

17 March 2025



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Jannis Kounellis, *Senza Titolo (Omaggio a Fontana)*, 1986

The Italian Cultural Institute of New York Partners with Magazzino Italian Art to Present the Exhibition *Dialogues Between Italy and America: Jannis Kounellis, Maria Lai and Lucio Pozzi*

A tightly focused exhibition that displays the New York premiere of a major work by each artist

Italian Cultural Institute
March 14, 2025–May 13, 2025

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New York, New York—The Italian Cultural Institute of New York today opened *Dialogues Between Italy and America: Jannis Kounellis, Maria Lai and Lucio Pozzi*, an exhibition focusing on three pioneering artists from Italy with ties to the United States. Organized by the Institute in collaboration with Magazzino Italian Art in Cold Spring, New York, and curated by Paola Mura, Magazzino's Artistic Director, in consultation with David Ebony, the exhibition represents each artist with a single work being shown in New York for the first time. Offering viewers an unusually intensive experience of the work of Kounellis, Lai and Pozzi, *Dialogues* also provides a capsule introduction to Magazzino's current programming and permanent collection, which are dedicated to advancing the study and appreciation of postwar and contemporary Italian art in the United States.

"Since its foundation in 2017, Magazzino Italian Art has introduced countless members of the North American public to the thriving culture of contemporary Italy—said the Consul General of Italy in New York Fabrizio Di Michele and Director a.i. of the Italian Cultural Institute—our collaboration with the Museum for this remarkable exhibition speaks not only to the close ties of our organizations, but also to those between Italy and the United States."

Nancy Olnick and Giorgio Spanu, co-founders of Magazzino Italian Art, said: "The three artists on view in this exhibition all forged lasting and significant relationships with colleagues and audiences in the United States—the kind of relationships that Magazzino is dedicated to fostering. We are proud to partner with the Italian Cultural Institute of New York to bring their work and our programming into the heart of Manhattan."

Envisioned as an echo of Magazzino's current offerings, *Dialogues Between Italy and America* draws inspiration from Umberto Eco's suggestion, introduced in his 2007 essay "The Museum of the Third Millennium," that a truly powerful museum experience results

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from experiencing single artworks. Maria Lai echoed this sentiment in 2004, stating, "A work of art should be seen for several days and looked at in silence and alone, in an empty space, which unfortunately no museum offers us."

The exhibition is arranged in three sections built around single, emblematic works by each artist, inviting visitors to pause, observe, and engage in a focused experience.

The works on view are:

- Jannis Kounellis's *Senza Titolo (Omaggio a Fontana)* from 1986, a large-scale work composed of five steel panels: four of them are clad in lead sheets, while one of them is painted with a vibrant, intense coat of red enamel. In an allusion to Italian artist Lucio Fontana's cut canvases, Kounellis worked incisions into the lead surface, transforming the material into a field of material and spatial tensions. With its monumental scale, the work creates a powerful visual and conceptual experience, evoking Kounellis's deep interest in maintaining a dialogue between past and present.
- Maria Lai's *Per Ille* (1984), an installation documenting her collaboration with singer Ille Strazza. In that year, Strazza performed an original melody inspired by Lai's stitched books. The performance took place on a stage designed by the artist: *Per Ille* includes Lai's scenic backdrop, which depicts a geography, along with the musical score stitched into paper with thread. Strazza's original music *Il canto dei sassi*, recorded during the 1984 performance, is also part of the installation. The work is on view in the Institute's Galleria Borghese, a space that evokes the atmosphere of a presbytery, further enhancing the liturgical associations of the piece.
- Lucio Pozzi's *Consular Relocations* were made specially for this exhibition. Currently celebrating his 90th birthday, Pozzi is known for his eclectic practice, which moves fluidly between abstraction and figuration across painting, sculpture, watercolor, photography, and performance. The new work consists of fourteen distinct yet interconnected elements, each named after a sea deity from Greco-Roman culture. Together, the elements express Pozzi's interest in spatial perception and the interplay of color, form, and structure.

The artworks on view correspond with major exhibitions and artworks currently on view at Magazzino, including the permanent collection dedicated to Arte Povera, of which Jannis Kounellis is one of the leading representatives *Maria Lai. A Journey to America* (through July 28) and *Lucio Pozzi: qui dentro / in here* (through June 23).

About the Italian Cultural Institute

The Italian Cultural Institute in New York was founded in 1961 by the Italian government. Its mission is to promote Italian language and culture in the United States.

Under the guidance of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Director and the staff of the IIC foster cultural exchanges in a variety of areas, from the arts to the humanities, to science and technology.

Central to the Italian Cultural Institute's activity is its collaboration with the most prominent academic and cultural Institutions of the East Coast. In particular, our focus is on the relationship between memory and innovation, opening a window on the different identities and main cultural and social aspects of past and current Italy.

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About Magazzino Italian Art

Magazzino Italian Art is a museum and research center dedicated to advancing scholarship and public appreciation of postwar and contemporary Italian art in the United States. Located in Cold Spring, New York, the museum was founded in 2014 by Nancy Olnick and Giorgio Spanu.

In 2017, the first building, designed by architect Miguel Quismondo and set within several landscaped acres of the Hudson Highlands, was inaugurated with an exhibition drawn from the Olnick Spanu Collection and dedicated to Margherita Stein, founder of the historic Galleria Christian Stein in Milan and a key advocate and supporter of the artists associated with Arte Povera.

Created as an educational not-for-profit museum, Magazzino Italian Art increased its indoor space by two-thirds in September 2023 by opening the freestanding Robert Olnick Pavilion designed by architects Alberto Campo Baeza and Miguel Quismondo and named in memory of philanthropist and art advocate Robert Olnick. This new building provides a multipurpose room with auditorium capabilities, a store, and Café Silvia serving Italian specialties.