

ETTORE SPALLETTI DAN GRAHAM

17 April – 20 June 2026
79 rue du Temple, 75003 Paris
Opening Reception: Friday 17 April, 6–8pm



Ettore Spalletti, 2011. Photo Elisia Menduni. © Patrizia Leonelli

Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to announce *Ettore Spalletti Dan Graham*: an exhibition of two artists in dialogue which will be on view through June 20. Though different in their artistic backgrounds, each shared a desire to offer a “space” where forms and colors—whether absorbed or reflected—draw the gaze and engage the body of the viewer and explore shifts in perception. In the work of Spalletti (1940-2019) form, color, and space come together to establish a relationship with the viewer, who in turn becomes an ally. Graham (1942-2022) placed the visitor at the center of the perceptual experience, compelling them to see themselves while observing others, within a space that transforms into a landscape. Belonging to no movement, both reject categorization.

Ettore Spalletti fostered a dialogue between classicism and contemporary art through a practice in which painting and sculpture merge in the pursuit of an essential dimension and a new conception of spatiality, in constant dialogue with the art of the past and, in particular, with the masters of the Italian Renaissance, from Piero della Francesca to Raffaello. In his artistic language, geometries and archetypal forms, given substance by color, transform painting into sculpture, while sculpture becomes painterly. His colors are not merely “surface” colors, but “atmospheric” ones, possessing a profound emotional quality: they embrace the observer, reflecting light back into the space they occupy.

“Blue is a color that is always around us; it is a color that envelops us...The sky is always around us; it never repeats itself in the same way; every day it offers you a different blue and a different light. They are never defined within an ideology, but they are defined within their own transformation. Sometimes, when someone speaks to me about monochromes, I say that mine are landscapes.” E.S.

Dan Graham advocated a social and psychological conception of art by creating works that are both conceptual and functional, constantly straddling the boundary between architecture and sculpture. His steel-and-glass pavilions expand the surrounding landscape due to the unique properties of reflection, refraction, and diffusion of light, which shift as the surrounding scenery changes, in response to visitors’ movements within the space. The glass panels that make up the pavilions are transparent on one side and reflect light like a mirror on the other, thereby inviting viewers to interact with the work and explore its changing nature. The space becomes a place of “disorientation” where the boundary between interior and exterior, public and private, blurs through reflections and transparencies.

On the ground floor of the gallery, *Colonna sola*, *Carte rosa*, and *Tight Squeeze* face one another and face us, responding to the shifting light they absorb and reflect. The concept of the column has been present in Spalletti’s practice since the 1970s, reflecting a desire for verticality that is consistently recognizable across different moments. In *Colonna sola*, 2014, color constitutes its body, triggering a chromatic fantasy based on the transition from painting to architecture; its base contains all the lines of geometry: the horizontal, the vertical, the oblique, and the curve. In the diptych *Carte rosa*, 1998, the work, painted on both sides, breaks free from the wall, responsive to the mood of the environment. At times, it is alabaster or onyx that, through light, reveals the color hidden within, such as in *Scatola di colore*, 1991 and *Portacipria*, 2013 on view in the exhibition.

“Pink is the color of the skin that never has a fixed form of its own, but is constantly transformed by the mood we are in... Gray, for me, is welcoming; it complements all the other colors well... I prepare a mixture of chalk and pigments, then

apply it in successive layers, every day at the same time for nearly a month. Finally, when I break up the pigments by abrasion, the color is revealed, and the painting emerges. Looking at it, you cannot tell whether the color moves from the surface inward or whether it comes from the inside outward.” E.S.

Graham’s *Tight Squeeze*, 2015, a hybrid structure between sculpture and architecture, was originally designed for the roof of the Cité Radieuse in Marseille. Consisting of two panels, one straight and made of perforated metal, and the other curved and made of two-way mirror glass, the work traces the undulating form of a wave in space, echoing the “vertical city” built by Le Corbusier facing the Mediterranean Sea. Both enclosed (self-contained) and open (devoid of a door and roof), *Tight Squeeze*, enters into dialogue with the architecture of the historical gallery space, the garden and, above all, with Spalletti’s work exhibited alongside it. *Tight Squeeze* is an invitation to visitors to interact with it, to enter. The reflective and transparent panel creates a complex interplay of reflections, mirrors, distortions, and superimpositions; a visual perception that transforms depending on whether one is inside or outside. We are not mere observers: we become both perceiving subjects and perceived objects. The perforated metal panel, playing with light and shadow, enhances both the physical and political experience.

“...my pavilions are utopian because they allow you to see both transparency and reflection at the same time from both sides of the walls. I use glass with variable reflectivity, which today allows one to control the percentage of reflection on both sides, and often, if there are multiple reflections, I keep the reflectivity low so as to blend it with transparency. However, the relationship between the two also depends on the conditions of the sky and the external light; indeed, it changes constantly, and this creates a landscape-like quality in my architecture.” D.G.

