



Lucio Fontana
(Argentinian, 1899 - 1968)

Biography

Lucio Fontana was a Argentine-Italian painter and sculptor born in 1899, in Argentina. In 1905, Fontana moved with his father to Milan and after serving in the Italian army in World War I, he obtained his diploma as a 'master builder'. After graduating, Fontana returned to Argentina, where he worked as a sculptor in his father's studio before opening his own, in 1924. He moved back to Milan in 1927 to study under Adolfo Wildt at the Accademia di Brera. He spent the duration of World War II in Argentina where he developed and published in 1946 his new theory of art in *Manifesto Blanco*, which proposed a 'spatial' form of art, instead of a 'virtual' approach.

Fontana is considered founder and representative of Spatialism. Followers of 'Spazialismo' (the Italian translation), which arose in the late 1940's, intended to synthesize colour, sound, space, movement, and time into a new type of art. Fontana published his ideas of the movement in his *Manifesto Blanco* in Argentina in 1946. He proposed a 'spatial' attempt in art instead of a 'virtual' approach, combining art and science through the use of techniques such as neon lighting and television. He also cut and stabbed paintings, which are also considered Spatialist works. Known as *Concetto Spaziale* ('spatial concepts'), these evolved throughout the remainder of his career. These forms of art ranged from holes and slashes in monochrome paintings to egg-like shapes in undefined spaces and were created using different techniques. In his *Pietre* ('stones') series, he fused the sculptural with painting by encrusting the surfaces of his canvases with heavy impasto and colored glass. In his *Buchi* ('holes') cycle, he punctured the surface of his canvases, breaking the membrane of two-dimensionality in order to highlight the space behind the picture. In his *Tagli* ('slashes') cycle, he sliced through matte monochrome surfaces.

Fontana also developed ties with the Italian *Arte Povera* (literally 'poor art') movement between 1967 and 1972. Like the term 'Impressionism', this term was derived from art criticism. Artists from this movement adopted a radical stance against established institutions of government, industry and culture, by creating unconventional art composed of different materials and styles.

Fontana died at the age of 69 in Varese on September 7 1968.



Selected Collections

Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa, Israel
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Design Museum Den Bosch, Den Bosch, The Netherlands
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, Belgium
Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA
Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston, USA
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. USA
Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA
Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, USA
Museo d'Arte Contemporanea del Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli, Italy
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, Italy
Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (GAM), Turin, Italy
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain
Tate Gallery, London, United Kingdom
Calderara Foundation Collection, Italy

Selected Exhibitions

2013

Destroy the Picture: Painting the Void, 1949–1962, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA), Chicago, USA
The 60s In The Guggenheim Collections. From Informel To Pop Art, Guggenheim Museum, Venice, Italy

2009

Lucio Fontana. Le scritture del disegno, Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Milan, Italy
Lucio Fontana: Zeichen und Zeichnung, Museum Liner, Appenzell, Switzerland

2008

Lucio Fontana, Scultore, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, Italy

2007

Via Crucis - Lucio Fontana, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Brazil
Lucio Fontana Sculptor, Castello di San Giorgio, Torino, Italy

2006

Lucio Fontana, Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
Lucio Fontana: Venice/New York, Guggenheim Museum, Venice, Italy
Lucio Fontana: Alle Radici Dello Spazialismo, Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimo, New York, USA

2004

Lucio Fontana, Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, Switzerland

2000

Lucio Fontana, Sperone Westwater, New York, USA

1999

Minimalia: An Italian Version in 20th Century Art, New York, USA

1998

Gold: Gothic Masters and Lucio Fontana, Compagnia Di Belle Arti (& other locations), Milan, Italy
Lucio Fontana, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Italy
Lucio Fontana. Entre Materia y Espacio, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain

1996

Lucio Fontana: Retrospektive, Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria

1987

Lucio Fontana, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

1977

Lucio Fontana: A Retrospective, Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA

1966

Retrospective, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands

1959

V. Bienal Sao Paulo, Brazil

1930

Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

Selected Literature

F. Enrico Crispolti (ed.), *FONTANA*, Fondazione Lucio Fontana, Edizioni Charta (1999), Milan, Italy