

## *CORRADO CAGLI: FROM ROME TO NEW YORK*

23rd February–28th April 2018

Private View: 22nd February 2018, 6–8pm

Brun Fine Art is very proud to present the first UK solo show of the pioneering Italian artist Corrado Cagli (Ancona 1910 – Roma 1976), also known as Maestro Cagli. The first-ever selling exhibition, titled *Corrado Cagli: From Rome to New York*, will be organised in collaboration with the Archivio Corrado Cagli (Rome) and will run from 23rd February, significantly the artist's day of birth, to 28th April 2018. Curated by Alberto Mazzacchera, the show will feature over forty works by Maestro Cagli on view for the first time in the UK. Presented across the two floors of the Old Bond Street gallery, two main strands of the artist's career will be referenced: the Roman School of Painting (1930s), and the abstract period (1940s-1950s). *Corrado Cagli: From Rome to New York* will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with introductory essays by curator Alberto Mazzacchera.

Throughout his life, Cagli worked with a number of different mediums, such as ceramics, sculptures, paintings, theatre set design and costumes, wall painting, and tapestry. Considering this vast artistic production, the curator selected a first group of paintings belonging to the so-called 'Roman School,' which Cagli co-founded with Italian artists Giuseppe Capogrossi and Emanuele Cavalli in the 1930s. As leader of the Roman School, Cagli first introduced fundamental artistic concepts, such as *primordialismo*, and in the years between the two World Wars he became one of the most influential Italian artists of the time due to his evocative style and figurative pictures.

Cagli's artistic career was then deeply influenced by the enforcement of the Italian Racial Laws promulgated by the Fascist government. As an artist of Jewish heritage, Cagli was forced to flee Italy in 1938 and seek refuge in New York, where he remained until 1947. The reaction against the Fascist-imposed cultural tradition was already visible in the paintings *Views of Rome*, which were partly censored at the 1937 Universal Exhibition in Paris. In the 1940s, after becoming a U.S. citizen, Cagli enlisted in the Army with the heartfelt intention of defending freedom, a value so vital in his pictorial production as well as his life. During his service, Cagli fought in Normandy, Belgium, the Ardennes, and Dachau (Germany), where the artist was inspired to produce emotionally-charged drawings of the prisoners being freed from the tortures of the infamous concentration camp. After the exile and the following return to Italy, Cagli presented his work, deeply influenced by his experience in New York, in an exhibition held in Bologna in 1948. Here, the artist gave full expression to the more abstract and informal nature of his pictorial style – an evolution already foreshadowed by some works painted before the exile. Art historian and critic Enrico Crispolti noted that Cagli's informal experience heralded "consequences not only in Rome, but also for the development of spatial and nuclear *gestualismo* in Milan." Cagli's post-war artistic production will constitute the second core group of works presented in this exhibition, where paintings are visibly less figurative to give way to abstraction, and colours are charged with moving intensity.

In the second half of the 20th century, Cagli became the master of a number of younger artists, and was able to quickly established his reputation both nationally and internationally. In addition to exhibiting in New York (1947, 1948, 1949, 1954, 1960, 1971, 2015), the artist's work was also shown in Rome (1932, 1935, 1948, 1954, 1972, 1986, 2001, 2005, 2011), Paris (1937, 1939, 1951, 1964, 1997, 2015), Florence (1938, 2002), San Francisco (1941, 1942, 1946), Los Angeles (1941), Washington (1943), Chicago (1950), São Paulo (1951), Hamburg (1951), Phoenix (1963), and Turin (2017), amongst others. Today, works by Maestro Cagli are part of international private collections as well as public museums, including the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, the Vatican Museums, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje, the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, the Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade in São Paulo, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, the LACMA, the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, the Jewish Museum and the MoMA in New York.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

Corrado Cagli (Ancona 1910 – Roma 1976) was an Italian painter active both in Italy and the United States throughout the 20th century. After attending the *Accademia delle Belle Arti* in Rome, Cagli worked as the artistic director of the Rometti factory, known for its production of fine ceramics. In the early 1930s, the artist made his artistic debut by holding his first solo exhibition at the Galleria di Roma, and shortly after he co-founded the *Gruppo dei Nuovi Pittori Romani* (the 'Roman School of Painting') together with fellow artists Giuseppe Capogrossi and Emanuele Cavalli. Due to his Jewish heritage, Cagli was forced to flee Italy and move to the United States in order to escape Fascist persecution. The years spent in the US became extremely formative for the artist, for Cagli had to chance to interpret and experiment with new pictorial techniques, which would distinctly inform his later production. In 1948 Cagli was able to return to Rome, where he would spend the rest of his life. Deeply influenced by his exile during World War II, the artist shifted away from figurative representation – distinctive trait of the Roman School period – and adapted a more evocative style, embracing the neo-cubist, informal tendencies of the 50s and 60s.

