

7 August 2025

# MAGAZZINO ITALIAN ART

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Installation view, 'Piero Manzoni.  
Materials of His Time', Hauser & Wirth  
Los Angeles, 2019  
© Fondazione Piero Manzoni, Milano  
Courtesy Fondazione Piero Manzoni,  
Milan and Hauser & Wirth.  
Photo: Mario de Lopez



## Magazzino Italian Art to Present an Exceptional Gift—Two Visionary Installations by Piero Manzoni—in *PIERO MANZONI: TOTAL SPACE*, Opening September 8, 2025

**Realizations of Projects Conceived in 1961 Are Gifts of Fondazione Piero Manzoni,  
Milan, and Hauser & Wirth**

[Link to Press Kit](#)

Cold Spring, New York (August 7, 2025)—Magazzino Italian Art today announced that through the extraordinary generosity of Fondazione Piero Manzoni in Milan and Hauser & Wirth, it has received the gift of two room-size immersive environments conceived by Manzoni in 1961, at a date when conceptualism and installation art were only starting to appear on the art world's horizon. Magazzino will unveil these exceptional gifts, accompanied by a contextual selection of works by Manzoni on loan from American collections, in the exhibition *Piero Manzoni: Total Space*, opening to the public on Monday, September 8, 2025.

Nancy Olnick and Giorgio Spanu, co-founders of Magazzino, said, "We are grateful to the Fondazione Manzoni and Hauser & Wirth for entrusting these major gifts to Magazzino, where they can now be seen in the company of the museum's extensive collection of Arte Povera. Through their generosity, the donors have recognized Magazzino as the primary institution in North America for collecting, exhibiting, and studying the cutting-edge Italian art of the postwar era."

Rosalia Pasqualino di Marineo, Director of Fondazione Piero Manzoni, said, "These visionary projects by Manzoni have only recently made the transition from pure idea to physical reality. Now that they have been achieved with the assistance of Hauser & Wirth, more than half a century after they were imagined, we are happy that the ideal permanent home for them is Magazzino Italian Art."

Adam Sheffer, Director of Magazzino, said, "Despite his brief career, Piero Manzoni was among the most innovative, ironic and restlessly inventive young artists in Italy, if not the world. We are proud to exhibit the wonderful gift of these two environments in tandem with several of the *Achromes* works that preceded them, in which Manzoni broke with the tradition of painting in favor of an art of 'total space', where materials, form, and presence eclipse the superficial and open new conceptual dimensions."

In 1957, searching for what he described as a "new language" and "total transformation," Piero Manzoni began to create *Achromes*: works made of gesso on canvas, in which white had no allusive or symbolic value but was a colorless surface. As he continued the series,

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he experimented further with the construction of “neutral” spaces using materials that included kaolin, cotton wool, polystyrene, synthetic fibers, and fur.

Envisioning a next step in an art of “total space,” he wrote in 1961 to his friend the Dutch artist Henk Peeters (1925–2013) of his wish to create an artwork that would be a room of white fur, and another artwork that would be a room coated in white fluorescent paint. These projects were unrealized at the time of Manzoni’s death in 1963, at age 29.

Another aspect of Manzoni’s exploration of the boundaries between artwork and spectator is the *Base magica* (*Magic Base*), a pedestal conceived in 1961 to transform reality itself into art. By stepping onto it, any person is elevated to the status of a sculpture. With this work, Manzoni questioned the conventions of authorship, permanence, and the hierarchy of artistic objects, turning the simple act of presence into a work of art. For this exhibition, Magazzino presents an exhibition copy of the *Base magica*, authorized by the Fondazione Piero Manzoni. Installed in the evocative isotropic cube of the Robert Olnick Pavilion, the work will allow visitors to experience firsthand the artist’s original intent, participating directly in the process of transformation that makes every individual, if only for a moment, a living work of art. As art critic and historian Germano Celant wrote in 1975: “Manzoni does not use, but exalts, the body and the individual as living sculptures.”

In 2019, Rosalia Pasqualino di Marineo curated the exhibition *Piero Manzoni: Materials of His Time* at Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles. For the exhibition, Hauser & Wirth and Fondazione Piero Manzoni commissioned New York-based architect Stephanie Goto to realize the two rooms that Manzoni had imagined. The rooms were subsequently exhibited at Hauser & Wirth New York in the 2019 exhibition *Piero Manzoni: Lines, Materials of His Time*.

*Piero Manzoni: Total Space* will remain on view at Magazzino Italian Art through March 23, 2026. Public programs presented in conjunction with the exhibition will be announced at a later date.

Also on view with *Piero Manzoni: Total Space* will be the exhibition *Yoichi Ohira: Japan in Murano*, showcasing the work of Yoichi Ohira (1946–2022), the Japanese-born artist who became a leading figure in designing Venetian glassworks on the island of Murano, Italy. The exhibition will include approximately 60 works that showcase his masterful ability to blend Japanese influences with Italian traditions and his longstanding interest in abstracting from natural forms.

### About Piero Manzoni

Born in 1933 in Soncino, Italy, as Count Manzoni di Chiosca e Poggiolo, Piero Manzoni grew up in Milan and was self-taught as an artist. In 1956, he made his debut in Soncino and later at the San Fedele Painting Prize in Milan, where he exhibited his first paintings featuring anthropomorphic shapes. He began his exhibition activity, signed manifestos with other artists, and joined the Nuclear Art Movement. Between 1957 and 1958, he created his first *Achromes*, showed for the first time in the exhibition *Baj Manzoni Fontana* in Bologna. In 1959, with artist Enrico Castellani, he co-founded the journal *Azimuth* and Azimut gallery in Milan.

From 1959 Manzoni realized conceptual artworks like the *Linee* (*Lines*), and series of works focused on body and authorship: *Corpi d'aria* (*Bodies of Air*), balloons that could be inflated either by the artist himself—thus becoming *Fiato d'artista* (*Artist's Breath*)—or by anyone else. In 1960 he presented *Consumption of Art / Dynamic of the public / Devour Art*, a performance in which the audience ate hard-boiled eggs marked with his thumbprint. In 1961 he produced his best-known work, *Merda d'artista* (*Artist's Shit*), a series of 90 small, labeled, sealed cans whose asking price was pegged to the current value of gold. He died in his studio in Milan of a heart attack in 1963, at age 29.

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Manzoni's legacy is carried on by the Milan-based Fondazione Piero Manzoni, which was established by his family. Rosalia Pasqualino di Marineo, a niece of the artist, has served as Director of the Fondazione since 2009. She has curated numerous projects and exhibitions and edited or contributed to several books about Manzoni, most recently *Merda d'artista: That Scandalous Can* (2025).

### **About Magazzino Italian Art**

Magazzino Italian Art is a museum and research center dedicated to advancing scholarship and the public appreciation of postwar and contemporary Italian art and culture. Located in Cold Spring, New York, the museum was founded by Nancy Olnick and Giorgio Spanu in 2017.

Magazzino, meaning "warehouse" in Italian, was inaugurated with an exhibition dedicated to Margherita Stein, founder of the historic Galleria Christian Stein in Torino and a key advocate and supporter of the artists associated with Arte Povera.

Set within several landscaped acres of the Hudson Valley Highlands, Magazzino's first building, designed by Miguel Quismondo, houses the Museum's collection and a Research Center. In September 2023, the Museum inaugurated its Robert Olnick Pavilion, designed by architects Alberto Campo Baeza and Miguel Quismondo. This new building provides additional exhibition space, an Education Center, Spazio Aperto, The Store, and Café Silvia, serving Italian cuisine by Italian Chef Luca Galli.

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