



Next Door Gallery
Perpetuum Mobile by Marco Fedele di Catrano



Lorcan O'Neill Gallery
Six Nations, by Pietro Ruffo



AAM Gallery
Fuori Luogo, by Aurelio Bulzatti

Contemporary Art

BY SOLVEIG STEINHARDT
INTERVIEWS BY ANNIE SHAPERO

Art is the first thing that comes to mind when we think of Rome. Centuries of patrons and the presence of the Catholic Church's headquarters helped create a museum-city, inspired by an ancient heritage as well as by religious muses and mythology. Frescoes, mosaics, sculptures, and paintings adorn the Centro Storico, in a combination of styles from Roman and Medieval, to Renaissance and Baroque, the era in which Italy's artistic supremacy left the scene. Since then, Rome, and Italy in general, have been nostalgically looking back 500 years at the past glories of the bygone ages, without paying much attention to the new art trends around the world. With few sporadic exceptions, today's Italian institutions give little support to the new artists, many of whom move abroad, where they receive greater appreciation.

But the times they are a-changin'. According to the prestigious magazine 'Flash Art', since 2001, Rome has a new desire to look to the future. This controversial city, inconsistent and

distracted, is also willing to face the rest of the world, to not be left behind; it is, or it strives to be, an international art city.

The beginning of the 21st century saw a chain reaction of commercial art gallery openings, along with the development of modern concept stores, design shops, and contemporary festivals of all kinds, from the *Rome Film Festival* to *Romaeuropa*, to the more underground scene, represented by the electronic music festival *Dissonanze*, and the contemporary expression festival *Enzimi*. Richard Meier's Ara Pacis Museum, the first work of modern architecture in the Centro Storico since the 1920s, testifies that Italy's fear of modernity is slowly decreasing. The foreign Academies in Rome, born in the early 1900s to support international research in classic studies, recently opened their fellowships to other disciplines, including art, music, and video, allowing their scholars to breathe the classic Roman air, while bringing fresh, young art into the city; Rome is beginning to create its new artistic identity, and although some believe it's still too early to talk about a 'Roman contemporary art scene', the combination of people, events, magazines and institutions that operate in the



Galleria Sisters



Altri Lavori in Corso
Gigorobot, by Franco Losvizzero



Punctum Arte
Installation by Elizabeth Aro

MACRO Future, *La Città che Sale:*
We Try to Build the Future



sector today are proof that the sleeping giant is finally waking up. The opportunities to admire contemporary art in Rome are constantly on the rise. Three important contemporary spaces were created or renovated in the last decades: the **MACRO**, short for *Museo di Arte Contemporanea di Roma*, is housed in two ex-industrial complexes situated in different areas of the city. Fat houses, trucks driving on the vertical museum walls, pollen structures, recycled art, and growing cities are some recent examples of a MACRO exhibit. An even more contemporary space, the **MAXXI** (*Museo delle Arti del XXI Secolo*) is the city's brand new art museum. The **Palazzo delle Esposizioni**, a massive building on Via Nazionale, just reopened after a three-year-long restoration, and organizes frequent installations and video art exhibits.

The best way to enjoy the developing art scene is, however, to visit commercial art galleries, where important curators and critics support new artists and sell their works. We prepared a tour of our favorite galleries by neighborhood, for you to admire, and

bring home, the best of today's art.

Traditionally known as Rome's art street, gallery lined Via Margutta is a must for art collectors.

Since 1990, **Valentina Moncada** has hosted 67 exhibitions with the works of many Italian and international artists. More recently, the gallery's taste shifted towards Italian photography. Via Margutta, 54. Tel 063207956. www.valentinamoncada.com

First Gallery focuses on the combination of media, and displays work in four spaces over a 200m surface entirely dedicated to contemporary art. Via Margutta, 14. Tel 063230673. www.firstgallery.it



Galleria Valentina Moncada
Faces by Donato Amstutz

Not far from Piazza Barberini, one of the most important contemporary art galleries in the world, **Gagosian Gallery** opened his new branch in December 2007, with a comprehensive exhibition that explores the artistic path of Venice Biennale winner Cy Twombly.

Via Francesco Crispi, 16. Tel 0642086498.
www.gagosian.com

The alleys surrounding Piazza Navona and Campo de' Fiori are filled with small galleries and exhibition spaces.

