

AGOSTINO BONALUMI  
*SMALL GEMS*

27 maggio – 6 agosto 2021

Cardi Gallery, Corso di Porta Nuova 38, Milan

The Cardi Gallery in Milan announces the opening of the “Small Gems” exhibition by Agostino Bonalumi, devoted to a special selection of works of small dimensions created by the artist during the entire course of his career.

It is an official exhibition, realized in collaboration with the Archivio Bonalumi, and offers a truly unique opportunity to see a series of works that have rarely been on display.

Bonalumi is one of the figures who have made the most significant marks on the Italian artistic scene starting from the 1960s. He took part in the cultural debate that developed in those years, contributing decisively, together with Enrico Baj, Piero Manzoni and Enrico Castellani, to the transcending of informal language in the name of a new objectification of the artwork. Starting from 1959, Agostino Bonalumi began to create shaped works using convex canvas obtained through the use of wooden or steel elements positioned behind the canvas itself. This is a stylistic characteristic that was to remain unchanged over the years and that would lead to the artist testing his skills in both the sculptural and the environmental/architectural fields.

Through the works on display, it will be possible to look back over Bonalumi’s conceptual and project path, from the convex canvases to his sculptural production. The sophisticated results of the artist’s research are achieved here also thanks to a more intimate dimension, in which he employs his own methodological approach. A production, that of small format works, that has always had its own individuality and that has seen the artist experimenting with various materials: in addition to convex canvas, also with ceramics and bronze for example. The works on display are neither preparatory models nor sketches of works of larger dimensions: rather, they have come about from the same practice and sometimes share the conformation of the larger works. The small format works were often realized following the larger ones, as if the reduced dimensions enabled the artist to better delineate the project idea lying at the basis of the latter.

The exhibition will be open to the public from 27 May to 6 August 2021 and will be accompanied by a publication of over three hundred colour pages, edited by Antonella Soldaini with Veronica Locatelli.

“For me it is a great pleasure to have worked together with Fabrizio Bonalumi and the Bonalumi Archive in the organization of this exhibition, which will be accompanied by a major book that will analyze the work of the artist’s small gems: a further necessary celebration of one of the key figures of the Italian Post-war Period” (Nicolo Cardi).

“This exhibition provides a snapshot of one particular aspect of the artist, never presented and analyzed before in such an analytical form. It offers a great opportunity, which I am happy to share with the Cardi Gallery, for which I have the greatest respect” (Fabrizio Bonalumi, Bonalumi Archive).

## BIOGRAPHY

Agostino Bonalumi was born in Vercate (MB) in 1935. After studies in technical and mechanical design, he devoted his energies to autodidactic painting, beginning to display his works at a very young age.

From 1958 he began his association with Enrico Castellani and Piero Manzoni, with whom he exhibited first at the Galleria Pater in Milan, and then on other occasions in Rome, Milan and Lausanne.

In 1961 at the Gallery Kasper in Lausanne, he was among the founders of the Nuova Scuola Europea [New European School] group.

From 1965 he began a long association with Arturo Schwarz and Gillo Dorfles. From 1966 he was represented exclusively by the Galleria del Naviglio, directed by Renato Cardazzo: in 1973 Edizioni del Naviglio published an extensive monograph on Bonalumi, edited by Gillo Dorfles.

He participated in the Venice Biennale in 1966 and in 1970 with a group of works and with his own personal room.

There followed a period of study and work in Mediterranean Africa and the United States, where the Bonino Gallery in New York organised a one-man show devoted to his work.

In 1967 he was invited to the Biennial Exhibition in São Paulo and in 1968 to the Biennial Exhibition of Young People in Paris.

In 2002 the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca in Rome awarded Agostino Bonalumi the Premio Presidente della Repubblica for his career.

Having become one of the most recognized exponents of the Italian art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during his career he also created works of environmental painting and set designs for the theatre.

Agostino Bonalumi passed away in Monza on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013.