFMoMa, San Francisco (1989). Works by Förg are part of major museum collections such as the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam); National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa); Museum für Moderne Kunst (Frankfurt); Ludwig Museum (Cologne); Tate Modern (London); Museum of Modern Art (NY); SFMoMa (San Francisco) and Hamburger Bahnhof-Museum für Gegenwart (Berlin).

## Lucio Fontana

Lucio Fontana (1899–1968) was born in Rosario de Santa Fé, Argentina and raised in Milan. His first major international retrospective was held at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1977. Museum exhibitions include: *Lucio Fontana: Retrospective*, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, France (2014), *Lucio Fontana: Venice/New York*, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2006–07); *Lucio Fontana: Alle Radici Dello Spazialismo*, Italian Cultural Institute, New York (2006); Hayward Gallery, London (1999); *Lucio Fontana. Entre Materia y Espacio*, La Fundación 'la Caixa' and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (1998); Fondazione Lucio Fontana, Milan (1999); Kunsthalle Frankfurt, (1996).