

Monica Bonvicini: Put All Heaven in a Rage

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

September 4 – October 12, 2024

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present *Put All Heaven in a Rage*, the gallery's first solo exhibition with Monica Bonvicini, opening on Wednesday, September 4th in New York.

Among the most important artists of her generation, Monica Bonvicini's evocative and thought-provoking works explore the relationship between architecture, gender, and power. As a strong female voice, Bonvicini's multifaceted practice addresses issues of institutional critique and the politics of space through a feminist lens. Dry-humored and direct, Bonvicini's art never refrains from establishing a critical connection with the sites where it is exhibited, the materials that comprise it, and the roles of spectator and creator, while commenting on the conflicting reality of the world today.

Central to the show and the viewer's first encounter is the architectural installation *Buy Me a Mirror*. By reflecting the viewer's image, Bonvicini's installation compels individuals to confront their own presence and the social contexts they inhabit, transforming them from observers into active participants / actors. This engagement is further emphasized in works like *Gorgeous*, where the interplay of voyeurism, narcissism and self-awareness is explored playfully through reflective surfaces that literally stick their tongues out. These elements critically reflect on design ideologies and societal dogmas, prompting a reconsideration of perspectives and the construction of reality. In *You to Me*, Bonvicini challenges the imagery of handcuffs to explore the tensions of interpersonal relationships and the constraints of societal expectations, further questioning the dynamics of power and control in both private and public spheres.

Highlighting the material realities of labor and the delicate balance between structure and chaos, the artist uses traditional timber 2x4s to recreate the framing of a house, dividing the exhibition space. Bonvicini perpetuates the symbolic nature of the house as a place where identity is constructed, and as a private space which desires and relationships are formed.

Throughout the gallery, a variety of works draw their materiality and imagery from cultural associations and power dynamics, particularly as perceived through sexuality stereotypes: woven leather belts, dangling handcuffs, chainsaws dipped in black rubber, voyeuristic mirrors, clanging chains formed into swings, and the stylized male landscape of American prairies. Allowing for playful and performative acts, visitors can sit or lie in *Chainswing Rings & Stripes*, subverting the social norms and typical human engagement in art.

The monumental *Marlboro Man Prairie* depicts the iconic imagery of the Marlboro Man, stripping it of its original color and branding to reveal a haunting black-and-white landscape. This deconstruction of a commercial symbol of masculinity and Western ideals invites a critical examination of cultural hegemony, the pervasive influence of American capitalism, and how landscapes and frontiers clash with ideas of freedom and nationalism in contemporary society.

Bonvicini's exploration of gender identities is vividly depicted in a series of new works in the upstairs galleries. A recurring chain motif is overlaid by pink text on mirrors, turning design objects into a confrontation about stereotypes and celebratory hymns given to powerful female figures. The installation *Bonded Eternmale*, transforms Willy Guhl's well known chairs into subversive depictions of gendered spaces, emphasizing the fluidity and complexity of identity.

This narrative is further extended in Bonvicini's black-and-white drawings, where extracted and dissected quotes from literature and poetry create compelling commentary on political concern, division, and the pursuit of personal and collective agency.

Put All Heaven in a Rage serves as a profound critique of the structures that govern our lives. By engaging viewers in a reflective and participatory experience, Bonvicini's works invite us to reconsider our roles within these frameworks, ultimately advocating for a more inclusive and egalitarian society. The exhibition's title, borrowed from William Blake's poem "Auguries of Innocence" from 1803, encapsulates the spirit of disruption that characterizes Bonvicini's practice, underscoring the transformative power of desire and action in challenging the status quo.

Born in Venice, Italy, Monica Bonvicini lives and works in Berlin, Germany. The artist studied at the Universität der Künste in Berlin and the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, CA. Bonvicini has been a professor since 2003, having taught at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna and the Berlin University of the Arts.

Since the 1990s, Monica Bonvicini has had numerous exhibitions and projects around the world. In 2022, the artist had a major solo exhibition at Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin. Other significant solo exhibitions include Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2022), Kunsthaus Graz, Austria (2022), Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany (2020), Belvedere 21 Museum of Contemporary Art, Vienna (2019), OGR, Turin, Italy (2019), Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (2017), BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, Newcastle (2016), Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel (2011), Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2012), Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France (2009), Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (2009), Art Institute of Chicago (2009), Sculpture Center, New York (2007), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2002), among others.

Bonvicini has earned several awards, including the Golden Lion at the Biennale di Venezia (1999); the Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst, from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (2005); the Rolandpreis für Kunst for Art in Public Space from the Foundation Bremen, Germany (2013); the Hans Platschek Prize for Art and Writing, Germany (2019); the Oskar Kokoschka Prize, Austria (2020).

Monica Bonvicini's works can be found permanently installed in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London; on the waterfront at Bjørvika, before the Den Norske Opera & Ballett House, Oslo; the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art (2003-2019); and the Weserburg Museum of Modern Art, Bremen, among others.

Bonvicini's work is represented in the permanent collections of Museum of Modern Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Istanbul Museum of Art, Istanbul, Turkey; Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Italy; MAXXI, Rome, Italy; Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy; Jumex Museum, Mexico City, Mexico; MAMbo, Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Italy; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, Switzerland; Museion, Bozen, Italy; Museum Sztuki, Lodz, Poland; Neue Galerie, Graz, Austria; Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin, Germany; Neues Museum Weimar, Weimar, Germany; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, Germany; Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany; Volpinum Kunstsammlung, Vienna, Austria, among others.

Artist Talk

Monica Bonvicini in conversation with Julia Bryan-Wilson



**Wednesday, September 4th
6:00pm**

Julia Bryan-Wilson is a Professor of Contemporary Art and LGBTQ+ Studies at Columbia University and Curator-at-Large at Museu de Arte de São Paulo. Julia wrote an essay entitled Coercive Spaces, Desirous Space in Monica Bonvicini's 2019 catalogue, *I CANNOT HIDE MY ANGER*, published on the occasion of her solo exhibition at Belvedere 21 in Vienna. Her most recent book is Louise Nevelson's *Sculpture: Drag, Color, Join, Face* (2023).