

TALKlikeSEX

Press Release

"Talk Like Sex" is a juxtaposition of artists who have been active in the U.S. and Europe since 1950, dealing with the texture of the canvas/ceramic as opposed to drawing the viewer's attention to the quality of the actual painting. Lucio Fontana is the father of many contemporary artists on both sides of the Atlantic, having been the first to slash the canvas and, thus, originating the concept of spatialism. Fontana was also a gifted ceramicist and the opening work of the show is Battaglia, one of his ceramic pieces from 1950. Dadamaino (real name Eduarda Emilia Maino) was the only female member of the Italian Zero Group and ascribed her practice largely to Fontana, who inspired her use everyday utensils to carve out her mesmerizing Volumi. Alighiero Boetti took the actual notion of the canvas to its next level, embroidery, but not before Turi Simeti (another Italian Zero member) had started to create undulating monochrome canvases in Fontana's studio.

Most historically important art movements need a generation or two before their influence emerges in young artists. Today, contemporary artists Davide Balula, Jennifer Boysen, Dean Levin, Amir Nikravan, Olve Sande, Travess Smalley and Marianne Vitale show considerable regard for their Italian Zero forefathers. While Boysen and Levin take cues from Simeti in shaping the canvas, Smalley updates Fontana's spatialist aesthetic by incorporating the Internet into her work. Sande and Nikravan (master of the trompe l'oeil) round up the show with New York-based artists Vitale and Balula.

Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan asked me why I chose the title, "Talk Like Sex". I mentioned that the reference between Fontana's erotically infused slashed canvases and the title were rather obvious to me. He replied, "That's it, that's the link!"

"Talk Like Sex" is also a rap song by Kool G Rap & DJ Polo from 1990. With this in mind, I think it could easily have been Fontana speaking instead of Kool G Rap in the following interview from Complex magazine: "This was a concept. I wanted to make something in a different direction. It wasn't meant to be smooth. It was meant to get chicks interested in me in that kind of light but be funny at the same time. Everything is not always straight-faced or ice grilling for me. I like to laugh, I like to joke around. I like when other people make me laugh. I would just let everything come natural, whatever took over my imagination I'd just roll with that. But I did want to rap about interesting shit. I wanted to expand."

—Amir Shariat

Artists featured in "Talk Like Sex": Davide Balula, Alighiero Boetti, Jennifer Boysen, Dadamaino, Lucio Fontana, Dean Levin, Amir Nikravan, Olve Sande, Turi Simeti, Travess Smalley, Marianne Vitale

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