



CALL FOR PAPERS

Marino Marini Study Days Thursday, April 30 and Friday, May 1, 2020 Center for Italian Modern Art

Keynote speaker: Robert Slifkin (NYU)

The Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) presents the first exhibition in the United States of female nude sculptures by Marino Marini, on view through June 13, 2020. An exceptionally gifted sculptor and also painter, draughtsman and engraver, Marini (1901-1980) is regarded as one of the “three famous M’s,” who alongside Arturo Martini and Giacomo Manzù was credited with revitalizing the Italian figurative sculpture of the first half of the twentieth century.

Curated by Flavio Fergonzi (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa), the exhibition *Marino Marini: Arcadian Nudes* features some thirty sculptures of female nudes he made between 1932 and 1949. Less explored and more rarely exhibited than his famous *Horses* and *Riders*, Marini’s women encompass a variety of iconographic themes rooted in classical and pre-classical antiquity, from Pomona to Venus and the Three Graces, and revisit more modern renditions of Dancers and Young Ladies, as best exemplified in the work of Auguste Rodin, Edgar Degas, and Aristide Maillol. The radical change in Marini’s style and syntax taking place in the 1940s is also highlighted in the exhibition: the traumatic years of the war precipitated his self-imposed exile in Switzerland and resulted in the expressionistic realism of works marked by the rough, corroded surfaces and disproportionate shapes also to be found in Alberto Giacometti, Fritz Wotruba, and Germaine Richier.

Aiming to further investigate and expand the theme of the exhibition – Marini’s “timeless, eternal women, an arcadian ideal of a harmonious, bountiful nature,” to quote CIMA’s president Laura Mattioli – as well as offer new insights into the wider debate on the representation of female bodies in twentieth-century art, the 2019-2020 CIMA fellows invite proposal for papers for the Marino Marini Study Days, to be held on site in New York on Thursday, April 30 and Friday, May 1, 2020.

The Study Days seek to gather scholars from different research fields – including history of art and architecture, of literature, theater, and sociology – to disprove the generally accepted view of Marini as a sophisticated artist outside history, who devoted himself to a limited, allegedly little inventive number of themes; we also aim to reassess his work both in relation to the cultural and socio-political scenario of Italy at the time and in light of the interplay with the international art language born out of the Second World War. Unlike conventional conferences, the Marino Marini Study Days will offer speakers the unique opportunity to discuss the artist’s career while being surrounded by notable examples of his work.

Topics may include (but are not limited to):

1. Marino Marini and the Fascination for Antiquity

How did Marini’s constant dialogue with the ancient past help shape his peculiar artistic language? We welcome papers discussing Marini’s work in relation to any of his wide-ranging sources, spanning from archaic Greek and Cycladic to Etruscan art, from Egypt to China, from imperial Rome to Renaissance Italy.

2. Marini and the Twentieth-Century International Art Scene

How does Marini's work relate to the wider artistic scenario especially of the 1930s to 1950s? Prospective speakers may focus on Marini's relationships with artists befriended during his trips to Europe and the US (e.g., Richier, Wotruba, Giacometti, and Henry Moore) and evaluate the reciprocal influence that may be detected in their art as a result.

3. Representing the Female Nude in the Twentieth Century

A pervasive theme of the history of art from its very beginning, the female nude became an almost exclusive subject matter in Marini's work from 1932 to 1949. How are we to understand this choice in light of the broader artistic context of the time, particularly in relation to artists famously engaged with the subject, including Rodin, Degas, Maillol, Picasso, De Kooning?

4. Not only a Sculptor: Marini as a Painter, Draughtsman and Engraver

While Marini's main contribution to the history of art lies in the realm of sculpture, he systematically practiced painting, drawing and etching throughout his life, both as part of the creative process and as independent artistic means. Papers are welcome that explore this less-studied branch of Marini's production, including those focusing on preparatory works relating to sculptures on display at the 2019-2020 CIMA exhibition.

5. Marini's Reception and Legacy

During Marini's lifetime, both critics (e.g., Lamberto Vitali and Gianfranco Contini), collectors, and merchants (e.g., Emilio Jesi and Curt Valentin) significantly contributed to the widespread knowledge of his art on an international scale. In addition, as an esteemed teacher first in Monza (1929-1940) and then in Milan (1941-1969), Marini trained several acclaimed sculptors (e.g., Kengiro Azuma, Alik Cavaliere and Parviz Tanavoli). How are we to assess the reception and appropriation of Marini's art and legacy, pertaining issues as different as style and technique, scholarly appreciation and critical appraisal, collecting practices and the art market?

Please send an abstract (250-300 words), title, and a short biography (100-150 words) in English to info@italianmodernart.org with the subject line "Marino Marini CFP" by **Sunday, January 26, 2020**. Please send these materials in a single PDF document. Please do not send multiple attachments.

Presentations are not to exceed 20 minutes. No reading of papers *in absentia* is allowed.

All speakers receive a \$300 honorarium and participants may request additional financial assistance for travel and accommodation, which CIMA may award as appropriate.

The papers will be published in CIMA's online journal *Italian Modern Art*.

Deadline: Sunday, January 26, 2020.