

For Immediate release

## ***AGOSTINO BONALUMI. Shaped Metal***

9 March – 29 April 2022

**Preview: 8 March 2022, 6 – 8pm**

**Mazzoleni London** is pleased to present the exhibition **AGOSTINO BONALUMI. Shaped Metal** from 9 March to 29 April 2022, in collaboration with Archivio Bonalumi.

This project inaugurates Mazzoleni's **new gallery space in 15 Old Bond Street** as well as a series of shows titled "**Focus on**", a format delving into a range of key aspects of the European post-war period.

The title *Shaped Metal* refers to the metal sheets series that Bonalumi created in the late 1980s using a "pleating" process with an enamel coating.

These wall-mounted works represent the highest point of Bonalumi's prolific career. Characterised by strictly rectilinear rhythmic structures, they are representative of the artist's explorations of materials and their expressive potential. In this regard, historian, curator and critic of contemporary art Francesca Pola writes: "*This new approach to matter, in which also the luminous dimension given by the transparency was fundamental, was taken up again in an extraordinary cycle that is today much less well known and which is strongly tied to the artist's sculptural investigations: that of the 'lamiere' (started in the late 1980s) in which Bonalumi experimented the use of enamelled sheets for wall-hung works that exploited the ductile potentialities of the material in order to articulate the form in complex and elusive surfaces*" (From F. Pola, *Bonalumi. Sculptures*, Numerozeroeditore, Milan, 2014).

A pioneer of the post-war Italian avant-garde, Agostino Bonalumi (1935 – 2013) started his career in the Milanese artistic environment of the Brera district, initially collaborating with other artists, such as Piero Manzoni and Enrico Castellani. Between the late 1950s and early 1960s, Bonalumi had developed his personal style and methodological approach with a series of works featuring extroflexions of the canvas, gradually refining the dialectic between volume and void, concave and convex. These experimentations with a combination of traditional and industrial materials – such as canvas, fiberglass, and metal – reached maturity in the following decade, consolidating him as a leading figure on the contemporary art scene.

The display offers the viewer an insightful understanding of the "lamiere", a specific production of shaped metals, which highlights the artist's visual perception and his exploration of the space. The light reflects on the shiny surface of the pleated enamelled sheets creating spatial rhythm in the red, white, blue, black, green, yellow, and orange monochromes. A brochure with a text by Francesca Pola will accompany the exhibition.

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#### **AGOSTINO BONALUMI**

Agostino Bonalumi was born in 1935 in Vimercate, a town nearby Milan. With a background in technical design and mechanics, he began to experiment as a self-taught painter and show his work from a young age. In 1958, Bonalumi started his collaboration with Enrico Castellani and Piero Manzoni, exhibiting for the first time at Galleria Pater in Milan, followed by other shows in Rome, Milan, and Lausanne. In 1961, the artist was one of the founding members of the Nuova Scuola Europea group at Kasper Gallery in Lausanne. In 1965, after acquiring some of his works, Arturo Schwarz offered him a solo show at his gallery in Milan, for which a catalogue was published with an essay by Gillo Dorfles. In 1966, Bonalumi began a long period of collaboration with Galleria del Naviglio in Milan, which became his exclusive agent and published a large monograph in 1973, edited by Gillo Dorfles. In 1966, Bonalumi participated in the Venice Biennale with a selected body of works, followed by a personal room in 1970. During a period of study and work in Northern Africa and the United States, he debuted with a solo show at Bonino Gallery in New York. In 1967, he was invited to the São Paulo Biennale, followed the Youth Biennale in Paris in 1968. In 1980, his work was included in a major retrospective at Palazzo Te in Mantua, which featured works across his entire career. In 2001, Bonalumi was awarded the Presidente della Repubblica Prize, which was celebrated with a solo show at the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca in Rome in 2002. In 2003, the Institut Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt presented the solo show *Agostino Bonalumi. Malerei in der dritten Dimension*. During his prolific career, the artist also worked in stage design, producing sets and costumes. Despite suffering from a long-term illness, Bonalumi continued to work assiduously until the last years of his life. During his last period of activity, he completed a cycle of bronze sculptures started in the late 1960s, and his work was hosted in a number of international solo shows in capitals such as Brussels, Moscow, New York, and Singapore. In summer 2013, he collaborated on the realisation of a major exhibition in London, which unfortunately he could not see. Agostino Bonalumi passed away in Monza on 18 September 2013.

#### **MAZZOLENI**

Mazzoleni was founded in Turin in 1986 by Giovanni and Anna Pia Mazzoleni, as a natural evolution of their private collection started in the 1950s. The historic Turin space, which occupies three floors of Palazzo Panizza, overlooking the city-centre Piazza Solferino, has since 2014 been flanked by the London gallery in the Mayfair art district. Over the past three decades, Mazzoleni has organised solo and group exhibitions of more than 150 prominent Italian and international artists from across the 20<sup>th</sup> century with an exhibition programme focused on museum-calibre Italian art from the post-war period and recently the contemporary panorama, working in close collaboration with artists' estates and foundations.

All exhibitions are accompanied by fully illustrated monographs, with authoritative critical texts. Under the leadership of Davide and Luigi Mazzoleni, in recent years Mazzoleni has intensified its international activities, participating in numerous art fairs, including Art Basel (Basel, Miami and Hong Kong), Frieze Masters (London), TEFAF (Maastricht and New York) and FIAC (Paris).

#### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

Exhibition: *AGOSTINO BONALUMI. Shaped Metal*

Dates: 9 March – 29 April 2022 | Private view: Tuesday 8 March, 6pm - 8pm

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