

GLADSTONE 64

Alfredo Volpi

130 East 64th Street

November 4, 2017 – January 6, 2018

Opening November 3, 6-8pm

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of historic works by Brazilian painter Alfredo Volpi (1896 – 1988), the first solo presentation of his work in the United States. Volpi is regarded as one of the most influential and celebrated Brazilian painters, who the preeminent public intellectual Mario Pedrosa called “the master of his time.” Honing his craft during the rise of modernism in Brazil, Volpi has made a lasting impact on the history of art through his signature approach to depicting the forms of everyday experiences—from festival banners to common row houses—in vibrantly chromatic abstraction.

Tangentially connected with Concretism, the mid-century Brazilian artistic movement that included Tarsila do Amaral, Waldemar Cordeiro and others, Volpi occupied a liminal space between naïve and fine art, as a self-taught artist with a distinct aesthetic style that distinguished his work from the academic painters of his time. Volpi emigrated from Lucca, Italy to São Paulo, Brazil as a child, spending the remainder of his life in Cambuci, which inspired the city and seascapes that filled his oeuvre. Volpi first explored the medium of paint as an apprentice to a wall decorator, where he not only perfected a craftsman’s ability to prepare surfaces and mix pigments, but also became interested in architecture and urban space. In the 1930s, Volpi began to paint in his free time, turning to subjects that were immediately at hand—namely Cambuci and the surrounding area. However, it was not until the end of that decade when he began to fully develop a signature style of painting. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Volpi began to depict building façades and rudimentary flags in his paintings using a parti-colored array of tempera paints. Volpi’s evocative and thoughtfully considered color palettes transformed these everyday scenes and subjects into abstract patterned landscapes, connecting his fine art practice with his early work as a designer. This initial impulse to deconstruct and reshow elements of everyday life through his unique style of painting also demonstrated his early attempts at pushing the boundaries of early modern art practices.

This exhibition focuses on the different aspects of his practice during his most engaging phase between the late 1950s and mid 1970s. Gathering major works, many of which have never been exhibited outside of Brazil, the paintings on view survey the façade, banner, and nautical paintings with which he is most associated. On this occasion, the first major monograph in English of Volpi’s work will be published which includes a new essay on his work by scholar Rodrigo Moura and historical writings on the artists by Aracy de Amaral, Willys de Castro, and Mario Pedrosa, translated into English for the first time.

Alfredo Volpi was born in 1896 in Lucca, Italy, and died in 1988 in São Paulo. Throughout his lifetime, Volpi had solo exhibitions at Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo; Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil, Porto Alegre, Brazil; Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Campinas, Brazil; Biblioteca Municipal Mario de Andrade, São Paulo; Companhia do Metropolitano de São Paulo - Metrô; and Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro. Subsequent to his death in 1988, many institutions have shown Volpi’s work, including Paulo Kuczynski Escritório de Arte, São Paulo; Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo; Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, Belgium; Instituto Moreira Salles, Rio de Janeiro; Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, São Paulo; Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro; Museu Oscar Niemeyer, Curitiba, Brazil; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Espaço Cultural Banco Central, São Paulo; Museu de Valores do Banco Central, Brasília, Brazil; Centro Cultural São Paulo; Museu Nacional de Belas-Artes, Rio de Janeiro; Centro Cultural Laurinda Santos Lobo, Rio de Janeiro; and Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo. In 1953, Volpi won the prestigious Grand Prix for Brazilian painting at the second São Paulo Art Biennial. Volpi was also included in the Venice Biennale in 1950, 1952, 1954, 1962 and 1964.

Richard Prince

Ripple Paintings

515 West 24th Street

November 3 – December 22, 2017

Thomas Hirschhorn

DE-PIXELATION

530 West 21st Street

October 27 – December 22, 2017

Gedi Sibony

Lemons and Grapefruits

12 Rue du Grand Cerf

November 17, 2017 – January 6,
2018

For further information, please contact Andrew Huff: ahuff@gladstonegallery.com

New York gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 10am–6pm

Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday–Friday, 10am–6pm and Saturday, 12pm–6pm