

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

509 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

Pier Paolo Calzolari: AND I SAY

February 16 – March 25, 2017

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present our third solo exhibition of Italian artist Pier Paolo Calzolari, debuting works completed in the last two years. *AND I SAY* further develops the artist's decades-long practice of using commonplace and organic materials, including salt, lead, oyster shells, tobacco, and fire, as a means of exploring states of matter, transience, light, and beauty. On view from February 16 to March 25, 2017, the exhibition will feature two separate immersive installations along with a series of lead wall works. *AND I SAY* is the second single-artist exhibition to be presented across the gallery's adjacent spaces at 507 and 509 W. 24th Street.

Through his deliberate dialogue with art history, Calzolari has distinguished himself from his Arte Povera peers, who frequently embraced an avant-garde rejection of the cultural past. *AND I SAY* reflects this continued engagement, drawing on traditions cited by the artist as ranging from primitive African graffiti to Cretan and Pompeiian painting, Japanese decorative arts, and elements of Mannerism and the Baroque. Through his comprehensive repositioning of art historical sources, Calzolari's work offers a meditation on the experience of art across time, exploring the tension between the fleeting nature of life and materials and the perennial expressions of artistic traditions.

At 509 W. 24th Street, an enclosed temple-like space designed by the artist will be filled with a semicircle of canvases mounted on wood. Appearing monochromatic from a distance, the surface of each of the panels is finely disrupted with flower petals and thin white stems. With references to the centuries-old Japanese Nihonga painting tradition, which frequently used dry pigments derived from ground natural ingredients, such as minerals and shells, the installation is reminiscent of a large-scale decorative Shoji screen. This spirit of contemplative space is continued at 507 W. 24th Street in the main gallery where a sole triptych of brown and black felts is presented spanning 20 feet wide and 10 feet high. Evoking an altar piece, the felts have been masterfully burnt by the artist in a process that creates subtle textural changes. The resulting gradations resemble a sky of gathering clouds and radiant light, ominous, yet pure. In a separate room, a new series of lead wall works will also be on view. Their lustrous surface is oxidized and delicately embellished with elements of burnt nuts, paper or string. In Calzolari's ability to seemingly suspend a moment, an instinctive empathy exists between the artist and his materials—an understanding of nature's mutability and inherent fragility.

"The power of Calzolari's work lies in its ability to quiet the noise all around us. It stops us in our steps and inspires us to pause and be present. With the subtlest of gestures and the transformative use of materials, his practice simultaneously makes bold and poetic statements," said Marianne Boesky. "It is a timely opportunity to have this extraordinary artist's new works in the gallery. He creates a safe and beautiful venue for contemplation."

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Pier Paolo Calzolari was born in Bologna, Italy, in 1943. As one of the original members of Arte Povera, he was included in the movement's seminal 1960s exhibitions curated by Germano Celant. Calzolari's first exhibition at Marianne Boesky Gallery in 2012 was the artist's first in the United States in over 20 years. Calzolari's works are included in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, Guggenheim Museum, New York, Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Musee National d'Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, and Palazzo Grassi, Punta della Dogana Francois Pinault Foundation, Venice, amongst many others. He has been exhibited at the MoMA (1978, 1985), Documenta (1992), the Peggy Guggenheim Collection (2011), and the Centre Pompidou (2016). The artist currently lives and works in Lisbon, Portugal.

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