



RARE PRESENTATION OF ITALIAN MODERN MASTER MEDARDO ROSSO INCLUDING EXPERIMENTAL PHOTOS, DRAWINGS, AND SCULPTURE, SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON ARTISTIC VISION AND PROCESS

Organized by CIMA and on View October 2014–June 2015,
Installation is Complemented by Two Important Works by American Artist Cy Twombly

CIMA Expands Fellowship Program in U.S. and Italy in Conjunction with Installation's Opening



Enfant au Soleil and *Ecce Puer* in the artist's studio on the Boulevard des Batignolles in Paris, circa 1908.

New York, NY (August 27, 2014) – This October, the Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) unveils a major installation of sculpture, drawing, and experimental photography by acclaimed modernist Medardo Rosso, revealing the exceptional range of an artist known chiefly for his three-dimensional work. Initially derided by critics, Rosso later achieved renown for his radical approach to process, materiality, and form. The presentation, anchored by major loans from the Museo Medardo Rosso in Italy, explores the artist's mastery of abstraction, light, and shadow, as well as his tendency to return again and again to the same subject, rendering a familiar form in an array of diverse materials from plaster, wax, and bronze to photography and drawing. The focused installation marks the U.S. debut for the majority of the works, and is the first time that a comprehensive group of drawings by Rosso will be on public display.

On view October 17, 2014 through June 27, 2015, “Medardo Rosso” is the second presentation mounted by the new foundation, which promotes public appreciation for, and new scholarship in, 20th-century Italian art through annual installations, Study Days and other public programs, as well as its fellowship program. The installation of approximately 115 works includes:

- Examples of Rosso's serial sculptures, most notably three iterations of *Madame Noblet*, one in bronze (1897), one in plaster (post-1914), and a black wax on plaster version (1913-14);
- Rosso's *Rieuse* (1902), a work inspired by the enigmatic smiles of the women in Leonardo da Vinci's paintings; this fragile wax-on-plaster sculpture, on loan from the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro in Venice (Fondazione dei Musei Civici di Venezia), has never before traveled outside of Italy;
- Intimately scaled, abstract drawings—all stand-alone works of art, not preparatory sketches—that incorporate found materials such as old envelopes, receipts, and notecards from hotels or cafés;
- More than 50 original photographs taken by the artist; and

- Some large-scale reproductions of Rosso’s photographs of his lost experimental, life-sized plaster sculptures—the last remaining evidence of these fragile works, which are largely unrecognized in Rosso scholarship.

In CIMA’s tradition of juxtaposing modern and contemporary art, the Rosso installation is complemented by the presentation of two works by the American pioneer of abstraction Cy Twombly—the painting *Untitled (New York City)* (1956) and the diptych work-on-paper *Idilion* (1976)—featuring freely made, calligraphic marks and emotive gestures resonant with Rosso’s aesthetic.

“Rosso is broadly acclaimed for his masterful work as a sculptor, but he was prolific as a draftsman and photographer and was a much more experimental artist than is typically understood,” said CIMA Founder and President Laura Mattioli. “In a time when there was a clear hierarchy among media, he approached each form of expression with equal weight and significance, and distinguished himself from his contemporaries through unusual choices in subject matter and material. By presenting a holistic look at Rosso’s sculpture, drawings, and photography and placing them in dialogue with the gestural work of Twombly, CIMA hopes to offer a platform for deeper, more comprehensive understanding of Rosso’s versatility and to inspire renewed public interest and appreciation for this critical 20th-century artist.”

In tandem with the opening of “Medardo Rosso,” CIMA has expanded its fellowship program in support of critical research on modern Italian art in the United States and abroad. Four scholars will research and explore various aspects of Rosso’s career and legacy during their residency in New York, and a new fellowship position has been added to support research travel to Italy. In addition, CIMA will host a full roster of rich programming throughout the duration of the Rosso installation, including: lectures and a roundtable discussion on Rosso’s serial sculpture practice and technique, featuring leading Rosso scholar Sharon Hecker and conservation scientists from Harvard University on October 30, 2014; a conversation with Metropolitan Museum of Art curator Nicholas Cullinan, exploring the ties between Rosso and Twombly, in November 2014; a Study Day on Rosso’s photographic practice in spring 2015; and a series of artist talks focusing on Rosso’s enduring appeal among artists working today. Details on these programs will be posted as available to CIMA’s calendar at www.italianmodernart.org/upcoming-events.

