

# PAOLO CANEVARI SELF-PORTRAIT / AUTORITRATTO

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21 February - 17 April 2021

## CARDI GALLERY

LONDON - MILAN

22 Grafton Street, London W1S 4EX

Press Preview: 18<sup>th</sup> February, 10am - 1pm

VIP Preview: 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2pm - 6.30pm; 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> February, 10am - 6.30pm

Public opening: 21<sup>st</sup> February - 17<sup>th</sup> April

(Open Monday - Friday 10am - 6pm & Saturday 11am - 5pm)



*Paolo Canevari, Numero 8 THANKS, 2009; Tyres on wood; variable dimensions*

Italian contemporary artist Paolo Canevari is best known for transforming everyday materials and icons into large-scale sculptures that confront his audience with stark, political and philosophical commentary. Throughout his career, Canevari has worked in a variety of media, most notably tyres and inner tubes, painting, drawing, performance, animation and film.

The provocative nature of the artists' works, and his active role within art world in New York, where he lived and worked for many years, have kept Canevari in the spotlight of both the American and Italian contemporary art scenes.

Cardi Gallery is proud to present the first major solo show of Canevari's work in the UK, an extensive survey exploring thirty years of the artist's

practice, the culmination of a decade-long collaboration with the gallery. A museum-scale exhibition occupying four floors at Cardi London in Mayfair, *'Self-portrait / Autoritratto'* brings together over 30 works including sculptures, drawings and installation that range from the artist's notorious 1990s rubber sculptures to his most current series *'Monuments of the Memory: Landscapes'* and *'Constellations'*. Many of the works are shown here for the first time.

*'Self-portrait / Autoritratto'* aims to illustrate Canevari's worldview through the artist's deeply introspective creative process. It brings to the fore not only a reflection on the self but also, in the artist's words *"...a political reading of making art, intended to measure what Pasolini had defined "the injustice of the world". "Art is a democratic, progressive force, so it should ideally serve society, not the powers that be. In my work, the use of icons, symbols, and forms from various cultures is a way of drawing attention to their true meaning, tied to dogmas or other forms of power; they're a way to open up a dialogue with the viewer and stimulate a reaction. [...] The "political" character of my work is just one of many possible interpretations of what I do." "What I wish to express is a radical, subversive attitude towards art and the idea of art as it has been conceived and conveyed by globalised consumeristic society, therefore raising the level of moral and ethical perception of the world."*



*Paolo Canevari Sfera, 2009; Tyres on wood*  
100 x 100 x 100 cm, 39 3/8 x 39 3/8 x 39 3/8 in

The ambiguity of Canevari's artworks, suspended in their brutalist aesthetic between irony and disquiet, is a successful result of both conceptual and formal transformation of industrial materials. Oil and its applications (synthetic rubber, exhaust motor oil, etc) are at the heart of his vocabulary; in his hands they become ambiguous symbols of the systemic violence that permeates today's declining world, where the threat of war - whether in the name of spiritual or monetary values - is constant and humankind's memory is tragically too short.

*"To me, an artwork is profoundly important when it does not recoil into a one-way structure - whether ideological or technical - but when it opens up to different perspectives for the viewer, therefore broadening their thought."*  
Paolo Canevari

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue with an essay by the eminent American curator Robert Storr; an interview with Iranian artist Shirin Neshat and a homageto Canevari by the acclaimed Italian novelist Andrea Camilleri. A series of artist talks, and exhibition tours will be held in conjunction with the show.



*Paolo Canevari, installation view of the solo show "Nobody Knows" 2010, curated by Germano Celant, Centro per l'arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato. Installations shown: "Colosso", 2002 and "Decalogo", 2008*

## Paolo Canevari

Paolo Canevari was born in Rome in 1963, a third-generation artist in his family. Since his first solo show in 1991, in which he started using car tubes and tyres, Canevari has developed a personal language aimed at revisiting the everyday and the most intimate aspects of memory. Over the years, and through the employment of a variety of media and techniques, from animation to large-format drawings, videos and installations, his projects have taken on a strong conceptual connotation. Focusing on the use of symbols, icons and images that are part of the collective memory, his works often invite viewers into a direct confrontation.

The artist was invited to partake in several biennials globally, including Liverpool Biennial 2004; the Whitney Biennale (2006), the 52<sup>nd</sup> International Exhibition at the Venice Biennale (2007). Widely exhibited at prominent institutions around the world, Canevari's works have appeared at (amongst others) the National Gallery and MACRO, Rome; MART, Rovereto; Museion, Bozen; The Drawing Center, PS1 Contemporary Art Center and MoMA, New York; IMMA, Dublin; KW, Berlin; Parkview Green Contemporary Art Museum, Beijing. Pieces by Canevari are included in prestigious international museum collections such as MoMA, New York, the Fondation Louis Vuitton pour la Creation, Paris, Rome's MACRO and MART, Rovereto.

## Cardi Gallery

The Cardi Gallery was founded in Milan, Italy in April 1972 by Renato Cardi with a focus on fostering the work of contemporary Italian artists. In the late 1960's Renato Cardi started to collect works by artists like Cy Twombly, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni and Michelangelo Pistoletto, who were all relatively unknown at the time. Over the subsequent years Renato built a distinguished collection that spanned from Arte Povera to Spatialism. Through both his inextinguishable passion for art and the subsequent success of the Galleria Cardi, Renato earned the reputation as a critically engaged champion of developing

artists, one who made major contributions to launching many of their careers. Now led by Renato's son Nicolo, the Cardi Gallery continues to shape the cultural landscape in Milan and abroad.

In 2015, the Cardi Gallery opened its first overseas venue, expanding its presence to London's Mayfair district where it is housed in a magnificent 17th century Georgian townhouse on Grafton Street boasting six storeys and over 10,000 sq feet of exhibition space. Both Cardi London and Cardi Milan host regular museum-quality

exhibitions that are accompanied by a scholarly catalogue or an artist monograph often featuring texts by eminent critics such as Germano Celant, Francesco Bonami and Achille Bonito Oliva.

The Cardi Gallery's unique specialist expertise in Italian Modern, Post-War and Contemporary art - specifically in Arte Povera, Minimalism and Zero Group- has contributed to building some of the finest and most historically important private collections across the Europe, the Americas and the Far East. The Gallery also regularly lends works for museum exhibitions internationally.

*"Cardi Gallery believes that art and culture are key for a healthy society and a ray of hope in these tragic times. I am absolutely delighted to bring to London these incredible works by Paolo Canevari, opening an exciting exhibition season for the gallery."* Nicolo Cardi



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### LINKS:

[cardigallery.com](http://cardigallery.com)  
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#PAOLOCANEVARI

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@cardigallery #PAOLOCANEVARI

## Covid-19 Pandemic

All regulations relating to Covid-19 will be strictly adhered to at Cardi Gallery,  
please see the website for the latest details.