The dialogue between Spalletti’s and Graham’s works continues on the lower level of the gallery. *Untitled*, 1976–1992, a series of 50 graphite drawings, now in the collection of the MNAM–Centre Pompidou, are reproduced as lithographs and constitutes Spalletti’s formal vocabulary. Fields of color, lines, archetypal figures or those transformed from the world of geometry—memories the artist has drawn upon throughout his life—take shape in *Orizzontale*, 1996, *Vuoto, grigio, nero neutro*, 2010, and *Grigio, argento*, 2015. At times the frame opens outward, taking on the responsibility of space; at times it softens, becoming rounded; at other times it contains a space bent by color. Nearby, the model *Half Cylinder/Perforated Steel Triangular Enclosure*, 2008 also perfectly illustrates Graham’s exploration of the geometry of forms. Similar to three-dimensional drawings, the models served as preparatory studies for future pavilions while also functioning as sculptures in their own right. The first models created in the late 1970s, prior to his first pavilion unveiled at documenta VII in 1982, stemmed from a reflection on habitable spaces and the use of one-way mirrors, an idea that came to him while observing office buildings. Created in 2008, *Half Cylinder/ Perforated Steel Triangular Enclosure* marks the first use of perforated metal in combination with two-way mirror glass, an association later revisited in *Tight Squeeze*.

Ettore Spalletti (1940–2019) was born in Cappelle sul Tavo (Pescara), where he lived and worked his entire life. He had major exhibitions dedicated to his work around the world. In 2014, a major retrospective was presented simultaneously at three Italian museums: the GAM, Galleria Civica d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, in Turin; at the MAXXI - National Museum of 21st-Century Arts, Rome; and at the MADRE, Donnaregina Museum of Contemporary Art, Naples. This project envisioned a single major exhibition unfolding from the north to the south of Italy, as if the museums were Italy itself and the three cities were the rooms of this museum.

Other notable institutional solo exhibitions include: yu-un, Tokyo, Japan (2024); Magazzino Italian Art, Cold Spring, New York (2023); National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rome (2021); Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco (2019); Palazzo Cini, Venice (2015); GNAM - National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome (2010); Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Kleve (2009); Villa Medici, Académie de France, Rome (2006); Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (2005); Castello di Rivoli - Museum of Contemporary Art, Rivoli - Turin (2004); Fundación la Caixa, Madrid (2000); Capodimonte Museum, Naples (1999); Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Strasbourg (1998); MUHKA - Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp (1995); Guggenheim Museum, New York (1993); Musée d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (1991); De Appel, Amsterdam (1989); Kunstverein, Munich (1989); Portikus, Frankfurt (1989); Halles d’art contemporain, Rennes (1988); Museum Van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent (1983); Museum Folkwang, Essen (1982). Spalletti has been invited several times to Documenta in Kassel (1982, 1992) and to the Venice Biennale (1982, 1993, 1995, 1997). Notable permanent installations include: the *Salle des départs* (1996) for the Hôpital Raymond Poincaré in Garches near Paris; *Collection, Landscape*, Obayashi Corporation, Tokyo (1998); *Necessity of Movement and Contemplation*, Yokohama Island Tower, Yokohama (2003); *Fountain*, Palace of Justice, Pescara (2004); and the *Chapel* (2016),

created in collaboration with architect Patrizia Leonelli Spalletti for the Villa Serena Nursing Home in Città Sant'Angelo, Pescara.

Dan Graham (1942-2022) was born in Illinois, grew up in New Jersey, and later made New York his home and workplace. An unclassifiable and self-taught artist, erudite and bibliophile, he was also an art critic and theorist. Architectural questions remained central to his practice: “*Not Post-Modernism: Dan Graham and 20th-Century Architecture*”, presented at the Serralves Museum, Porto, in 2023-2024, was developed in collaboration with the artist before his passing. Graham has had major exhibitions in a large number of international institutions such as Museion, Bolzano, Italy (2023); The Red Brick Museum, Beijing, China (2017); The Metropolitan Museum, New York (2014); De Pont Foundation, Tilburg, The Netherlands (2014); MaMo Marseille (2015); and a retrospective show simultaneously presented at three American institutions: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota (all in 2009).

Other notable solo exhibitions include Castello di Rivoli, Museo D'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy (2006); Museu Serralves, Porto, Portugal (2001); Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (1997); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1993); the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth (1985); Kunsthalle Berne (1983) and The Renaissance Society, University of Chicago (1981). Graham has participated in Documenta V (1972), VI (1977), VII (1982), IX (1992), and X (1997) and in the Skulptur Projekte (1987) and (1997). He has been the recipient of numerous awards including the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York (2010), the French Vermeil Medal, Paris (2001), and the Coutts Contemporary Art Foundation Award (1992). A number of his *pavilions* are shown permanently in sculptures' parks or urban contexts in many countries across Europe, Asia and North America.

Marian Goodman Gallery champions the work of artists who stand among the most influential of our time and represents over five generations of diverse thought and practice. The Gallery's exhibition program, characterized by its caliber and rigor, provides international platforms for its artists to showcase their work, foster vital dialogues with new audiences, and advance their practices within nonprofit and institutional realms. Established in New York City in 1977, Marian Goodman Gallery gained prominence early in its trajectory for introducing the work of seminal European artists to American audiences. Today, through its exhibition spaces in New York, Los Angeles, and Paris, the Gallery maintains its global focus, representing some 50 artists working in the U.S. and internationally.

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