

KOUNELLIS

Galleria Christian Stein, Corso Monforte 23, Milan
October 12, 2022 – January 21, 2023

Galleria Christian Stein is delighted to be staging the exhibition *KOUNELLIS* in its space at Corso Monforte 23, Milan, from October 12, 2022, until January 21, 2023.

The exhibition pays tribute to the naturalized Italian artist of Greek origin Jannis Kounellis (1936 - 2017) through a selection of seven works that, presented together, form a single, unprecedented installation on an environmental scale inside the exhibition room. The event opens a window onto the imagination of an artist who is considered to have been one of the principal exponents of the Arte Povera movement, highlighting the innovative elements and legacy of his artistic practice.

From the sixties onward Jannis Kounellis deconstructed and reformulated the language of art, preferring to the traditional means of painting a mixture of media (performance, sculpture, installation) and materials not usually found in an exhibition space.

Now plates of metal, coal, traces of smoke on the wall, hessian, a bell and coats are on display again, accompanied by less common elements in the artist's production, like the crucible and wax. The gallery will even be filled with the smells of these substances, constituting a vocabulary of latent images that stir memories linked to our individual and collective experience. Thus the viewer is obliged to share the "space of representation" with the work, which, projecting itself outside the canvas, invades the setting.

The work from 1987, mounted on the gallery's most spacious wall, is composed of two rectangular modules: a double iron plate onto which are fixed 20 cylinders of yellow wax and a group of empty shelves to hold up the stains of soot left on the wall. On the ground, it is echoed by another work from the same year: a later version of the iron "coal container" made for the first time in 1967, whose metal structure is filled this time with yellow wax and tar.

The work from 1993, displayed at the back of the room, presents a bell and two iron plates arranged at an angle and surmounted by a girder. The bell hangs from a rope while the girder supports its real weight. Painted half black, the bell is the symbol of a ritual that for centuries has defined the sense of community. Abandoning the wall, the work inhabits the same space as its viewers, defining itself in relation to their physical experience.

On the opposite side of the room stand two large plates, one ringed by a bundle of ropes from which hang two crucibles (1990), the other with three black coats pressed by the same number of metal plates (2009). Also on display, two plates of smaller size on whose shelves are set respectively coal (1988) and hessian sacks (2000).

For Rudi Fuchs—an art historian who has been, among other things, director of the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and

the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Castello di Rivoli, Turin, as well as a close friend of Kounellis's, with whom he appears in the photo on the invitation to the exhibition—"a work by Kounellis is always surprising and unexpected, it is not the fruit of a style but of historical comparison, of an abrupt intervention in the apparently even and flexible course of history."

(R. Fuchs, J. Gachnang and C. Mundici, eds., *Jannis Kounellis*, catalogue of the exhibition at the Castello di Rivoli, 1989)

Jannis Kounellis showed for the first time at the Galleria Christian Stein in 1967, on the occasion of the group exhibition *Confronti*. From that moment on gallery and artist continued to collaborate, organizing together more than 25 exhibitions. The gallery is still actively engaged today in the promotion and distribution of his work in the world.

Corso Monforte 23, Milan

From Monday to Friday: 10 am – 7 pm

Saturday: 10 am – 1 pm, 3 pm – 7 pm

For information: tel. +39 02 76393301

info@galleriachristianstein.com

www.galleriachristianstein.com