### PUBLIC MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

- Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.
- The Jewish Museum, New York, NY.
- New York Public Library, New York, NY.
- Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT.
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, CA.
- Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA.
- Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH.
- Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO.
- Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Palermo, Italy.
- Museo del Novecento, Milan, Italy.
- Vatican Museums, Contemporary Art Collection, Rome, Italy.
- Uffizi, Florence, Italy
- Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin, Italy.
- Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Palazzo Pitti, Florence, Italy.
- Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Roma Capitale, Rome, Italy.
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.
- Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, Israel.
- The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia.
- Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade, São Paulo, Brasil.
- Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.



*Obsession* (1950), oil on canvassed paper, 67 x 48.5 cm.

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1932: Rome, Galleria di Roma, *Adriana Pincherle, Corrado Cagli*.
- 1935: Rome, Galleria La Cometa, *Corrado Cagli 50 Disegni*.
- 1936: Rome, Galleria La Cometa, *Corrado Cagli*.
- 1937: Paris, Galerie des Quatre Chemins.
- 1938: Florence, Galleria d'Arte di Via Cavour.
- 1939: Paris, Galerie des Quatre Chemins, *Corrado Cagli. Peintures, Dessins*.
- 1940: New York, Julien Levy Gallery.
- 1941: San Francisco, Civic Center Museum. Los Angeles, Shaeffer Gallery. Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum. Los Angeles, Shaeffer Gallery.
- 1943: Tacoma, Washington, College of Puget Sound. Washington, Seattle Art Museum.
- 1946: New York, Hugo Gallery, *C. Cagli, from Cherbourg to Leipzig. Documents and Memories*. Chicago, The Arts Club of Chicago. San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Arts. Santa Barbara, The Santa Barbara Museum of Arts.
- 1947: New York, Knoedler Gallery, *Corrado Cagli*. Rome, Studio d'Arte Palma, *Mostra di Corrado Cagli*.
- 1948: New York, Knoedler Gallery. Milan, Galleria del Camino. Rome, Galleria l'Obelisco. Milan, Galleria del Milione. Florence, Galleria della Vigna. Genoa, Galleria di Genova.
- 1949: Washington D.C., Watkins Gallery.
- 1951: Turin, Galleria della Bussola. Florence, Galleria Il Numero.
- 1955: New York, Schettini Galleries.
- 1959: Bologna, La Loggia. Milan, Galleria Blu. Turin, Galleria Galatea. Rome, Galleria Marguttiana. New York, Trabior's Gallery.
- 1961: Athens, Italian Institute of Culture in Athens, *Corrado Cagli*.
- 1962: Venice, Galleria Alfa.
- 1963: Phoenix, Phoenix Art Museum, *Cagli*.
- 1964: Florence, Galleria L'Aquilone. Rome, Ata Gallery.
- 1965: Milan, Civic Pavilion of Contemporary Art, *Cagli*.
- 1972: Florence, Palazzo Strozzi, *L'Opera di Corrado Cagli*. Florence, Palazzo Vecchio.
- 1977: Ferrara, Palazzo dei Diamanti, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna. Rome, Centro d'Arte Cultura Pan Art.
- 1983: Milano, Galleria Schettini.
- 1985: Arezzo, Sale delle Logge del Vasari, *Cagli. Disegni 1933-1976*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico-Magazzini del Sale, *Il Cagli romano. Anni Venti/Trenta*. Rome, La Sapienza University.
- 1987: Rome, Galleria d'Arte Eliseo.
- 1999: Rome, Archivio Farnese, *Corrado Cagli, gli anni della Scuola Romana 1932-1938*.
- 2005: Padua, UNESCO Pavillion, *Corrado Cagli, 18 Disegni per la Libertà*.
- 2006: Ancona, Mole Vanvitelliana.
- 2010: Pordenone, Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, *Corrado Cagli e il suo Magistero*.
- 2014: Asti, Palazzo Mazzetti, *Corrado Cagli. Attualità per il tempo della continuità*.