

VEDOVI GALLERY

BIG BANG

April 20 – June 23, 2023



Ugo Rondinone, *SUNRISE. west. september.*
2004, Cast aluminium, 60 x 101 x 35 cm /
23 5/8 x 39 3/4 x 13 3/4 in

Vedovi Gallery is pleased to announce 'BIG BANG', a new exhibition featuring a curated selection of works in metal made during the 20th Century up to the present day.

This presentation illustrates the myriad ways in which the medium of metal has been configured and reconfigured, while demonstrating how periods of artistic output inform the next, in doing so ignite chain reactions within the history of sculpture.

As catalysts in the explosive advancement of contemporary art as it is defined today, the works gathered in this survey exemplify an energy which fuelled creative innovation of the past into the period of present. Artists on view include Carl Andre, Walead Beshty, Pol Bury, Alexander Calder, Cesar, George Condo, Max Ernst, Mark Handforth, Gabriel Kuri, Sherrie Levine, Adam McEwen, Man Ray, Ugo Rondinone and Franz West.

On-going material investigation spurs artistic innovation. From the ubiquity of the everyday to the objects therein Man Ray's reinterpretation of the benign to the status of art is exemplified in *Le fer rouge* (1966). An iron with its surface painted red is rendered beautified by the artist's elevating of formal aesthetics, much like how one might apply a fresh coat of lipstick.

contact@vedovigallery.com
www.vedovigallery.com

11 bd de Waterloo
1000 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 513 38 38
Fax: +32 2 513 39 54

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Gabriel Curry's *Self-portrait* (2014) as a whole over a whole divided in full distribution loop reaches through the historical trajectory of Ray's found object sculpture to source beauty from the mundane. Here, the artist explores the physical integrity of objects by combining technique with material to question how function versus form is represented. In exemplifying the almost-invisible features of our shared environment, Mark Handforth's enigmatic sculptural assemblage *Red hydrant* (2004) operates between shrine and a celebratory object, made as a tribute to the first responders of the 9/11 tragedy. The juxtaposition of candles with the American fire hydrant inverts the object's use from the civic to the domestic.

Capturing the energy of an expanding field of sculpture, artists initiated a sense of functionality as conceptual additive to materials of making. Franz West developed his whimsical sculptural sensibility as an anti-thesis to post-war brutality. The artist's colourful and irreverent sculptures, exemplified in *Sitzskulptur* (2004), were intended to defy the preciousness of the art object by being intentionally interactive, in the case his work on exhibit, as an opportunity to sit. Where the fragility of the artwork is undermined in West, Walead Beshty underscored the globalized infrastructures required to move objects across distances. Polished copper has an ability to register manipulation on its surface which is exemplified in Beshty's *16-inch Copper (Fedex Kraft Box)* (2010). The marks of handling across international distances imbue the minimalist form with a history of touches. Carl Andre's minimal formal language, known as floor-works, reduce art down to its very elemental properties of material alloy. *6 CuAl LINE* (2005) continues this pursuit in polished metal squares, as surfaces intended to be experienced by being walked on.

Sherrie Levine's *Antelope Skull* (2006) captures the artist's interrogation of redundancy. Emblematic of a hunter's trophy, the artist casts a discarded skull in bronze, elevating the kitsch emblem of the hunt into the arena of classical sculpture. Further examining the mythic qualities of this traditional material, George Condo's bust of *The Linden Boy* (2002) speaks to the past while César's *Expansion murale* (1970) explores the intrinsic quality of the solid object. Here the form is visualized as a compacted material gushing outwards, describing the artist's life-long pursuit of Nouveau Réalisme sculpture.

As an exhibition curated under the premise of exponential development in the field of sculpture, 'BIG BANG' brings together expanded perspectives on form and material exploration within the confines of three-dimensional space. Artists such as Alexander Calder, Tony Cragg, Ugo Rondinone and Pol Bury equally placemark pivotal ideas in the progression of material form in sculpture. The exhibition as a whole lends itself to the infinite possibilities of sculpture as an ever-expanding universe of creative innovation.

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