

Marlborough

Marlborough Gallery, Inc.
40 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019
telephone 212.541.4900
telefax 212.541.4948
www.marlboroughgallery.com
mny@marlboroughgallery.com

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For press inquiries please contact Janis Gardner Cecil at Marlborough Gallery at 212.541.4900 or jccecil@marlboroughgallery.com

ALBERTO MAGNELLI: *A Retrospective: 1912-1965*

February 12 - March 8, 2008

New York, NY (January 17, 2008) - The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that on February 12th the gallery will present a retrospective exhibition of the work of the Italian painter, Alberto Magnelli. The exhibition will be comprehensive and cover the years from 1912 to 1965. The artist is considered to be Italy's first abstract painter and as the art historian, Daniel Abadie, has stated, "The last of the first generation of great abstract painters."

Included in the exhibition will be thirty-four paintings and thirty drawings. The paintings will begin with a self-portrait executed in 1912 and continue through the artist's early period with twelve key works from 1914 to 1918, including several important still lifes from 1914 such as *The White Table* and *Still Life with White Line*. The art historian, Margit Rowell, writes in one of the exhibition catalog's two essays that, "The still lifes of 1914 may be considered as the ultimate expression of Magnelli's personal sensibility up to that time." There will be seminal abstract works from 1915 (the year Magnelli painted his first abstract works) such as *Peinture no. 0526*. There will be boldly colored, voluptuous paintings of large female figures constructed from simplified curved planes such as *La Paresse* and *Donna al bagno*, both from 1917. Daniel Abadie discusses these works in one of the essays in the catalog and says that "These works from 1917 are still often misunderstood in the appreciation of the artist's work and yet they form a kind of recapitulation of all Magnelli's discoveries over the preceding three years." The show will continue with seven works from the pre-war thirties and among those works there will be five "Stone" paintings, works which sought to amalgamate figurative and abstract painting and which marked a major development in the artist's *oeuvre*. There will also be two works from the forties and eight works from his late period, which is devoted to totally abstract, sharp, clear-cut forms in matt colors. The drawings will range in date from 1914 to 1968 and will include works on various papers in the mediums of pencil, charcoal, sepia, and colored crayon. The drawings will represent rare, early figurative studies and several studies for abstract paintings, including ten studies from 1931 for the "Stone" paintings.

Magnelli's work has been called "classical," "mysterious," "poetic," "metaphysical," "sober," "lyrical," "sensuous." Margit Rowell writes, "Although Magnelli's art would evolve through a diversity of subjects and styles throughout his long career, this ambivalence between a rigorously abstract and idealized vision and a desire to create an impact of great physical and emotional immediacy would remain constant to his oeuvre until the end." The art critic, Maria Lluisa Borrás, speaking of his late work writes, "With his roots anchored in the painting of the Quattrocento, in his final phase - one of fullness and virtuosity - Alberto Magnelli creates a universe of solidly constructed forms and colors, sober and balanced but tremendously poetic, situated in the realms of the imagination. Nobody but he could achieve this great lyricism on the basis of logic and rationality, of synthesis and proportions."

Magnelli was born in 1888 in Florence, Italy. He was self-taught and began to paint in 1907. He was particularly influenced by Uccello and Piero della Francesca. His first paintings were marked by a "dry" style which became a part of his aesthetic throughout his career. He made his first trip to Paris in 1914. The artists he met (Archipenko, Boccioni, Gris, Léger, and Picasso among others) and the work he saw by them as well as the discovery of Cubism and the work of de Chirico and Matisse were of significant importance. He had his first one-man show in Florence in 1921. In 1932 he moved to Paris and remained in France for the rest of his life. His first one-man show in Paris was in 1934 at Galerie Pierre, run by Pierre Loeb, and his first show in New York was in 1937 at the Nierendorf Gallery. His first retrospective was in Paris in 1947 at Galerie Drouin and about that exhibition *Panorama des Arts* wrote, "The Alberto Magnelli exhibition is without doubt the most important for abstract art since Kandinsky's two exhibitions at the same gallery." Michel Seuphor wrote, "The most important event of this new post-war period is the appearance of Alberto Magnelli...After the war Magnelli's canvases flourished. He soon became the most important abstract painter in Paris." From that time Magnelli has had many retrospective exhibitions such as at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris in 1968 and at the Fondation Joan Miró in Barcelona in 1990. Magnelli died in Meudon, France in 1971.

His work can be found in museums all over the world. Among them listed by countries are the following: Brazil: Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Sao Paulo; Denmark: Nordjyllands Kunstmuseum, Aalborg; France: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris; Musée Magnelli, Vallauris; Germany: Folkwang Museum, Essen; Museum Würth, Schwäbisch Hall; Italy: Palazzo Pitti, Florence; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome; Spain: Fundació Miró, Barcelona; Switzerland: Kunstmuseum, Basel; USA: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Venezuela: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Sofía Imber, Caracas.

For a more extensive biography and a list of museums in which Magnelli's work can be found, please visit the Marlborough website on the Internet at www.marlboroughgallery.com/artists/Magnelli. Magnelli died in 1971 at the age of 82.

An illustrated color catalog with essays by the former director of the Jeu de Paume in Paris, Daniel Abadie and Margit Rowell will be available at the time of the exhibition.

Marlborough Chelsea / International Public Art Ltd., 545 West 25th St, New York, NY 10001

telephone 212.463.8634

telefax 212.463.9658

chelsea@marlboroughgallery.com

Marlborough Fine Art (London) Ltd., 6 Albemarle Street, London W1S 4BY

telephone 44.20.7629.5161

telefax 44.20.7629.6338

mfa@marlboroughfineart.com

Marlborough Monaco, 4 Quai Antoine 1^{er}, MC 98000 Monaco

telephone 377.97702550

telefax 377.97702559

art@marlborough-monaco.com

Galería A.M.S. Marlborough, Nueva Costanera 3723, Vitacura, Santiago, Chile

telephone 56.2.228.8696

telefax 56.2.207.4071

Galería Marlborough, S.A., Orfila 5, 28010 Madrid

telephone 34.91.319.1414

telefax 34.91.308.4345