

## MATTA

Roberto Sebastian MATTA – Gordon MATTA-CLARK – Pablo ECHAUREN

Fondazione Querini Stampalia

Venice

May 29 – August 18, 2013

**Press preview:** May 28, 2013 – 10 am-2 pm

May 29 – 31 free entrance for the press and with Biennale accreditation passes

**Vernissage:** May 28, 2013 – 6 pm

**Exhibition organized by:** Galleria d'Arte Maggiore – G.A.M. - Bologna

*In conjunction with the 55. Venice Biennale, the exhibition aims at investigating the ideas and thoughts passed on – across generations, time and geography – from **Roberto Sebastian Matta** to his sons **Gordon Matta-Clark** and **Pablo Echaurren**.*

Three names, three histories and just one common denominator: art. In conjunction with the 55. Venice Biennale, and for the first time together, the exhibition – organized and produced by Galleria d'Arte Maggiore – G.A.M. in Bologna – gathers three main protagonists of the international art scene in the spaces of the Scarpa Area of the Fondazione Querini Stampalia. Gordon Matta-Clark and Pablo Echaurren don't only share the same father Roberto Sebastian Matta, historical personality who took part in the Surrealism and influenced the American artists of the Abstract Expressionism with his canvas and sculptures, but both of them are two personages of the contemporary artistic scene with their own different expressive styles.

The exhibition, curated by **Danilo Eccher**, starts with the work of Roberto Sebastian Matta and thanks to the works of its protagonists goes through half century of history of art, lived in three different countries: France, United States and Italy. The cross-section obtained is not confined to a family, even if exceptional, but widens its borders to the cultural and political environment in which these artists were deeply immersed. Children of the same father, but of different mothers, both Gordon and Pablo had a conflicting relationship with the father figure and they have both searched a conceptual dialogue – impossible in their private life – with Matta through their art even if they have elaborated – each one with his own style – unique and different languages. If the similarity with Matta-Clark can have references even at a formal, aesthetic-architectural level which is present in a different way even in his father's work, in Echaurren the affinity is to be found above all in the conceptual aspect deriving from the same Dadaist and late Surrealist source of his father and brother.

The link between their art forms will be critically deepened by Danilo Eccher in the catalogue of the exhibition, published by Silvana Editoriale. However it is clear that what is present in their works are social relations, they always looking for a relationship with the public who doesn't only participate but is involved directly or indirectly, physically and mentally, culturally and socially, inside or outside the work.

It is not just a coincidence if Matta defines the anthropomorphic figures both in his paintings and in his sculptures as "social morphologies", as a passing transformation from interior landscapes to the exterior world. For Gordon, sociality is an even more evident factor, being his art based on

performance, on "building cuts", sculptural transformations of pre-existing architectures where the viewer is invited to enter to move physically and with emotions in those spaces. In his work, Matta-Clark creates a direct relationship with the viewer, often based on the confidence that this person has to give to the work of the artist, which has architectural foundation as in Matta. Instead, as far as Pablo is concerned, all his artistic life is immersed in the aspects of society, in the everyday existence. And if it true that his canvases are related to the world of cartoons, music, street art and mass culture, the artist proposes with irony a direct critic to the consumerist society through his pop iconography made of contaminations of genres dialoguing now with the Dadaism and now with the Surrealism itself and so through the appearance of a familiar and at the same time disquieting nature. As the anthropomorphous and primitive figures in his father's paintings seem to suggest. It is not a coincidence that Matta's work aims also at a reflection on the impact that technology has on human existence.

**Roberto Sebastian Echaurren MATTA** (Santiago, Chile, 1911 – Civitavecchia, Italy, 2002)

Born in Santiago, Chile, and after studying architecture, Roberto Sebastian Matta devotes himself to painting from 1934 when he moves to Paris. The meetings of these years are stimulating and of paramount importance: in the french capital he works for Le Corbusier, in Madrid he is in contact with intellectuals like Federico Garcia Lorca and in London he spends time with Walter Gropius. But it is in Paris that he meets André Breton and Salvador Dali, joining and encouraging the birth of Surrealism. When the Second War World starts, he accepts the invitation of his friend Marcel Duchamp and he moves to New York where he inserts himself in the cosmopolitan environment, playing a fundamental role for the next generation of artists who will then give birth to the American Abstract Expressionism. The relationships with them, and with the surrealist artists still in Paris, are doomed to be ruined when Matta is accused of having led Gorky to commit suicide because he had a relationship with his wife. At the end of the Fifties, Matta is already an internationally famous artist. In 1971 the french magazine *Connaissance des Arts* places Matta in the top ten of the best contemporary artists in the world and in 1985 the Centre Georges Pompidou organizes a great retrospective. In 1990 he returns to Paris spending time in Italy and Tarquinia where he founds a studio, a ceramic school and a exhibition room. He passes away in Civitavecchia in 2002.

