

valentinabonomoartecontemporanea

JANNIS KOUNELLIS AT PORTICO D'OTTAVIA

14 February – 15 April 2006

On February 14th, the personal show of Jannis Kounellis will be inaugurated in the exhibition space of the cultural association **valentinabonomoartecontemporanea** at Via del Portico d'Ottavia 13, in Rome.

It returns to, amongst other things, the artists' important retrospective at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh as well as his personal exhibition at Albertina in Vienna. Jannis Kounellis presents an unpublished installation, designed and built ad-hoc for the space in the gallery.

This work by Kounellis is a reflection on painting and its weight, to be understood physically and metaphorically. The materials used by the artist include wire mesh, garments and red paint. The work fills the space in its entirety including the walls and the floor.

The installation by Kounellis affirms itself as a personal denunciation of discomfort in respect compared to historical moment charged with grand complexity.

The show was created with the collaboration of Nicole Mathysen-Gerst.

Of Greek origin (1936) and Italian by adoption (having moved to Rome in 1956), since the 1960s Kounellis has been one of the most exhibited artists of the Arte Povera movement in Italy.

Burlap sacks, coal, wool, dirt, fire: these are the materials that have constituted the fabric of the artists' work since his debut. Slabs of steel substitute canvas, shelves hold objects obtained from domestic reality. The sculptures, paintings, installations, and the performances become spaces and surfaces to cross, to penetrate. This was the case in his theatrical performance at the Galleria-Garage L'Attico by Fabio Sargentini, which commissioned Kounellis, in 1969 to display 12 live horses to occupy the entirety of the exhibition space, introducing a hypothesis which grasped the pervasion between aesthetic dimension and natural dimension. In 1972 the artist participated for the first time in the Venice Biennale. In 1986 a large anthology of his works was presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

In 1989 he presented at the Espai Poblenou in Barcelona, an installation composed of quarters of slaughtered ox's hung by hooks on iron plates, dramatically illuminated by oil lamps. The work was recently represented at the Attis Theater in Athens.

In 1991 he exhibited in Moscow at the Pulheim Synagogue. In 1994 at the ship-boarding dock of the Port of Pireo, the artist curated a selection of pieces tracing thirty years of his work. In 1996 he hung furniture to the vault of the portico at Piazza del Plebiscito in Naples.

In April 2002 at Whitechapel in London, in the environment of the cumulative review of his performances from the '60s to the '70s, Kounellis chose to re-present Senza titolo (12 cavalli) from 1969. At the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome, in the same year, he prepared a large-scale labyrinth made of sheet metal in the space, intervened with a few typical installations from his code of expression.

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Gallery hours: Mon-Sat 15,30-19,30 or by appointment. 06 6832766