POSTWAR. ITALIAN PROTAGONISTS
February 23– April 15 2013
Curated by Luca Massimo Barbero

Lucio Fontana (1899-1968), Piero Dorazio (1927-2005), Enrico Castellani (b. 1930), Paolo Scheggi (1940-1971) and Rodolfo Aricó (1930-2002) are the five pioneering artists of the exhibition Postwar. Italian Protagonists, at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection from 23 February until 15 April 2013. Curated by Luca Massimo Barbero, the exhibition is a re-reading of Italian art in the wake of the Informel painting that prevailed in the 1950s. The ‘protagonists’ brought the Italian art scene to an international public with a pictorial language specific to the early 60s, a new painting using the power of color and the iconography of the monochrome as defining visual and conceptual elements. The exhibition unfolds chronologically, showcasing the experimentation of each artist as, departing from the work of Lucio Fontana, these new generations developed a personal language at a critical moment of their artistic practice between the 60s and 70s.

Postwar. Italian Protagonists offers the public two moments of special interest. Tribute is paid to Paolo Scheggi, a Tuscan artist who died young and whose experimentation and profound artistic sensibilities are rediscovered here. Among his eight works on display is Intersuperficie curva bianca (1963), recently donated to the museum by Franca and Cosima Scheggi. The spotlight is also shone on Rodolfo Aricò in two rooms which, together with an accompanying publication of his artistic production from the 1960s, were made possible by the collaboration of the Archivio Rodolfo Aricò.

Lucio Fontana opens the exhibition, as a father figure in Italian and international post-war and contemporary art. Concetto Spaziale (1951) and Concetto Spaziale (1957), recent donations to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, exemplify respectively the monochromatic ground of Fontana’s “buchi” (holes) and his more matière based work, which together lead us to the vestiges of Informel in Quanta (1960), a masterly work loaned by the Fondazione Lucio Fontana in Milan. Its nine red three-dimensional shapes form a kind of constellation of cuts and holes which anticipate the shaped canvases of American art in the same period. In its conceptual essentialism this work sets up a contrapuntal dialogue with Fontana’s ceramics of the 50s, three plates suspended between the Baroque and the great explosion of Art Informel.

The exhibition proceeds with a selection of five works by Piero Dorazio, one of the founders of Italian abstract painting, centered upon his artistic practice between 1962 and 1965. His optical and structural lattices expand across the canvas in paintings such as Antelucano (1962), demonstrating the clarity of a rigorous symbolic system articulated in line and especially color. Dorazio’s abstract style is strongly characterized in Mar Maraviglia (1962) and Unitas (1965, Peggy Guggenheim Collection), focal point of this second gallery together with Durante l’Incertezza (1965), a canvas of monumental proportions (225 x 320 cm) that functions as a kind of response to the mural-sized works of contemporary American painting and testifies to the artist’s continuous dialogue with the U.S. scene.
Surface, synthesis and objectification are represented in the room dedicated to Enrico Castellani, a major figure in contemporary Italian art, co-founder of the journal Azimuth with Piero Manzoni. After his early Informel experiments, Castellani, together with Manzoni, instigated the total revision of his artistic practice with the use of monochrome canvases, often completely white and ‘extroflexed’ (with extruded points and zones) in such a way as to create iridescent lights and shadows that alter according to the angle of the light source. The Castellani room provokes the gaze of the viewer with the hypnotic Superficie angolare rossa (1961), loaned by the Archivio Castellani, Milan, displayed alongside Superficie bianca (1967) and Superficie bianca (1974), here exhibited to the public for the first time.