His works are exhibited in some of the most important museums in the world. Just to mention a few of them: the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Fine Art Museum in San Francisco and the Galleria d'Arte Nazionale in Rome.

**Gordon MATTA-CLARK** (New York, USA, 1943 – 1978)

Gordon Matta-Clark is an American artist working during the Seventies and better known for his "building cuts": sculptural transformations of abandoned buildings realized through cuts and the dismantling of structured architectural sites. Catalytic figure of the decade for the history and the development of SoHo in New York, his art calls into question the art statute itself. Using the performance as an expressive method, the majority of his work is based on the architectural fragments, decomposed objects, but also culinary experiments that we can see thanks to the documentation made of videos, photos and films. Active both in the United States and in Europe, the premature demise when he was thirty five has not prevented him from becoming a superstar in the contemporary and international art scene. Indeed Matta-Clark's works are present in great public collections: the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the MoMA in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the MoCA in Los Angeles, the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen in Antwerp, the San Francisco Museum of Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington DC, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

**Pablo ECHAURREN** (Rome, Italy, 1951)

Pablo Echaurren begins painting at eighteen and is immediately discovered by Arturo Schwarz. Against

the backdrop of the latest pop art, poor art, minimalism and conceptual, he begins developing his own lexical universe in the early Seventies where various themes converge: the world of miniature, the sign of 'old Japanese master' Hokusai, the comic quotes of Roy Lichtenstein, but also the images of scientific books on natural history, zoology and botany. In a second moment, the comparison with the iconographic heritage of art history expands in a constant dialogue with the avant-gardes, Futurism, Dadaism, Cubism, which he revisits with the eyes of an inhabitant of the global village, fed by messages of telecommunication and mass media. The art of Pablo Echaurren goes in many directions, articulating in a constant swing of *high* and *low*, of paintings to posters and collages, of the covers of books and comics, from ceramics to jewelry to tapestries, from video to text. It follows an idea of the artist as a craftsman in all fields, indifferent to the barriers and hierarchies that usually tend to compress creative activity. His relationship with young people is always very much alive and the same is for his close relationship with social movements. An author of essays, novels and short stories, Pablo has also published a series of illustrated biographies, dedicated to Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Picasso, Ezra Pound, and so on.

### **Fondazione Querini Stampalia – Area Scarpa**

The Board of Directors of the Fondazione Querini Stampalia decided to start the restoration of some parts of the Querini building in 1949. Manlio Dazzi, the foundation's director, committed to Carlo Scarpa to take care of the low ground and of the garden in the back of the building. The project was realized only ten years later, after the direction of Giuseppe Mazzariol, friend and supporter of the venetian master.

Scarpa's restoration project starts with removing the nineteenth-century decorative setup, with the static and conservative renewal of the stonework, and the careful cleaning of the existing architectural elements in order then to develop itself through four fundamental themes: the new bridge for the access, the entrance, the "portego" and the garden. These four spaces are linked with a path whose stages are visually disclosed from the little square in front of the canal, from which it is possible to glimpse partial views of the inside part of the building.

The low ground is in fact porous, transparent and the garden becomes the natural extension of the "portego"

"Water is an horizontal diaphragm graduating the heights of the space which are objectively changed. It is in relation to these effects that the walk of all the paths has been oriented and horizontally conducted from the canal to the garden, from the front overlooking the gate to the back of the building, as a unique barrier on which the light plays, dematerializing the plastic remains of every area in order to assume only a chromatic meaning"

Giuseppe Mazzariol,  
*Un'opera di Carlo Scarpa: il riordino di un antico palazzo veneziano*,  
in "Zodiac", n.o 13, 1964, p. 40.

### **Galleria d'Arte Maggiore – G.A.M.**

Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M. was founded in 1978 by Franco and Roberta Calarota, who have established the international prestige of the gallery through a permanent collection of high-quality works by 20th-century masters. Their daughter Alessia became director of the gallery in 2011, linking tradition with a new perspective. Taking an innovative approach, the exhibitions presented in the main location in Bologna aim to show how contemporary art springs from the dialogue with modern art.

The gallery has always dealt with two fundamental aspects of the art world: the market – taking part to some of the most important international art fairs – and institutional promotion. That it has developed important collaborative relationships with museums and institutions in Italy and abroad testifies to the

high quality of the works in its collection. As a point of reference for the masters of Italian art, Galleria d'Arte Maggiore has recently collaborated with the museum Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art in London for the show "Giorgio Morandi. Lines of Poetry", one of the most comprehensive exhibitions of his graphic art outside Italy. And, just to mention a few examples, among the several exhibitions curated by Franco Calarota, we have to remember the show "Silenzi" dedicated to the work of Giorgio Morandi at the Museum of Palazzo Fortuny in Venice, and "Giorgio de Chirico. Myth and Archaeology", the show which has been recently opened at the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, during the Year of Italian Culture in the United States, showing a precious collection of sculptures and works on paper.

**For further information and to schedule interviews:**

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