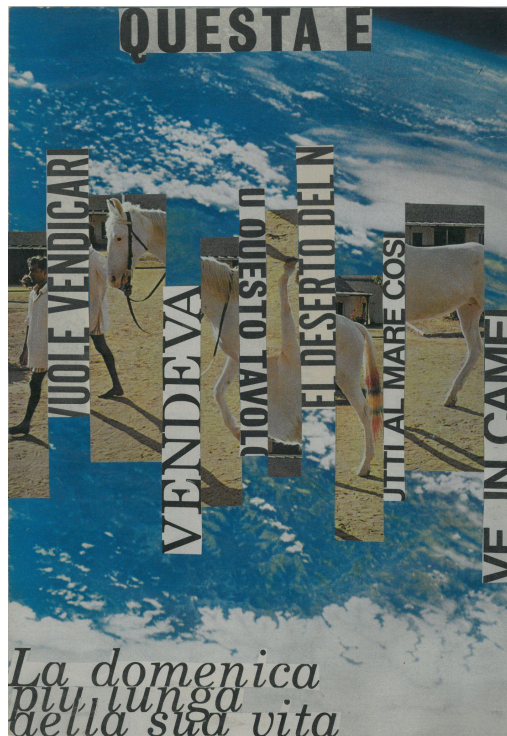




CENTER FOR ITALIAN ART ANNOUNCES NEW EXHIBITION:

***NANNI BALESTRINI: ART AS POLITICAL ACTION
ONE THOUSAND AND ONE VOICES***
Curated by Marco Scotini

ON VIEW FROM FEBRUARY 22 - JUNE 22, 2024



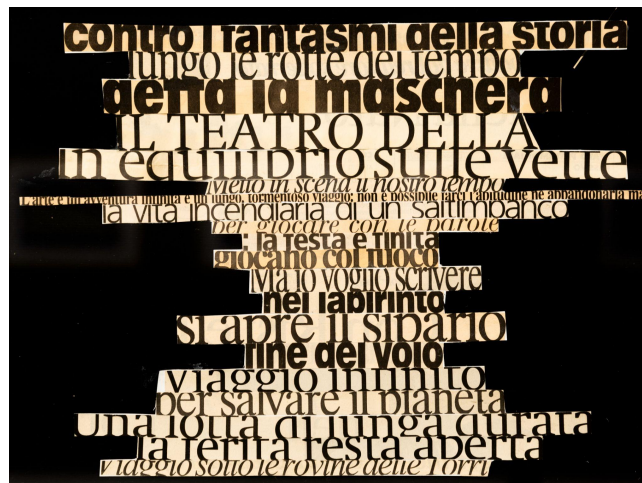
Nanni Balestrini, *Cavallo*, 1963. Collage on paper. Private collection, courtesy Frittelli arte contemporanea, Florence

(New York, February 15, 2024) - Today, the Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) announces its new exhibition, ***NANNI BALESTRINI: ART AS POLITICAL ACTION. ONE THOUSAND AND ONE VOICES***, curated by Marco Scotini, opening February 22nd, 2024. This is the first retrospective exhibition in the United States of Nanni Balestrini (1935-2019), an Italian experimental visual artist, poet, and novelist known for his revolutionary artistic practice and passionate involvement in the social-political movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

Born in Milan in 1935, Balestrini was a key protagonist of post-WW2 Italian literary and social avant-garde movements: he approached experimental poetry with a visual sensibility stemming from the artistic use of collage, and with a compositional practice that gave importance to the editing and recombining of existing texts (especially newspapers, magazines, and political slogans) in search for the expression of a collective enunciation.



Nanni Balestrini, *65000 Étudiants*, 1972. Mixed media on panel. Collezione Emilio Mazzoli, Modena



Nanni Balestrini, *Cronogramma*, 1960s. Collage on paper. Private collection.

He worked side by side with contemporary composers interested in the creative potential of stochastic music and the relationship between computer technology and art. Much of his radical artistic and literary research also developed in dialogue with his participation in the student and workerist movements of the late 1960s and 1970s, and their explosive political charge. Much emphasis has been placed on the exclusively typographical character of writing in Balestrini's artistic works. This exhibition will instead draw attention to the double acoustic and visual level of Balestrini's word or, better yet, to what Paolo Fabbri described as its "phonic-optic indiscernibility."