The gallery dedicated to Paolo Scheggi offers an intensely original display which brings the Tuscan artist’s innovative visual research to the attention of the wider public. One wall shows the three white superimposed canvases of Intersuperfici in counterpoint with the three black-hued Intersuperfici. A strong chromatic impact is created by Intersuperfici Curva Arancio (1969) and Intersuperfici curva rossa, hung at opposite ends of the room. The title Intersuperfici refers to three superimposed canvases, pierced by circular and elliptical openings. It refers to the play of the viewer’s gaze over the different planes. The characteristic monochrome represents the link both to Fontana’s experiments and to those of the generations born in the 1930s and 40s: a language through which the artist put behind him the expressive implications of the Informel, returning to the wellsprings of the historic avant-gardes. In tandem with this rediscovery of Scheggi at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, the Centro per l’arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci of Prato will host, from 23 March 2013, a monographic exhibition entitled Paolo Scheggi. Intercamera plastica e altre storie on the occasion of Franca and Cosima Scheggi’s donation of the work Intercamera plastica (1967) to the Tuscan museum.

The exhibition closes with Rodolfo Aricò, whose work is characterized by a rational and expressive syntax of structural rigour and chromatic sensibility. The two dedicated rooms focus on works of 1966-70 which witnessed the definition of his signature ‘object-paintings’: shaped canvases that Aricò developed in dialogue with international explorations of expressive reduction, from the Post-painterly abstraction of Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland to the Minimalism of Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt. Aricò’s forms originate from a fresh meditation on European visual culture of the past: a progression in reverse, which departs from the historical avant-gardes of the early 20th century to arrive at the perspectival Renaissance painting of Paolo Uccello, to whom tribute is paid in the work Studio 2. Paolo Uccello (1970). The return of Aricò’s work to Venice renews his connection to a city that hosted several important moments in his career, from the retrospective at Palazzo Grassi (1974) to his recurring participation in the Venice Biennale of Art (1964, 1968, 1980 and 1986).

The exhibition is supported by the Veneto Region and Intrapresae Collezione Guggenheim. The organizers are grateful for the collaboration of the Corriere della Sera and to Radio Italia as media partner. Hangar Design Group designed the exhibition’s publicity materials.
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PAOLO SCHEGGI (1940-1971)

“Your paintings that are so profoundly black, red, and white please me,” wrote Lucio Fontana to Paolo Scheggi in 1962, recognizing in the young man an artist capable of expressing the anxieties, even fears, of his own times. Constructed of three overlapping canvases, penetrated with elliptical or circular openings, his works were titled Intersuperfici, referring to the path the eye follows as it traverses the various layers of the work, alluding in this way to the interaction between the viewer and the pictorial layering. At the same time, the monochrome that characterizes these works are a link both to the work of Fontana’s the generation of artists born between the 1930s and 1940s, and to the need to move beyond the widespread language of the Art informel, by way of a reversion to the sources of the contemporary in the historical avant-garde.

White, together with light and shadow, delimits the two large elliptic openings with rounded corners of Intersuperfici curva bianca “Zone riflesse” (1963), which was selected for exhibition in 44 protagonisti della visualità strutturata, in 1964. Painted two years later, Intersuperfici curva bianca has three irregular ellipses that appear with seeming randomness in the various layers of canvas. In 1966 Murilo Mendes wrote that the 1968 Intersuperfici curva bianca seemed capable of “igniting/animating/situating/isolating a wall,” testimony of the spatial tension in Scheggi’s studies: indeed, a year earlier, the curved walls of the Intercamera plastica were bright yellow, creating a setting comparable in its color to Intersuperfici curva dall’arancia. Inviting the viewer to shift from perception to contemplation, this work of 1969 seems also to communicate with the helical sinuosity of the Intersuperfici curva dal rosso that is placed opposite. Finally, it is the color black that condenses on the three Intersuperfici that, as if being reflected in their opposite, delineate with a similar intensity an ideal path in Scheggi’s research, destined to mature in a mythical language in which white, black and red continue play a fundamental role, as symbols and archetypes of man’s perception of all space and time.

