

## ***Painting or how to get rid of it***



**11 June – 14 September 2014**

**French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici  
Grandes Galeries**

**Tuesday 10 June 2014**

press preview 11.30 a.m.

vernissage 6.30 p.m.- 8.30 p.m.

curated by **Éric de Chassey**

From 11 June to 14 September 2014, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici presents the group exhibition *Painting or how to get rid of it*, curated by Éric de Chassey. The exhibition brings together the works of four artists of different nationalities: Italian **Fabio Mauri** and American **Marcia Hafif** – who lived and worked in Rome – French **Martin Barré** and Swiss **Olivier Mosset** – who both lived in Paris for a long time.

The exhibition, whose title was inspired by Eugène Ionesco's play *Amedeus or how to get rid of him*, poses the question of the **end of painting** that has obsessed artists since the birth of abstractism at the beginning of the Twentieth century. In the 1960s, the logic of reducing painting to its primary components, which mark minimalism, asserts itself and leads to a form of art consisting of almost nothing, whose logical and inevitable consequence seems to be the death of painting. *Painting or how to get rid of it* reveals how much more complex these evolutions actually were.

Between 1959 and 1969, Fabio Mauri, Marcia Hafif, Martin Barré and Olivier Mosset took the logic of a progressive reduction and final disappearance of abstract painting to extremes in Rome and Paris. In the following years, they approached conceptual art or the 'performance', but unlike many of their contemporaries, they ended up by going back to painting without disowning their beginnings or their extra-pictorial experiences. The works on display cover three fundamental periods of their artistic

careers and the history of abstraction: abstract painting devoted to the disappearance of forms and colors, conceptual or performative works realized especially through films or photography, and finally, abstract paintings that refer to painting after the end of painting.

**Fabio Mauri** (Roma, 1926 - 2009)

Fabio Mauri is one of the masters of the Italian post World War II avant-garde. He lives between Bologna and Milan until 1957. Then he moves to Rome, the city of his birth. In 1942 he founds the magazine *Il Setaccio* (*The Sieve*) with Pier Paolo Pasolini. He teaches Aesthetics of Experimentation at the Academy of Fine Arts in Aquila for twenty years. In 1968, together with Balestrini, Sanguineti, Eco, Porta, Barilli, Filippini, Arbasino and others, he is one of the founders of "Quindici" ("Fifteen"), a review for the diffusion of culture. From the beginning of the 1970s and after his participation in the Venice Biennale in 1974, Fabio Mauri stops painting: his work on the relationship between image and ideology, realized with installations, scripting performances and gathering photographs, integrate painting only in an allusive manner, which reminds us of his *Schermi* (*Screens*) dating back to the 1960s in *What is Fascism?* or his installation *Entartete Kunst* (*Degenerate Art*) (1985).

**Marcia Hafif** (Pomona, California, 1929)

Following her studies in California, Marcia Hafif moves to Rome from 1961 to 1969, where she develops an abstract style of painting consisting of simple forms inscribed on brilliantly colored backgrounds which evolve into the dissolution of form in her spray paintings. Once back in the United States, in the 1970s the artist becomes known for her monochrome paintings that are realized in series, each exploring a mode of color. In her essay *Beginning Again* published in 1978, she defends her thesis on "the death of painting" and the predominance of abstraction in some of the greatest works of art of the Twentieth century. Numerous exhibitions have been dedicated to Marcia Hafif in Europe and the United States. The catalogue raisonné of her works was realized in Italy and published by Mamco, Geneva in 2010.

**Martin Barré** (Nantes, 1924 - Paris, 1993)

Martin Barré trains at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Nantes, where he studies architecture and painting. He moves to Paris in 1948. During the 1960s he becomes known on the Parisian scene (already dominated by Gestural Abstraction or Action Painting) for his minimalist canvases painted directly from the tube of color or a spray can (*Zèbres*). After abandoning painting from 1969 to 1972 in order to present works of conceptual art photography at the Galerie Daniel Templon (the first of this type in France), Barré returns to painting in series, playing on the concurrence of the codes of abstraction throughout the 1970s, to proceed to a purer abstraction where color once again plays the leading role in his last years of activity. His works are on permanent display at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and are often shown in Europe.

**Olivier Mosset** (Berne, 1944)

Born in Switzerland, Olivier Mosset, lives in Paris, where from 1966-1967, together with Daniel Buren, Michel Parmentier and Niel Toroni, he founds the "BMPT Group" (acronym for the names of the four artists coined by critics) whose aim is to deconstruct the pictorial system in order to redefine painting on the basis of new premises. At the end of the 1970's, Mosset moves to New York where he confronts himself with other artists, among others Marcia Hafif, rapidly forming a faction dubbed by the critics "The New York Radical Painting Group". In the 1980s his monochrome and large bi-chromatic paintings render him one of the main protagonists of the Neo-Geo trend. In 2012 he creates the scenes for the ballet *Sous Apparence* for the Opéra de Paris ballets. He currently lives and works between Tucson, Arizona and Neuchâtel in Switzerland.

**Opening hours of the exhibition:** from Tuesday to Sunday (closed Mondays) 10.45 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. | 2.00 p.m.- 7 p.m. (last admission 6.30 p.m.)

**The ticket includes a guided tour of the gardens of Villa Medici and entrance to the exhibition:** 12 euros (full price) | 6 euros (reduced price\*)

*\* Reduced rates: under 25s, students (upon presentation of an ID), adults over 60, unemployed (upon presentation of a document), art history teachers, fellows and members of foreign Academies and Institutes of Rome, holders of Bibliocard, Carta Più Feltrinelli, Metrebus card, Opera Card, Roma Pass, Romaeuropa Card, FAI members.*

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