NANNI BALESTRINI: ART AS POLITICAL ACTION. ONE THOUSAND AND ONE VOICES, curated by Marco Scotini, focuses on two crucial decades in the career of Balestrini, the 1960s and the 1970s. It includes over 70 works by the artist, along with a range of documentary material. The works from the 1960s illustrate a creative phase when Balestrini shared research interests with Luigi Nono, one

of the most important 20th-century experimental composers, and when the neo-avant garde literary movement Gruppo 63 was also founded. The creative relationship between Balestrini and Nono lasted an entire decade, and the exhibition sheds light on the search for the disalienation of the word pursued by both, as well as on their use of technology as a way to seize and subvert the means of industrial production and explore their artistic potential. The final works in the exhibition date back to the late 1970s; some of them were conceived in connection with a poem dedicated to the New York City electricity blackout of 1977. Planned as an “action for voice” to be performed by Greek-Italian lyricist and vocal experimenter Demetrio Stratos in May 1979, the work was never performed due to the premature death of Stratos and Balestrini’s indictment surrounding the political movement Autonomia Operaia.

The exhibition also includes a reconstruction of Balestrini’s *Tape Mark I* (1961), one of the earliest examples of computer-generated art. A combinatory poem produced by an algorithm written in the Unix programming language on a massive IBM mainframe computer, *Tape Mark I* anticipates many of the contemporary questions surrounding Artificial Intelligence, and was featured in the 1962 edition of the Bompiani Literary Almanac, which was dedicated to “the application of computers to ethics and literature”, a theme of utmost relevance today.

To provide context to Balestrini’s work, the show features a selection of early *words-in-freedom* works by Futurist artist Carlo Carrà, a form of avantgarde visual poetry that liberated words and letters from the conventions of grammar and syntax, making them part of visual and performative compositions. This technique was co-opted by the Italian Neoavanguardia in the 1960s, due to the revolutionary potential of the early Futurist movement.

NANNI BALESTRINI: ART AS POLITICAL ACTION. ONE THOUSAND AND ONE VOICES is on view at CIMA (421 Broome Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10013) from February 22nd - June 22nd, 2024. See visiting hours below.



Nanni Balestrini, *Giornale di bordo (La partita a carte)*, 1964. Collage on paper. Private collection, Milano (Venezia)

**CIMA OPEN HOURS:**

- Friday and Saturday: 11am to 6pm with guided tours at 11am and 2pm (last entry at 5pm)
- Members-only hours: Monday-Thursday by appointment
- General admission: \$15 for guided tours; \$10 for open hours
- Members & students: free

ABOUT CIMA:

Founded in 2013, CIMA is a public non-profit dedicated to presenting modern and contemporary Italian art to international audiences. Through critically acclaimed exhibitions—many of them bringing work to U.S. audiences for the first time—along with a wide variety of public programs and substantial support for new scholarship awarded through its international fellowship program, CIMA situates Italian modern art in an expansive historic and cultural context, illuminating its continuing relevance to contemporary culture and serving as an incubator of curatorial ideas for larger cultural institutions. CIMA works to add new voices to scholarship on modern Italian art with annual fellowships that open fresh perspectives and new avenues of research. A visit begins with a complimentary espresso, followed by an informal exhibition tour with one of the resident fellows. Visitors are welcome to linger for additional viewing and conversation.

ABOUT CURATOR MARCO SCOTINI:

Marco Scotini is an art critic and curator.

He currently is artistic director of FM Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea in Milan, a center specializing in the preservation and enhancement of private collections, artists' archives and the promotion of contemporary art. Since 2004, he has been director of the Department of Visual Arts at Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti of Milan and Rome. He is scientific director of the Gianni Colombo Archive, the Bert Theis Archive, the Clemen Parrocchetti Archive and the Nanni Balestrini Archive. Since 2014, he has been responsible for the exhibition program of PAV- Parco Arte Vivente in Turin. He was artistic director of the 2nd Yinchuan Biennale in 2018 and was a member of the Italian Council from 2019 to 2021. He has curated exhibitions for leading national and international art institutions, including the Albanian pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2015), three editions of the Prague Biennale (2003, 2005, 2007), Anren Biennale (2017), 2nd Yinchuan Biennale (2018) and was advisor for Bangkok Biennale (2020 and 2022). He took part in the 17th Istanbul Biennale (2022) and the BETA Timișoara Biennale (2022). He has been part of the project *TV Politics* at documenta 14 (2017). Scotini's project *Disobedience Archive* is part of the 60th Mostra Internazionale d'Arte della Biennale di Venezia (2024), curated by Adriano Pedrosa.

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