After studying in London, Paolo Scheggi moved to Milan in 1961 where he met his contemporaries and aroused the interest of Lucio Fontana, who from 1962 attentively followed his career. The transition from the early works of assembled metal sheets and collaged materials of the late 1950s and early 1960s to the Intersuperfici was rapid: the latter are monochrome works characterized by three overlapping canvases with elliptical or circular openings. It was with one of these, in white, that Scheggi was invited to the exhibit in 44 protagonisti della visualità strutturata, curated by Carlo Belloli at the Galleria Lorenzelli in Milan in 1964. A year later Gillo Dorfles selected him as one of the exponents of Pittura Oggetto, and Umbro Apollonio and Germano Celant became interested in his work. In 1965 Scheggi joined the nove tendencje-New Tendencies movement, and was in contact with the Nul and Zero groups. By this time enjoying international renown, in 1966 Scheggi was invited to exhibit in the 33rd Venice Biennale and in Weiss auf Weiss, curated by Harald Szeemann at the Bern Kunsthalle; in 1967 he exhibited in the V Biennale des Jeunes Artistes in Paris, Lo spazio dell’Immagine in Palazzo Trinci in Foligno and the Exposition International des Beaux Arts de Montreal; and the following year in Public Eye in Hamburg, and at the Teatro delle mostre in Galleria la Tartaruga in Rome. Despite the brevity of
his career Scheggi mingled a variety of visual languages, and as early as 1964 his research extended to the field of architecture: he worked as model builder for the Nizzoli Associati office and designed a new Milanese fashion house for Germana Marucelli. After these early “gratifying [vivibili] experiences of plastic integration in architecture” he designed and constructed the Intercamera plastica, first displayed in the Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, in January 1967. In 1968 Scheggi initiated his research in the theater, transcending the traditional space of the gallery and expanding into the city: examples of this are Marcia Funebre o della geometria for the event Campo Urbano in Como and the performance Oplà Stick that traveled from Milan and Zagabria to Florence in 1969. Finally, in 1970-71, he adopted a mythical-political perspective, studying relations with religious, anthropological and symbolic forms of art, and participated in exhibitions such as Amore mio and Vitalità del negativo, both of which took place in 1970. Tomba della geometria and 6profetiper6geometrie were exhibited in 1972 at the 36th Venice Biennale: Scheggi had already been dead one year, bequeathing to the history of art outstanding examples of far reaching research and a profound sensitivity.
RODOLFO ARICÒ (Milan, 1930-2002)

Rodolfo Aricò was a major figure of Italian art in the second half of the 20th century. His work is characterized by a rational and expressive syntax that combined structural rigor and chromatic sensitivity. The works exhibited here date from 1966 to 1970 in which his characteristic ‘object painting’ was defined: shaped canvases that the artist matured in an active dialogue with the international tendency towards expressive reduction in this period, from the Post-Painterly Abstraction of Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland, and the structural and primary volumes of Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt’s Minimalism. In this context Aricò offered an exquisitely European reflection that focused on the ‘coordinates’ of the portrayal and construction of space: from axonometry to perspective, the artist explored these via the creation of an intuitive geometry that was deliberately ambiguous and vivified by a refined chromatic richness—a chance of primary forms that is also a spatial, dimensional and chromatic study manifestly and deliberately unstable and indefinable (evident also in titles such as Anomaly and Orphic Box), merging painting and object.

The origin of Aricò’s forms was a wide-ranging contemporary meditation on European visual culture: a backwards view that began with the historical avant-gardes of the beginning of the 20th century—Robert Delaunay’s Orphic and dynamic Cubism that inspired Arico’s first circular forms, and Kazimir Malevich’s deforming Suprematism, that complicated geometric shapes in orthogonal and fugitive forms—and ended with Paolo Uccello’s Renaissance perspective painting. In these works, the optical illusion that results from the projection of the form is derived from a complex relationship between structure and color. It evokes the identity of painting as the construction of possible spaces: the vanishing point is always outside the work, thus invading and activating the surrounding area while the dense, stratified color may have no reference to nature or symbol but is conceived as an intensity of light, giving the surface a dynamic, indefinite identity.

