

ARTFORUM

Pier Paolo Calzolari

GALERIE KAMEL MENNOUR | 47 RUE SAINT-ANDRÉ DES ARTS
47 rue Saint-André des arts
September 14–October 26

Nearly two decades after his last solo show in Paris, Pier Paolo Calzolari is making a long-overdue reappearance. The reclusive *poverista*'s current exhibition spreads across Kamel Mennour's two spacious showrooms (christening the gallery's new location, just a few blocks from the flagship) with a stunning forty-five-year survey.

At the Saint-André des Arts space, key works from the 1960s and '70s introduce Calzolari's essential materials—metals, eggs, leaves, salt, moss, and frost (which he creates using refrigeration units). *Senza titolo (Lasciare il posto)* (Untitled [Leaving the Place]), 1972, centers on a large bright-blue monochrome horizontally bisected by a gold thread suspended in front of the canvas. Below the painting, a frost-encrusted copper shelf supports an audio speaker and glass pitcher filled with water and a floating egg. Originally all of this served as the backdrop for a live reading from Vasari's *Lives*. (Here the audio component is a tape recording.) Quintessential Calzolari—and well beyond Arte Povera—this work integrates contrasting styles (symbolism and abstraction), media (in 2-D and 3-D), and materials (natural elements and mechanical processes) while making wide-ranging art-historical references, from Il Sodoma to Yves Klein and from the modernist grid to performance art.

A more recent blend of abstraction, allegory, ephemerality, and physicality is on view at the rue du Pont de Lodi space, particularly in *Untitled (Iron pall – Tealights – Copper pall)*, 1989–90. Initially commissioned for a church (though never installed), the massive metallic triptych is fittingly mounted under a peaked skylight.

Flickering candles line the bottom of the central “altar” while the flanking panels, which are scored with intersecting perpendicular lines that read as two giant crosses, are framed by frost. Elsewhere, Calzolari's performative side lives on. An installation of seven iPad Minis (*Camei – Esquisses à propos de l'oeuf, des oiseaux, des remerciements et des souvenirs* [Camei - Sketches: about the egg, birds, acknowledgements and souvenir], 2003–13) presents various tableaux vivants featuring French artist Marie Cool interacting with eggs, birds, and books. Although this new technology initially seems at odds with the artist's oft-cited Franciscan inspiration, the “sketches”—mostly slow, repetitive actions filmed in his studio—underscore the importance of ceremony, nature, and humanity in Calzolari's work.

This exhibition is also on view at Kamel Mennour, 6 rue du Pont de Lodi, until October 26.

— Mara Hoberman



Pier Paolo Calzolari, *Senza titolo (Lasciare il posto)* (Untitled [Leaving the Place]), 1972, tempera grassa on canvas, refrigeration unit, copper, glass, egg, audio recorder, refrigerator motor, lead, gold thread, dimensions variable. Installation view.

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