

# CARDI GALLERY

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Francesco Vezzoli, GIOVENTÙ BRUCIATA, 2014  
Inkjet on canvas and metallic embroidery, in artist's chosen frame  
139.4 x 146 cm (54 7/8 x 57 1/2 in)

## THE SILVER SCREEN

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Cardi Gallery is pleased to present *The Silver Screen*, an online exhibition featuring 10 major works that attest to the massive impact advertising, the news media and especially the world of cinema have had on the production of two major Italian artists - one of the founders of Pop Art **Mimmo Rotella** (b. 1918, Catanzaro - 2006, Milan) and **Francesco Vezzoli** (1971, Brescia).

Both **Rotella** and **Vezzoli** share a deep fascination with the nature of celebrity. In the case of **Rotella**, several rare *photo-emulsion* and *Artypos* from the early sixties show how the sale of both consumer goods and the news have ingrained themselves on the artist's production and on modern consciousness.

From the advent of the mid-1950's, **Rotella's** rich, visual vocabulary has always been populated by the cinema, from Fellini's films to Spaghetti Westerns of Rome's Cinecittà where the industry was in full bloom, to the divas of the Hollywood classics. Roaming the streets of Rome in the late evening, the young **Rotella**, perhaps the earliest 'street artist', would rip down billboard posters containing some of the most recognizable stars of his day to reassemble at his studio into his now acclaimed *décollages* such as *Baskerville (1961)*. **Rotella** manipulated and modulated these charged images, creating a visual orchestra of the intertwined icons of the silver screen of his day, much in the same way a painter uses colours on a palette to create a painting.

In the early sixties, **Rotella** decided to go to the source, to the origin of where this fountain of cinematic propaganda was produced: the printing presses. In one of the great moments of Duchampian appropriation, he saw the discarded proofs used to test the printing presses' colour and registration before a print run. Not wanting to waste expensive large format paper, the proofs had layers on layers of images. **Rotella** excitedly began to crop and reassemble the proofs onto a canvas backing, what he later would dub *artypos* such as *Venere Imperiale (1966)* and *Magoo (1966)*.

Simultaneous to his production of *décollages* and *artypos*, **Rotella** sought a more immediate medium to convey the iconic moments of his time. In 1963 he began experiment with projecting photos of iconic images onto photo-emulsified canvas that resulted in some of the most important examples of early Pop Art such as *8 ½ (1963)*, *La diva (1963)*, *Lo schermo (1965 - 66)* and *La rivincita (1967)*.

**Vezzoli** approaches stardom from a different angle: the drama of the movie stars' divided identity. Unlike **Rotella** who celebrates their fame and iconic status, **Vezzoli's** work reflects on the anguish of the contradictions between a movie stars private and manufactured public life created by the industry. This contradiction is made apparent in *Study for "Four Fabulous Faces: Joan and Gloria" (2001)*, a tondo image of a Gloria Swanson (star of the tragic *Sunset Boulevard*, a tale of the aging female diva's descent into madness) printed onto fabric with glittering embroidered tear streaming down her face.

As many subsequent works of **Vezzoli**, these gestures - blood marks and tears streaming down the eyes of celebrities - are translated into metallic threads and jewels sewn onto prints using petit-point embroidery. This combination of techniques highlights two diametrically opposed worlds: the realm of traditional, almost disappearing craftsmanship contrasted with the ultra-glamorous aura of international stars. **Vezzoli's** work take the viewer

through a journey in the world of classics of the silver screen: from the star shaped *GIOVENTU' BRUCIATA (2014)* with the image of Sal Mineo imprinted with bloodstained hands (a reference to his murderous character in 1955 film *Rebel Without a Cause*), through to *Crying Divas* from the screenplay of an embroiderer II, a collection of teary-eyed portraits of thirty actresses from Luchino Visconti's masterpieces *Senso (1954)* and *Death in Venice (1971)*.

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To receive a PDF with detailed information on the works, please contact the gallery at [salesmilan@cardigallery.com](mailto:salesmilan@cardigallery.com) or [saleslondon@cardigallery.com](mailto:saleslondon@cardigallery.com).

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Edoardo Osculati  
[edoardo@cardigallery.com](mailto:edoardo@cardigallery.com)