In 1958 Aricò met Carlo Grossetti who the following year presented his first solo exhibition at the Salone Annunciata in Milan. In 1965, Roberto Sanesi dedicated a book to Aricò’s work titled Reperti: per uno studio sulla pittura di Rodolfo Aricò. In the same year Aricò took part in the 9th Rome Quadriennale, resulting in the purchase by the Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna of Work in Progress. Le “simultanee forme” di Delaunay. In 1967 he was given a solo exhibition at the Galleria L’Attico in Rome. In 1968 he was awarded a room at the 34th Venice Biennale, in which he created an environment of large works that were clear evidence of the structural nature of his ‘painting-objects’. In 1969, he was given a solo exhibition at the Deson-Zacks Gallery in Chicago. In the 1970s Aricò’s work veered towards the reinterpretation of his humanistic vision of the history of art and architectural archetypes, expressed in thinly-sprayed paintings with various superimposed layers of paint that generated a monochromatic finish. In 1974, he was given a retrospective exhibition at the Palazzo Grassi in Venice. In 1977 the Comune of Ferrara gave him a retrospective exhibition in the Padiglione d’Arte Contemporanea in the Parco Massari. In 1980 at the Casa del Mantegna in Mantua he held an exhibition that investigated the relations between architecture, painting and myth. The 1980s saw the crumbling of the regular geometry that had
characterized the previous decades in favor of an increasingly articulated metamorphosis of contours and surfaces. In 1982, Aricò was invited to the 40th Venice Biennale, Arti Visive ‘82 section, in which he exhibited Clinamen/Prometheus. In 1986 Aricò exhibited at the 42nd Venice Biennale, Il colore section, with Structure (1968). During the 1990s he programmed a series of solo exhibitions in which he began a relation with space that was increasingly physical and corporeal, as the drama of an uninterrupted materiality undergoing implosion and explosion. In 1994 he took part in the exhibition Venezia e la Biennale at the Galleria d’Arte Moderna Ca’ Pesaro in Venice. In 1997, at the A arte Studio Invernizzi in Milan, he exhibited spiritually charged works titled Evenings in which canvas and color become one in such a way as to constitute existential presences in their grandiose objectiveness. In 2001 the Galleria Spazio Annunciata in Milan held his last solo exhibition.
FACT SHEET

TITLE
POSTWAR. Italian Protagonists

VENUES AND DATES
Peggy Guggenheim Collection
February 23 – April 15, 2013

EXHIBITED WORKS
37

CURATORS
Luca Massimo Barbero

OVERVIEW
The exhibition pays tribute to five artists whose pictorial language has left a very personal mark on the history of postwar Italian art, Lucio Fontana (1899-1968), Piero Dorazio (1927-2005), Enrico Castellani (b. 1930), Paolo Scheggi (1940-1971) and Rodolfo Aricò (1930-2002). This exhibition is a re-reading of Italian art in the wake of the Informel painting that prevailed in the 1950s. The 'protagonists' brought the Italian art scene to an international public with a pictorial language specific to the early 60s, a new painting using the power of color and the iconography of the monochrome as defining visual and conceptual elements. The exhibition unfolds chronologically, showcasing the experimentation of each artist as, departing from the work of Lucio Fontana, these new generations developed a personal language at a critical moment of their artistic practice between the 60s and 70s.

ADMISSION TICKET TO THE COLLECTION
Regular euro 14; seniors euro 11 (over 65); students euro 8 (under 26 or with a student ID card); children 0-10 yrs and members free entrance (further information on membership: membership@guggenheim-venice.it).

Opening tickets allow the public to visit the temporary exhibition, the permanent collection, the Hannelore B. and Rudolph B. Schulhof Collection, the Gianni Mattioli Collection and the Nasher Sculpture Garden. Free guided tours of the temporary exhibitions are daily at 3:30 pm. Reservations are not required.

