

Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro
presents

Open Studio #2

LA NEGAZIONE DELLA FORMA

Arnaldo Pomodoro tra minimalismo e controcultura

[THE NEGATION OF FORM. Arnaldo Pomodoro between minimalism and counterculture]

curated by **Federico Giani**

The second appointment with the exhibitions staged in **Arnaldo Pomodoro's Studio** focuses on the artist's **American years** between **1966** and **1970**

from 12 March to 28 May 2023

every Sunday from 11am to 7pm

Arnaldo Pomodoro's Studio

Entry via the courtyard of the Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro

Via Vigevano 9, Milan

Milano, February 21, 2023. **Open Studio**, the cycle of exhibitions staged in the **Master's studio**, created with the aim of rediscovering and investigating particular themes and periods from along Arnaldo Pomodoro's artistic path, returns to the **Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro**, exhibiting **original works, documents and archive materials**.

From Sunday **12 March to 28 May 2023**, the exhibition ***La negazione della forma. Arnaldo Pomodoro tra minimalismo e controcultura*** [The negation of form. Arnaldo Pomodoro between minimalism and counterculture], curated by **Federico Giani**, places the spotlight on the five-year period **1966-1970**, a very lively and interesting season. These were **Pomodoro's "American years"** – lived between Italy and the United States, with teaching posts at Stanford and Berkeley – during which the artist developed **an unprecedented formal experimentation**, influenced by phenomena such as minimalism, and participated as a protagonist in **counterculture** initiatives, intended, that is, to open up new spaces for political and cultural practice.

The exhibition is divided into **six sections**, each of which investigates a specific aspect of Pomodoro's work or life, and presents around **forty works** – **sculptures, graphics, multiples, drawings, models and prototypes** – some of which **rediscovered and restored** for the occasion, others loaned by private collectors and by institutions such as the Collezione Intesa Sanpaolo and the Museo Magi '900 – Pieve di Cento (BO). The story of the context and the episodes that saw the Master as protagonist is entrusted to a selection of **photographs, films and archive materials** and to a group of works by **American artists** –

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colleagues and students on the campuses – with whom Pomodoro established friendships in those years, such as **Harold Paris, Sue Bitney, William T. Wiley, Stephen Laub and Arlo Acton.**

One of the founding themes of Arnaldo Pomodoro's poetics – at the origin of the invention of the famous *Spheres* – is the “**negation of form**”, that is, the search for the vital counterposing of solids and voids. Between 1966 and 1970 – coming to grips with the aesthetic and theoretical positions of minimalism established in those years by a series of crucial exhibitions in the United States – Pomodoro pushed his intervention on the spherical form towards a degree of extreme formal and conceptual synthesis. **Thus there came about a group of works that he himself defined in terms of “mental operations”: the *Rotanti*, *Forma X* and *Onda*.**

In the *Rotanti* the corroded surfaces and patterns of signs that characterize the *Sfere* progressively give way to cuts and clearcut, regular perforations, the result of a working process that, though remaining manual, seems to wish to probe into the possibilities of a mechanical or industrial aesthetics. This aspect proves even clearer in the choice of the chrome steel of *Forma X* and *Onda*, materializations of the “negative forms” obtained from the *Rotanti*, voids that become concrete and real positivities.

In those years the **experimentation on the relationship between solids and voids**, between opposite and complementary elements, involved **all the artist's spheres of activity**. These were genuine “experiments on the method”, represented in the exhibition by a series of lithographies on reflective paper or with contrasting chromatic ranges, midway between Pop and Optical, by an artist's book created with the poet Roberto Sanesi, as well as by multiples and jewellery, the latter curated by GEM-Montebello and immortalized by the photographs of Ugo Mulas.

Pomodoro's *American years*, enlivened by a blend of artistic and non-artistic stimuli that spurred on and nurtured his research, are recounted in the exhibition by a series of **archive materials and by works by artist friends** documenting his activities as a **passionate teacher at Stanford and Berkeley** and his role as a **bridge between the United States and Italy**, manifested in particular in the counterculture initiatives organized and promoted by Pomodoro, such as the **avant-garde magazine *Che fare***, founded and edited together with his friend Francesco Leonetti, and the **cycle of open-air exhibitions *Una scultura nella strada*** [A Sculpture in the Street], involving artists such as Alexander Calder, Giuseppe Spagnolo, Gianfranco Pardi, Mauro Staccioli and Nicola Carrino.

The exhibition closes with *Shaping.Negation – La forma negativa* (1970), an experimental film made with his friends Ugo Mulas and Francesco Leonetti, a self-ironic portrait of the artist, of his works and his *modus operandi*, and more broadly also of the entire art system, a synthesis of the salient features of the elements that had characterized his work and his life in the five-year period 1966–1970, with minimalist experimentations and counterculture initiatives.

The negation of form. Arnaldo Pomodoro between minimalism and counterculture

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Access details: from 12 March to 28 May 2023 – every Sunday from 11am to 7pm, with guided visits included in the ticket price at 12:30, 3:30 and 5:30pm – Single ticket €5 / free for those aged under 26 and members of the Fondazione.

The premises of Arnaldo Pomodoro's Studio are not fully accessible for people with serious motor disabilities.

Tickets purchased at fondazionearnaldopomodoro.it

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