



DEADLINE: Sunday, JANUARY 26, 2020

CENTER FOR ITALIAN MODERN ART

FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION

General Information

Each year the Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) awards multiple **CIMA Fellowships** to support research and study of Italian modern and contemporary art for doctoral and post-doctoral scholars. Citizens of all nationalities are eligible. CIMA offers a unique experience to its fellows: the annual exhibition serves as a hub for scholars from diverse academic backgrounds to share research derived from the artworks on view with each other and the public. Emphasis is split between individualized study—gaining an intimate knowledge of artists represented through close looking and through researching in depth a topic raised by the installation—and public discourse, as represented by collaboration on public programming and leading interactive exhibition tours. During their residency, fellows also have the opportunity to pursue their own research and connect with scholars and other professionals in and around New York.

2020–21 Fellowships

The exhibition for CIMA's next season (October 2020–June 2021) focuses on the early body of work created by the painter Mario Schifano (1934–1998) between 1960 and 1965.

Despite relevant exhibitions in the last fifteen years, Schifano hasn't yet received the broad recognition in the United States which he deserves. Favored by the broader influence of culture and habits imported from the United States in Italy during the years of economic growth in the 1950s and early 1960s, American art had an extensive impact on the artist's development of a distinctive visual vocabulary. In view of his unique style, the artist attracted the interest of Ileana Sonnabend, major dealer at that time, and was included in the seminal exhibition *New Realists* at Sidney Janis Gallery in New York in 1962. Following the exhibition, the artist travelled in New York and stayed there for six months between 1963 and 1964, when he prepared his solo show at Odyssea Gallery in 1964.

The so-called "monochromes" created by the artist between 1960 and 1962 show the influence of American artists. Despite the name, those works cannot be easily associated with monochrome painting. The saturation of the pictorial surface reassesses the literalness of the picture plane through a deep survey of the materiality of painting. The artist was able to achieve such density through a specific practice, which bears witness to Schifano's attentive study of the work of Jasper Johns. Schifano's investigation of the surface distinguishes his work from the all-over of



the Abstract Expressionism as well as from the sense of a pulsating limitless field of light conveyed by much monochromatic painting. On the other hand, the artist conceived the picture as a confined space, playing with frames, bars, and boundaries resembling street signs and screens. Major works from 1961–1962 would show the persistence of the act of framing through Schifano’s work. Prescient of his later obsession with television and video recording, the artist’s interest in reassessing surface limits was peculiar of the work of many artists of his generation in the 1960s.

In the following years, Schifano developed his distinctive style. CIMA’s installation will include a selection of drawings showing the increasing incorporation of figurative elements within the screens depicted on the picture plane. The act of framing turns into a cropping device, through which the artist crops and mounts references to advertisements, commercial goods, but also artistic sources and the very practice of making art. By mixing high and low, artistic and pop culture, the artist elaborated his signature imagery that unfolds through the series of works he is mostly associated with, including *Propaganda*, *Particolare di esterno*, *Paesaggio anemico*. Those works bear witness to the artist’s distinctive combination of words and images and his interest in the photographic practices of framing and montage, and reveal Schifano’s unique sense of figuration, which can hardly be framed within the general notion of Pop Art.

Focusing on a specific time in Schifano’s art, the exhibition ultimately aims to present a remarkable figure bridging Italian modern and contemporary art whose work is yet scantily acknowledged in the United States. The artist’s fascination for American art and culture serves as an early account of the broader issue of the reception of American culture in Europe, following the aggressive imperialism of the United States in international economy and geopolitics at the turn of the 1950s. The work of Schifano demonstrates the long enduring impact of American art even before the infamous Venice Biennale of 1964. In addition, through his examination of the surface and medium of painting and his later signature realism, Schifano elaborated a body work which substantially contributes in the general discussion on international Pop Art and provides an alternative narrative of the development of painting in the early 1960s.

Graduate students and early career post-doctoral researchers (who have attained their PhD within the past 7 years) from various fields, such as Art History, Italian Studies and Visual Studies, are welcome to submit their proposals. While any topic related to Schifano’s artistic career will be taken into consideration, CIMA is particularly interested in proposals that enrich our understanding of the work of Schifano by concentrating on broader subjects including:

- monochrome and the redefinition of the tenets of painting after the Abstract Expressionism/Informel both in Europe and in the United States;
- the connections between American and Italian art in the first half of the 1960s, in regards especially to the internationalization and re-discussion of Pop Art;
- the persistence and development of realism and figurative painting towards the mid-1960s;



- the visual and theoretical concern for the picture plane as a screen, and the discussion of the polarity opacity vs. transparency in the investigation of the materiality of the painting surface.

