

Salvo

La città

September 11–October 24, 2026

Sprüth Magers, Berlin

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Salvo began his career in the 1960s with early experiments involving photomontage, text and engraved marble. His conceptual practice was reconceived in 1973, when he turned decisively to painting as its unlikely vehicle. In his singular body of work, Salvo returns again and again to the same archetypal locations – Mediterranean landscapes, Classical ruins, factory districts, snowy mountainscapes and villages – each holding a universal familiarity. Through this gesture of repetition and refinement, the specific geographies of these recurring motifs dissolve, pushed to a point of maximum tension until they break free. What remains are pretexts for experiments in colour, form and light. On the occasion of Berlin Art Week 2026, Sprüth Magers is pleased to present *La città*, an exhibition of paintings that dwell in the city.

The presentation in the Berlin gallery's Window space, visible from the street outside, unfolds as a journey from the outskirts to the pulse of the city centre. The passage of time is traceable in the gradient hues of sunset giving way to the total darkness of night, when artificial light comes into play: electric neon signs, cone-shaped beams pouring from street lamps, the soft glow of a tram carriage, the galvanic glare of a pinball machine. All coalesce into leaping, translucent fields of psychedelic colour that illuminate the cubic forms of Salvo's architecture – buildings pared down to basic geometric shapes. Focused on "the compactness of the volumes that rise up before you"[1] over any object detail, some paintings of the urban periphery depicting anonymous facades reduce figuration so far that they teeter on the edge of pure abstraction, held back from the brink by Salvo's optical precision of light. These sparse canvases stand in sharp contrast to works like *Al cinema* (1988) or *Al bar* (1981), which bristle with human activity, the flow of figures and vehicles animating the city's communal spaces with a theatricality the peripheral works withhold.

Salvo's heightened treatment of the cityscape lays bare echoes of his Italian metaphysical and Futurist forebears, including Giorgio de Chirico, Ottone Rosai, Mario Sironi and Carlo Carrà. *La città*, above all, celebrates Salvo's fascination with the city as motif – and, within it, the nocturnal as the condition that enables the interplay between architectonic form and his articulation of light, refracted into ever-deeper registers of colour.

[1] Salvo, Luisa Castellini, in *Salvo – Opere recenti*, Biale Cerruti Art Gallery, 2006

Salvo (1947–2015) lived and worked in Turin. Solo exhibitions include Pinacoteca Agnelli, Turin (2025), Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rome (2022), Museo d'Arte della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano (2017, with Alighiero Boetti), Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin (2007), Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bergamo (2002), Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nîmes and Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (both 1988), Kunstmuseum Lucerne (1983), Mannheimer Kunstverein and Museum Folkwang, Essen (both 1977). In addition to participating in Documenta 5 (1972), the 1976 and 1988 editions of Biennale di Venezia and the seventeenth Quadriennale in Rome (2020–21), recent group exhibitions include Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands (2023), Kunsthhaus Glarus, Switzerland (2022), Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2021), Menil Drawing Institute, Houston (2020) and Consortium, Dijon (2018).

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