OPENING HOURS
Daily from 10 am to 6 pm, closed on Tuesday and December 25

INFORMATION
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HOW TO ARRIVE
From Piazzale Roma - Ferrovia (train station): vaporetto no. 2 towards Lido, get off at the Accademia stop (25 minutes); vaporetto no. 1 towards Lido, get off at the Accademia stop (30 minutes); Vaporetto dell’Arte, Accademia stop / From St. Mark’s Square: vaporetto no. 1, 2 towards Piazzale Roma-Ferrovia, get off at Accademia stop (5 minutes).

COMUNICATION AND PRESS OFFICE
Alexia Boro, Maria Rita Cerilli / tel. 041.2405404/415
Please, once published, send the article to: press@guggenheim-venice.it
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<td>Tempera and India ink on cardboard, 49.5 x 146 cm. Courtesy Studio la Città, Verona</td>
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<td><strong>Battle</strong>, 1951</td>
<td>Polychrome ceramic, 51 cm in diameter. Courtesy Studio la Città, Verona and Galleria Tonelli, Milan</td>
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<td><strong>Spatial Concept</strong>, 1951</td>
<td>Oil on canvas, 85.1 x 66 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Venice. Hannelore B. and Rudolph B. Schulhof Collection, bequest of Hannelore B. Schulhof, 2012</td>
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<td><strong>Spatial Concept</strong>, 1957</td>
<td>Oil on canvas, 115.6 x 88.9 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Venice. Hannelore B. and Rudolph B. Schulhof Collection, bequest of Hannelore B. Schulhof, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spatial Concept, The Quanta</strong>, 1960</td>
<td>Water based paint on canvas, with cuts and holes, red; nine elements; overall dimensions vary with installation. Lucio Fontana Foundation, Milan</td>
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| **Lucio Fontana**  
*Spatial Concept*, 1957  
Terracotta, 22 cm in height  
Private Collection, Venice |
|---|
| **Lucio Fontana**  
*Horsem*, 1955  
Polychrome ceramic, 52 cm in diameter  
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| **STANZA 2**  
**PIERO DORAZIO** |
| **Piero Dorazio**  
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Oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm  
Courtesy Lorenzelli Arte, Milan |
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*Marmaraviglia*, 1962  
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Courtesy Fondazione Marconi, Milan |
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**STANZA 3**  
**ENRICO CASTELLANI**

| **Enrico Castellani**  
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Collection of the artist |
|---|

| **Enrico Castellani**  
*White Surface*, 1967  
Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 180 x 8 cm  
Private collection, Milan |
|---|

| **Enrico Castellani**  
*White Surface*, 1974  
Acrylic on canvas, 145,5 x 96,5 x 8 cm  
Giuliana Soprani Dorazio Collection |
|---|

| **Enrico Castellani**  
*Blue Surface*, 1977  
Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 x 8 cm  
Private collection, Milan |
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**STANZA 4**  
**PAOLO SCHEGGI**

| **Paolo Scheggi**  
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Acrylic on multiple canvases, 60 x 80 cm  
|---|
| Paolo Scheggi | Zone riflesse, 1964  
|              | Acrylic on multiple canvases, 60 x 60 cm  
|              | Koelliker Collection, inv. LKPS0020 |
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| Paolo Scheggi | Intersuperficie curva nera, 1965  
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| Paolo Scheggi | Intersuperficie curva bianca, 1968  
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Oil on canvas, 60 x 40 cm  
Courtesy A arte Studio Invernizzi |
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| Rodolfo Aricò | Untitled, 1967  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 40 cm  
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Oil on canvas, 60 x 40 cm  
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Oil on canvas, 262 x 200 cm  
Courtesy A arte Studio Invernizzi |
### STANZA 6

**RODOLFO ARICÒ**

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<th>Title</th>
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<td>Dark Axonometry, 1970</td>
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<td>Rodolfo Aricò</td>
<td>The Obscure Object of Paolo Uccello, 1970</td>
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