

LA GALLERIA

NAZIONALE

Press Release

Fabrizio Clerici. L'atlante del meraviglioso
curated by Giulia Tulino

Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea
Sala Aldrovandi

Opening
28.06.2022

Open to the public
29.06 – 02.10.2022

The **Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea** is proud to inaugurate the show ***Fabrizio Clerici. L'atlante del meraviglioso***. Curated by Giulia Tulino, the exhibition hosts a journey into the imagination of a great protagonist of twentieth-century Italian art, a refined painter, set designer and illustrator who is unparalleled in his capacity for visionary and limitless inventiveness.

As an extremely cultured artist with an encyclopedic curiosity, Clerici gave life to dreamlike and enigmatic universes full of charm which spring from a boundless fantasy and are nourished by classical culture and myth as well as by the movements of his unconscious.

His training as an architect and his early association with Alberto Savinio are fundamental elements of his artistic career which see him oriented towards surrealism, but with a metaphysical inspiration. Architecturally, there are mysterious ruins and famous artifacts which participate in a symbolic game. The symbol, often entrusted to an architectural element, is central to Clerici's work as a vehicle for his personal atlas of memories and wonders. The viewer is invited to get lost in attempting to decipher the numerous literary and artistic references while participating in the restlessness that belongs to the soul of the artist as well as that of humanity in the twentieth century.

The exhibition stems from the recent acquisition of the collection from the Fabrizio Clerici Archive in 2021. Its great value is due to the precious material preserved and for its testimony of the rich array of relationships established by Clerici with important intellectuals and artists of his time.

The purpose is not only to return to the story of Fabrizio Clerici but also to that of "fantastica italiana" art which is too often confused with the Surrealism tout-court. These were artists who never joined organized groups or movements but were instead united by their environment, a state of mind, and a cultured, disinterested and appropriative artistic taste.

Over a hundred works of art including paintings, engravings and works on paper in the exhibition are contextualized alongside different thematic focuses made up of **archival materials** such as documents, photographs, letters, articles, design objects, theatrical sketches, artist's books and first editions which broaden the view on Clerici's production as a set designer, an illustrator, a designer and an architect.

On display is an important group of works by Fabrizio Clerici, which includes masterpieces such as *Il Minotauro accusa pubblicamente sua madre (The Minotaur Publicly Accuses his Mother)* of 1952, *il Sonno romano (The Roman Sleep)* of 1955, *Le Confessioni palermitane (The Palermo Confessions)* of 1954, and the *Minerva Phlegraea* of 1956-1957.

In addition to the important collection of works by Fabrizio Clerici, the exhibition features works from precursor artists such as **Alberto Martini**, **Giorgio de Chirico** and **Alberto Savinio**. Also included are works by similar artists as well as friends who were active in France, the United States and Italy from the mid-twenties to the end of the fifties such as: **Max Ernst**, **Leonora Carrington** and **Salvador Dalí**; companions such as **Leonor Fini** (who has significant works featured in the exhibition) and **Stanislao Lepri**; or the neo-romantics **Eugene Berman** and **Pavel Tchelitchew**. Younger artists inspired by him can also be found: **Domenico Gnoli**, **Enrico Colombotto Rosso** and **Enrico D'Assisa**. They will be joined by the works of three contemporary artists who in different ways manifest a similar aesthetic to that of the previous "fantastical" artists: **Eros Renzetti**, **Beatrice Scaccia** and **Fausta Squatriti**.

"Fabrizio Clerici is like a sponge that absorbs what he sees and what he loves and makes it his own; his memory is impressive and draws on a vast cultural repertoire ranging from classical antiquity to mythology, from history to religion, from anthropology to architecture and, of course, to the history of art," so writes Raffaele Carrieri.

Fabrizio Clerici (Milan, May 15, 1913 – Rome, June 7, 1993)

Fabrizio Clerici was born in Milan on May 15, 1913. In 1920 he moved with his family to Rome, where he graduated in architecture in 1937. In Rome he came in contact with the artistic and intellectual environment there and became particularly linked to Alberto Savinio. By the end of the thirties he was back in Milan as an architect and illustrator where in 1943 he held his first personal exhibition. In 1944 he returned to Rome where he met Leonor Fini and Stanislao Lepri and began associating with artists, writers and gallery owners such as Alberto Moravia, Elsa Morante, Irene Brin and Gaspero Del Corso, Mario Praz, Alberto Savinio and his brother Giorgio de Chirico. In 1945 he took part in two important group exhibitions: one in Rome at the La Margherita library-gallery (with Leonor Fini and Alberto Savinio) and one in New York at the Julien Levy Gallery (with Giuseppe Viviani). These years also featured the first publications of books illustrated by the artist, such as the *Bestiario* by Leoncillo Leonardi and *Il fu Mattia Pascal* by Luigi Pirandello.

In 1947 he made his debut as a set designer in George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, thus starting prolific activity in the fields of theater, ballet and opera. In the following year he participated for the first time in the Venice Biennale, where he met Salvador Dalí and created the sets and costumes for Igor Stravinskij's *Orpheus*, staged at the La Fenice theater. In 1953 the artist embarked on a series of travels in the Middle East, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Libya, Cyrenaica and Turkey, bringing back two important themes in his art: that of *Miraggi* and *i Templi dell'uovo*, which show cycles of utopian construction in the deserts, and develop in a spiral starting from a central nucleus where a hypothetical primitive egg is located. In 1955 he exhibited most of the paintings made during that time in New York. As he was painting, he continued to work as a set designer in theater collaborating with Giorgio Strehler. Clerici has obtained national and international recognition for his work and has been exhibited at the MoMA, the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Center Pompidou

in Paris, the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, the Vatican Museums and in prestigious private and public collections.

Public Info

**Galleria Nazionale
d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea**
viale delle Belle Arti 131 Roma

Accessible Entrance
via Gramsci 71

Opening Hours

Tuesday to Sunday:
9.00 – 19.00
last entrance 45 minutes before closing

Tickets

full price: € 10,00
reduced: € 2,00

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