The deadline for the Fellowship application is **Sunday, January 26, 2020**. Finalists will be interviewed via video or phone in the second half of February, and the selection process will be completed by March 1, 2020. Application materials must be submitted in English.

Fellowship Details

- **Fellowship Duration:** Candidates for a CIMA Fellowship may request a semester-length fellowship period (four to six months) or an academic year (nine to ten months); CIMA will determine whether full-year fellowships can be allocated. The semesters run from early September to early March (Fall), and early January to early July (Spring). Fellows may come from the disciplines of Art History, Italian Studies, and other fields in the humanities.
- **Stipend and Benefits:** Fellowship stipends vary in range, based on need and length of term, and typically include a living allowance of about \$3,000 per month. Tuition reimbursement will be included for those enrolled in degree programs at accredited universities; health insurance coverage will also be reimbursed, as will travel costs to and from CIMA. CIMA fellows' tax liability to the U.S. government will be determined in accordance with the tax regulations of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.
- **Resources:** Fellows are given a desk at CIMA, but are also encouraged to work at a desk provided for them in the main gallery itself, surrounded by the works they are researching. They may apply to receive privileges at New York City research libraries through the MARLI program.
- **Responsibilities:** Fellows are expected to be present in New York during the term of their fellowship and to participate in the intellectual life and programming of CIMA, though a small research budget to support short research trips to archives elsewhere in the United States will be made available. Fellowship responsibilities include but are not limited to leading CIMA's public tours (which occur twice a day on Fridays and Saturdays) as well as private guided visits for school groups and special constituents (on average once or twice a week, with the possibility of kids tours or special activities) and to participating in the public and members programming through the run of the exhibition; these duties are shared evenly among the fellows. Fellows interact with a wide variety of public audiences, sharing their research in many different ways, including through guided



looking. For this reason, CIMA is seeking candidates who have the ability to express themselves clearly in English.

If their residency falls in the first-half of the season, CIMA fellows will be present for the installation of the exhibition and will collaborate on writing a biographical or contextual essay for the catalogue. Fellows coming for the spring semester participate instead in the de-installation. All the fellows work together to organize the annual spring Study Days—a program that brings together the fellows and other scholars to share research that stems from the exhibition on view. Fellows are encouraged to contribute to CIMA’s blog and to propose public programming; they are also invited to pursue their own projects and take advantage of the rich cultural life of New York. CIMA makes every effort to assist the fellows in making professional contacts during their residency.

The Selection Process

A committee of experts drawn from CIMA’s advisory board and CIMA’s university partners (The Graduate Center CUNY, the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa, Italy, and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University) will meet to select the 2020–21 fellows. Candidates for CIMA Fellowships are chosen based on their academic potential and curriculum vitae, their proposed plans of study, their spoken and written English and Italian language abilities, and the correlation between their proposed plans and CIMA’s annual study topic. At CIMA we wish to foster a mix of emerging scholars from different schools of thought, who employ different methodologies and approaches, in order to encourage dialogue and exchange. All other factors being equal, preference will be given to those applicants who have not had extensive prior experience living, studying, and/or working in New York. CIMA selects fellows on an objective and non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity or sexual orientation. CIMA only accepts applicants who have attained their PhD within the past 7 years.

The Application

The application should be emailed to fellowships@italianmodernart.org by the end of the day **Sunday, January 26, 2020**. The email should be titled with the fellowship the applicant is seeking and their first and last name. If the applicant does not receive confirmation within one week, please contact CIMA by phone or email. Please submit the following information **in a single PDF document in 12pt Times font**. Please do not send multiple attachments.

- Cover letter with applicant information and project summary



Name

Email

Phone

Address

Current Position

Preferred Period you would like to take up the CIMA Fellowship

Brief statement describing your background, relevant experience, and particular interests (250 word limit)

Brief summary description of proposed study, also relating your project to CIMA's study theme (350 word limit)

- Proposal Information

Project Statement (1,500 word limit)

- Curriculum Vitae

A curriculum vitae (maximum of three pages)

- Fellowship Dates

Please indicate which semester (fall or spring) you would like to take up your fellowship, or if you are applying for a full academic-year period. Please note that the length of a fellowship will be determined at CIMA's sole discretion.

- References

Please provide the names, phone numbers, and email addresses for three references. Please instruct your references to submit their letters directly to CIMA by **Sunday January 26, 2020**. CIMA prefers letters as single page PDFs sent to fellowships@italianmodernart.org with the applicant's first name and last name in the email subject line.