Added Executive Director Heather Ewing, “We are thrilled to be advancing new research on the life and work of Rosso, an unsung trailblazer in the story of modern art. As CIMA enters into its second season, we have expanded our fellowship program beyond New York—thanks in part to the tremendous response of applicants from across the globe—enabling the next generation of historians, curators, teachers, and specialists to unearth important new discoveries about Italian modern art.”

About Medardo Rosso and the Installation at CIMA

By introducing a remarkable sense of light and movement to his forms, Medardo Rosso (1858–1928) revolutionized modern sculptural practice in the early 20th century. Using a variety of techniques, including hand modeling and casts, Rosso created mottled, fragile textures, resulting in highly expressive works. He rejected the traditional notion that sculpture must be viewed in the round, and created works that force the viewer to approach from a single vantage point, their subjects only discernible from a precise angle through the interplay of light and shadow. Rosso also avoided the historical and allegorical subjects that were in vogue in sculpture at the time and tended to focus on contemporary figures and day-to-day urban life. His non-traditional, avant-garde approach to art initially inspired scorn in Italy—early

in his career, he was even expelled from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera—but gradually he earned the respect and admiration of his peers, eventually becoming a friend and rival of Auguste Rodin and a seminal influence on the Italian Futurists and Constantin Brancusi. His sculpture first received recognition in the U.S. in 1963, with a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and today his work appears in the collections of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Museum of Modern Art, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, among others.

Drawn largely from the collection of the Museo Medardo Rosso in Barzio, Italy, “Medardo Rosso” features approximately 115 works from throughout the artist’s career and across media, including roughly a dozen sculptures, 30 drawings, 55 original photographs, and 18 modern prints from glass plate negatives. The installation reveals how Rosso explored the same subject in a variety of media—often over a span of many years—and employed materials in final works of sculpture that were unusual for the time, notably plaster and wax. The installation also sheds new light on the artist’s rarely-seen drawings and experimental photography, which showcase his interests in abstraction, light and shadow, and the human form. Rosso often photographed his own sculpture, but these images were intended as works in their own right, not simply documentation of his artistic pursuits in three dimensions. His continuous, experimental process of reworking his subject—isolating and enlarging forms, manipulating color and contrast, and re-photographing photographs—transformed and enriched the meaning of the original work.

About the 2014-15 CIMA Fellowship Program

Each academic year, CIMA awards fellowships to students pursuing pre-doctoral and post-doctoral study of 20th-century Italian art. The program aims to support scholars in overcoming the cultural, academic, and political impediments that have hindered a broader understanding and appreciation of Italian modern art and its impact on contemporary art history. Evolving from its scope in CIMA’s inaugural year—during which the foundation hosted two fellowship positions in New York City—the program’s second iteration has grown to support a total of five fellows: four New York-based fellowships, two in the fall and two in the spring, and one travel fellowship in Italy.

The 2014-15 fellows are: Chiara Fabi and Francesco Guzzetti, for the fall season; Ilaria Barzaghi and Ilaria Cicali, for the spring season; and Laura Moure Cecchini, CIMA’s Travel Fellow, who will be conducting her research in Milan and Rome. More information about the fellows and their research projects can be found at italianmodernart.org/current-fellows.

About CIMA

The Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) is a nonprofit foundation established to promote scholarly research and advance public appreciation of modern and contemporary Italian art in the U.S. and internationally. Through research fellowships, annual installations, and ongoing sponsorship of cultural programming, CIMA advocates for a deeper awareness of 20th-century Italian art and its enduring legacy and serves as an incubator for new discourse and scholarly debate. Founded in 2013 and based in New York City, CIMA is overseen by Executive Director Heather Ewing, with guidance by the CIMA Advisory Committee, including President Laura Mattioli, Emily Braun, Flavio Fergonzi, Vivien Greene, and Valentina Pero. CIMA’s inaugural installation focused on the Italian Futurist Fortunato Depero and closed in June 2014.

Location, Hours, and Admissions

CIMA is located in New York City's SoHo neighborhood, on the 4th floor of 421 Broome Street.

“Medardo Rosso” will be on view to the public October 17, 2014 through June 27, 2015. The foundation will be open by appointment only on Fridays and Saturdays for guided visits at 11am, 1pm, and 3pm; group tours can be arranged by appointment on other days. Visits last approximately one hour and are led by CIMA's fellows. Admission costs \$10 (reservations are required; entry for students is free with valid ID), which includes a complimentary cup of espresso and walk-through of the foundation's intimate space, remodeled by IVARCH / Irina Verona Architecture. For more information and to book a visit, go to italianmodernart.org.

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