Elisabetta Giovagnoni is the mind behind **9, Vetrina Contemporanea**, opened in 2000 to promote young emerging artists, working with different media. "I am absolutely NOT an artist, I don't even know how to hold a sketching pencil", she says "yet in some way I guess I am, in the way that I personalized this space, in my choice of artists and collections." Elisabetta follows no particular strategy when she chooses an artist - just her instinct and her desire to be truly original. Via della Vetrina, 9. Tel 0668192277. www.galleriavetrina.it

Marco Rossi Lecce, from nearby gallery **Altri Lavori in Corso**, founded his gallery in 1989: "The World Cup was set to take place in Rome, which meant construction and rehab all over the city. I was restoring a giant two-story space in a historic building, and I invited fifty artists to participate in the project. It was 'works in progress', both outside and inside. Some of them were famous artists, but there were also some young emerging talents, and the exhibition, called *Other Works in Progress*, was a great success. It inspired me to open this gallery, with the objective of discovering young and new talent". Vicolo del Governo Vecchio, 7. Tel 066861719. www.altrilavoriincorso.com

Two doors down, there's **Punctum Arte**, a cultural association aimed at the diffusion of contemporary young art through exhibitions and catalogues. Check out Eleonora Esse's exhibit, on until January 6. Vicolo del Governo Vecchio, 2. Tel 3396170930.

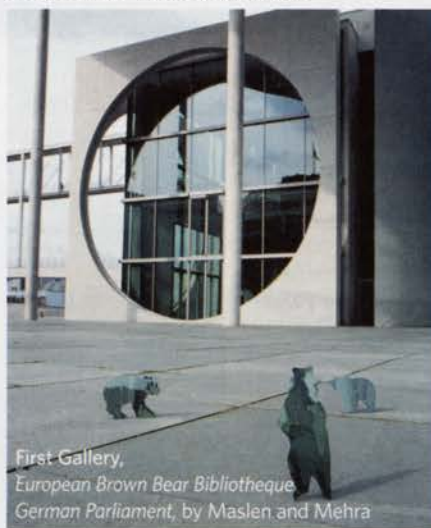


Galleria Cedro26, Hollywood, Uncelebrated,
by David Strick

www.punctum-arte.org

Galleria Sisters is a cute art space that carries a combination of design, antiques, retro objects and contemporary art. The gallery is the brainchild of Eleonora, Emanuela, and Veronica Nobile Mino, three sisters in love with interior design, contemporary art, and decoration. Their goal is to promote young talent in contemporary art and design, in a pleasant and cozy space they like to call "Mix&Match Land" for the diversity of media, ages, and style. Via dei Banchi Vecchi, 143. Tel 066878497. www.sistersinart.it

Mixed languages and genres define **AAM Gallery**, created by Francesco Moschini in 1978, in response to the great lack of contemporary art in Rome. "We like to choose projects that represent pure expression and style, in an effort to combat the omnipresent works of vulgar, superficial and media-hungry content, so prevalent in the contemporary art world today". Via dei Banchi Vecchi, 61. Tel 0668307537. www.aamgalleria.it



First Gallery,
European Brown Bear Bibliotheque
German Parliament, by Maslen and Mehra

After a career as the Sotheby's Contemporary Art expert in both London and New York, Raul Marinuzzi Ronconi opened **Next Door Art Galleria** in 2003, with the help of internationally renowned photographer Massimo Vitali. "My wish is to become the best gallery in Rome - or at least the most friendly and most approachable. I promote international and local artists, and I focus on high quality photography, video, and contemporary art." Via di Montoro, 3. Tel 0645425048. www.gallerianextdoor.com

Near the Vatican, **MONITOR** Video&Contemporary Art is considered a high quality gallery that works with young and mid-career artists. Viale delle Mura Aurelie, 19. Tel 0639378024. www.monitoronline.org

A totally different art gallery space, **MARTE** is photographer Marta Fegiz Palombelli's actual house, turned into an exhibition space where visitors can chill out and discuss the works displayed. Vicolo del Farinone 32. Tel 0697602788.

A walk over the pedestrian bridge will take you to Trastevere, where **Lorcan O'Neill** opened his renowned gallery in 2003. Working with Italian and international artists, O'Neill aims at bringing international art to Rome while helping Rome obtain recognition abroad. Via degli Orti d'Alibert, 1/e. Tel 0668892980.

www.lorcanoneill.com

Not too far away, **Cedro26** presents the work of Italian and international photographers. Vicolo del Cedro, 26. Tel 0658335299. www.cedro26.it

On the Celio hill, **Galleria SALES** (Via dei Querceti, 4/5. Tel 0677591122. www.galleriasales.it) is considered a reference point in contemporary art, and it is situated right next to **Z20 Galleria**, founded by art curator and historian Sara Zanin. Via dei Querceti 6. Tel 0670452261 www.z20galleria.it