

# THE MAYOR GALLERY

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## MARIO SCHIFANO

### *Compagni, compagni, 1968*

5 November – 20 December 2018



*Compagni, compagni, 1968, enamel and spray-paint on canvas with Perspex, 160 x 140 cm*

In 2018 marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the global wave of protests, The Mayor Gallery is holding an exhibition of Mario Schifano's (b. 1934 Khoms, Libya – d. 1998 Rome, Italy) political series *Compagni, compagni* (*Comrades, comrades*) 1968.

A radical and charismatic figure, Mario Schifano was in the centre of the avant-garde social life of Rome; mixing with aristocrats, actors, crooks, writers and Rock 'n Roll musicians. Eschewing his earlier 'Monochrome' paintings in the early 1960s Schifano started to bring in iconic 'Pop' advertising logos and text such as his 'Coca-Cola' and 'Esso' works and in 1962 exhibited alongside Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Tom Wesselmann at Sidney Janis Gallery in 'The New Realists' exhibition.

By 1968 inspired by the mass socialist movements which spread across Europe Schifano's interest in social change and contemporary history was realised both in his film making tackling subjects such as the Vietnam War and particularly in his *Compagni, compagni series*. In this series, Communist motifs of the hammer and sickle and political slogans are spray painted boldly in black using templates-reminiscent of the banner and placards used in the protests. The rounded corners of the canvas, often covered with Plexiglas, resembled the frame of a slide producing a cinematic quality, with the lack of overt traditional artistic ability reflecting the democratic nature of the ideology. Using the same slogans calling for fairer solutions to social and political contradictions, he is inviting the viewer to react to the serialisation and mass utilisation of political mantra.

Mario Schifano has been exhibited widely both in Italy (Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1980, Venice Biennale, 1982 and 1984) and internationally (Paris, Centre Pompidou, 1981; San Francisco, Italo-American Museum, 1985; London, Royal Academy, 1989; Brussels, Palais des Beaux Arts, 1989; New York, Solomon Guggenheim, 1994; Beijing, International Exhibition Center, 1997) and is included in a number of major international museum and private collections.

Fully illustrated catalogue available with an introduction by Marco Meneguzzo

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Opening times:

Monday – Friday 10 am – 5.30 pm