

CONTEMPORARY ECHOES: REDISCOVERING ITALIAN ART FROM 1950-1980, ARTWORKS FROM THE BFF COLLECTION

An exploration of divergent expressions and common threads

Milan, New York, 5 February 2024 – **BFF Banking Group** is delighted to unveil its latest endeavor, the art exhibition "*Contemporary Echoes: Rediscovering Italian Art from 1950-1980, Artworks from the BFF Collection*", in partnership with International Arts and Artists.

Curated by Renato Miracco and presented in New York City and Washington, DC, the exhibition sheds light on the intrinsic relationships between American and Italian artists between 1950 and 1980, exploring mutual influences and developments during this period. For instance, Alberto Burri and Robert Rauschenberg had multiple encounters, with Rauschenberg presenting Burri with one of his early "*feticci*" (boxes) during their meeting in 1953. In their ongoing dialogue, Burri perceives materials as personages, reflecting human existence like a mirror. In stark contrast, Rauschenberg's approach involved materials that aimed to dismantle the dominant role of the individual, serving as a mirror for the commodification of human beings. This serves as just one illustration of the exhibition's exploration and unveiling of artistic research.

The exhibition features twenty-four works by ten prominent Italian artists: Valerio Adami, Franco Angeli, Enrico Baj, Alberto Burri, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Mario Ceroli, Piero Dorazio, Gio' Pomodoro, Mario Schifano, and Emilio Tadini.

Inspired by the book "*Italian and American Art - An Interaction - 1930s – 1980s*", the exhibition serves as a captivating exploration linking the artistic journeys of Italian and American artists, drawing inspiration from the bank's art collection dating back to the late 1980s.

Twentieth-century Italian art often remains obscured in terms of its origins and historical context. Curator **Renato Miracco** expresses, "*From this perspective, we must see the attempts on one side, the Italian one, to find a vital and confrontational space, and on the other, the American one, a desire for ancestral roots.*"

The exhibition employs both textual and visual mediums to delve into the ways Italian art embraced the allure of American art and vice versa, fostering mutual knowledge. Miracco further states, "*The process of redefinition and clarification immediately brings to light unknown alphabets we need to learn.*"

Massimiliano Belingheri, CEO of BFF Banking Group, adds: *"This initiative is a way of sharing a part of our cultural heritage with society at large, in the hope that it can contribute to the enrichment of common understanding and help promote art as a means of development available to all"*.

"Contemporary Echoes" follows the success of the touring exhibition *"Art Factor – The Pop Legacy in Post War Italian Art"*, which visited various European cities and will conclude in the bank's new headquarters in Milan set to open in autumn 2024.

The book *"Italian and American Art - An Interaction - 1930s – 1980s"*, published and distributed by 5 Continents Editions, supports the American leg of the exhibition. Focusing on the interaction and mutual fascination between Italian art and American art, the publication centers around an extensive essay by art historian, critic and curator Renato Miracco, with insights from the Italian Ambassador to Washington, Mariangela Zappia, and the curator of the BFF collection, Maria Alicata. It has been available in Italian bookshops since January 2024 and will be available in the U.S. and Canada starting March 2024.

"Contemporary Echoes: Rediscovering Italian Art from 1950-1980, Artworks from the BFF Collection" is made possible under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as well as the Italian Ministry of Culture. The exhibition is free of charge as part of BFF's commitment to sharing and promoting art widely.

The exhibition is scheduled to be on view in New York, NY from February 28 to March 28, 2024 and in Washington, DC from April 5 to June 2, 2024.

For additional information please visit:

<https://athillyer.org/contemporary-echoes/>

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About the Curator, Renato Miracco

Renato Miracco is an art historian, critic, and curator. He has been Director "per chiara fama" of the Italian Cultural Institute in New York, Cultural Attaché at the Italian Embassy to the United States and Member of the Board of Guarantors at the Italian Academy at Columbia University. Miracco has curated over 87 exhibitions worldwide, including: an anthological exhibition on Giorgio Morandi at the Metropolitan Museum, New York; the Burri, Fontana, and Manzoni exhibition at the Tate Modern, London; an anthological exhibition dedicated to Giacomo Balla at the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (Brazil); and a retrospective of Italian art of the 1950s

and 1960s at the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC. He is currently the Guest Curator at the Phillips Collection (Washington, DC) where he recently curated a monographic exhibition on Giuseppe De Nittis, which was considered among the ten best exhibitions between the U.S. and Europe in 2023.

About International Arts & Artists

International Arts & Artists (IA&A) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally through exhibitions, programs and services to artists, arts institutions and the public.

About BFF Banking Group

BFF Banking Group is the largest speciality finance provider in Italy and a leading player in Europe for Factoring and Lending services towards Public Administrations; in Italy, it is also the leading name in securities services and corporate payment services. The Group operates in nine countries in Europe.

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