

Marisa Merz: The Sky Is a Great Space

Joelle Grosso (January 26, 2017)



Art lovers in New York City are crowding to see a stunning new exhibition devoted to the full scope of the career of Marisa Merz, the only female protagonist of the Arte Povera movement in the 1960s.

The [Met Breuer](#) [2], the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) [3]’s brand new space dedicated solely to modern and contemporary art will not only be celebrating the one year anniversary of the building itself which was designed by [Marcel Breuer](#) [4] but they will also be commemorating the 50th anniversary of [Marisa Merz](#) [5]’s first solo show as an artist.

The Turin-born talent was the only female to ever be accepted into the [Arte Povera](#) [6] circle, a radical avant-garde art movement that took place from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. These particular artists were characterized by their unorthodox processes and their use of nontraditional materials. Arte Povera, literally “poor art,” targeted the values of the commercialized art world with the hopes of challenging and disrupting them. Much of their work revolves around the concepts of organic forms, subjectivity, and the relationship between life and art.



Merz's first exhibition in 1967 featured an installation made entirely of folded aluminum foil at the Gian Enzo Sperone gallery in Turin. Her career only prospered from that point on, along with the growth of feminism, exhibiting her work in major venues internationally. The prolific artist has created five decades worth of spectacular pieces that have transformed and evolved throughout the years. Her powerful early work mainly consisted of sculptural installations using unconventional materials that referenced her home life while her more recent work is comprised of huge drawings and paintings of ethereal feminine imagery.

In her personal life, Marisa is married to artist [Mario Merz](#) [7] and together they form a powerhouse art couple. Her husband was also associated with the Arte Povera movement and the two were both heavily influenced by each other's works. Together they had a daughter named [Beatrice](#) [8] who grew up running around in her parents' studio, witnessing their contemporary pieces take shape firsthand. Family life made up a considerable amount of Merz's work and Beatrice recalls home being a place where "there were no boundaries." When speaking about her mother Beatrice says that "she always and only did what she liked, and that every work originated from the pleasure of making it, from a spontaneous gesture or finding of a particular object or material."

"The Sky Is a Great Space" is the first major retrospective of the Italian artist in the United States. Merz is well known in Italy and Europe so this exhibition hopes to bring her more recognition in the States. The show is organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the [Hammer Museum in Los Angeles](#) [9] and is currently taking place from January 24th until May 7th, 2017 at the Met Breuer.

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