

GREENHOUSE

GIANFRANCO BARUCHELLO

Massimo De Carlo is pleased to present the first exhibition by Gianfranco Baruchello in its Milan gallery in Palazzo Belgioioso. *Greenhouse* brings together an extraordinary selection of works that span from the 1960's to 2016. Through his long and on going, unique, career Gianfranco Baruchello has explored and materialized through art his interest in the relationship between the mechanisms of the mind and their relationship with urbanism, design, anatomy, agriculture and nature.

Greenhouse exemplifies Gianfranco Baruchello's understanding of space – psychological and physical – as a language, an architectural iconography that encompasses and embodies values, gestures, metamorphoses, empathy and truth. This language becomes tangible through a series of exceptional signature large canvases - populated by minuscule figures and drawings, the iconic 1970's box compositions, sculptures, and installations.

Greenhouse embodies Gianfranco Baruchello's experience of a kaleidoscopic absorption of a variety of images and information, from the early 1960's to the 1990s. Each work becomes a graphic reflection on the relationship between man, space and the ever-changing urban landscape. For Gianfranco Baruchello nature is an open space that the artist recodifies through miniaturizing, reducing, sculpting and enclosing it. Baruchello's key topic of the anti-monumental is reshaped through the daily gestures, laying out and maintaining a garden, which mimics and mirrors the one of our mind. *Greenhouse* traces a life long reflection on space, shapes and land that tackles the grey area, crude yet oneiric, between the self and the other.

The works exhibited collect and summarize Gianfranco Baruchello's ability to transform into art his relationship with the space around him, outlining both the political and social narrative together with the poetic and philosophical one. The iconic diptych *More news in a moment but first this message* (1968), created with cut-outs of newspapers and pencil drawings on canvas, illustrates the relationship between the artist and his attempt to decode the complexity of the stratification of information and media languages of the time – encompassing the Vietnam war, student revolts and television. The box compositions of the 1970s, inhabited by Duchampian uniforms and political narratives, are representations of Gianfranco Baruchello's interpretation of the rise of the feminist movement in Italy: Baruchello hopes that the rise of feminism will be able to bring a sort of peace treaty between genders, anticipating an attitude that will only emerge a few decades later. In the last room of the exhibition two other objects of the late Seventies collect in a fragmentary and anti-historical way a personal archive of the artist's obsessions.

The three paintings titled *Nella stalla della Sfinge* (1980-1981) represent the final part of Baruchello's investigation around the theme of sweetness - the project consisted of a book and a series of filmed interviews with philosophers and critics such as Jean-François Lyotard and Félix Guattari. The canvases are scattered with miniature characters, which populate Baruchello's inner world and his artistic practice: the most recurrent themes are those of the realm of the house, in which interiors, rooms and meat carpets describe physical and emotional states. The work *Acrobata Clandestino*, exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 1988, is an excellent example of the representation of the complex relationship between the philosopher and the artist, in which, according to Gianfranco Baruchello, the artist is like an acrobat who performs the difficult parts of the philosophical activity, those that philosophers avoid doing.

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The installation titled *Una casa in fil di ferro* (1975) and the sculpture *Greenhouse* (1977) embody the experience of Agricola Cornelia, a farm on the Roman hills where the artist lived and worked from 1973 to 1998 (where the Baruchello Foundation is now located) and they allude to the artists' research of a space of his own, both physical and mental: ephemeral and open constructions and houses to live in and spaces to grow in, these greenhouses were made at a time in which Baruchello had extended his artistic to encompass the farming of vegetables.

GIANFRANCO BARUCHELLO

Gianfranco Baruchello was born in Livorno, Italy in 1924. He lives and works in Rome and Paris. Through his long, and on going, career the Italian artist, regarded by mentor Marcel Duchamp as his only possible heir, has tackled a vast array of mediums spanning from painting to video via experiments between art and agriculture. Baruchello was immersed in the flourishing of most art movements and socio-political changes of the last century and counted amongst his friends many influential historical figures, artists and thinkers of this and the last century.

He spent most of the sixties between New York, where he counted John Cage as a friend, and Paris where he took part in the revolts of 1968 with friends Felix Guattari, Alain Jouffroy and Jean Jacques Lebel. In the early sixties in Milan, at the same time of the birth of the Arte Povera movement, he meets and befriends Marcel Duchamp, who will become his mentor. In 1962 he took part in the iconic *The New Realists* curated by Pierre Restany in New York. In 1966 his film *Verifica Incerta*, recently screened at the ICA in May 2015, was shown at both the MoMA and the Guggenheim in New York for the first time.

In the 1970's after a decade of profitably engaging with the Parisian and New York art scenes, first hand witnessing and participating in the rise of Pop Art and of the then ascending art market, Baruchello decided to move on. Not wanting to abide to the fashions of the moment, he decided to characterise himself as an outsider, moving to the Roman countryside in 1973. He founds the farm *Agricola Cornelia*, experimenting and pursuing a deeper connection between earth and art. Here, where he sometime lives and still works, he found the perfect external location for his quest for the understanding of the interior: the refusal to conform becoming a statement that supports his aim to shape a depiction and understanding of the works of the human mind.

In the late seventies he takes part in two major exhibitions: he shows in 1976 the Venice Biennale and in 1977 Documenta, in Kassel.

During the 1980s and 1990s he concentrates on his work and on the land of the *Agricola Cornelia*, transforming it in 1998 in the Fondazione Baruchello: a foundation dedicated to contemporary art and offering spaces for artists to create work and since 2000 specialized in archiving and cataloguing.

In the last two years, after taking part in Documenta in 2012 and at the Venice Biennale of 2013, a number of institutions in Europe have dedicated retrospectives to Gianfranco Baruchello and there has been a growing interest and appreciation of the artists' work, hence Massimo De Carlo is particularly proud to present this lengthy exhibition of this imaginary and captivating Italian artist.

Solo exhibitions include: Institute of Contemporary Art, London (2015); *Certain Ideas*, Retrospektive, ZMK, Karlsruhe; Retrospective, Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg (2014-15); *Cold Cinema*, curated by Alessandro Rabottini, Triennale di Milano, Milan (2014); *Certe Idee*, curated by Carla Subrizi, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, GNAM, Rome, (2011). Gianfranco Baruchello took part in the 55th edition of the Venice Biennale in 2013; in the 2012 edition of Documenta.

Gianfranco Baruchello's works are part of prominent collections of contemporary art among which: The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Salomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York; the Centre Pompidou in Paris; the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome; the MADRE Museum in Naples.

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Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo, Milan
Piazza Belgioioso 2,
20121 Milano, Italy
From January 26th until March 18th, 2017
Open Tuesday to Saturday, 11:00am – 7:00pm
Opening: Wednesday 25th of January 2017, from 7:00 to 9:00pm

For further information and materials:

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