

**FONDAZIONE PRADA PRESENTS "TV 70: FRANCESCO VEZZOLI GUARDA LA RAI"  
FROM 9 MAY TO 24 SEPTEMBER 2017 IN MILAN**

Milan, 8 May 2017 - From 9 May to 24 September 2017, Fondazione Prada presents in its Milan venue "TV 70: Francesco Vezzoli guarda la Rai" (TV 70: Francesco Vezzoli Watches Rai), a project conceived by artist Francesco Vezzoli and developed in collaboration with Rai, Italy's national broadcasting company.

In between individual experiences and collective narratives, the exhibition translates the artist's gaze into a visual experience that explores 1970s TV production. Italian public TV is interpreted by the artist as a driving force for social and political change in a country in transition from the radicalness of the 1960s to the hedonism of the 1980s, as well as a powerful machine for cultural and identity creation. During that decade, Rai revised its pedagogical mission and distinguished itself for the high cultural quality of its productions, such as the collaborations with film directors Bernardo Bertolucci, Federico Fellini, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani. Divided between formal austerity and experimental vocation, 1970s television amplified the development of collective imagination into a plurality of landscapes and individual perspectives, anticipating the narratives which characterized the commercial television of the following decade. TV became a specific medium, and its shows went through a progressive transformation: they first shifted from culture to information, and subsequently from information to communication.

As stated by Francesco Vezzoli: "With this project, I wanted to set a path that was risky and dense—one as difficult as the subject requires—but also entertaining and surreal. A true investigation of this contemporary custom and its roots, informed by today's critical sensibilities: 1970s Italian television produced rituals and, as a consequence, absolute, long-lasting myths that still today, presented anew in this exhibition, can inspire us to make unconventional choices".

"TV 70", realized with the curatorial support of Cristiana Perrella, has been conceived as a sequence of visual and semantic juxtapositions taking place in the Nord gallery, in the Podium and in the Sud gallery at Fondazione Prada. The design of the show, realized by M/M (Paris) - Mathias Augustyniak and Michael Amzalag – is based on the merging of spatial and temporal dimensions in a set-up which combines traditional museum exhibition standards with the screening of moving images, in alternating conditions of light and darkness. The sequence of immaterial documents from the Teche Rai archives combined with the materiality of paintings, sculptures and installations – selected thanks to the scientific consultancy of Massimo Bernardini and Marco Senaldi – develop in three separate sections, and analyze the relationships between Italian public television with visual art, politics and entertainment.

The first section, “Arte e Televisione” (Art and Television), introduced by *Paesaggi TV* (1970) by Mario Schifano, reflects on the artistic employment of the TV medium. Shows like *Io e...* and *Come nasce un’opera d’arte* turned artists (such as Alighiero Boetti, Alberto Burri, Giorgio de Chirico, Renato Guttuso and Michelangelo Pistoletto), filmed or interviewed as they were creating their works, into public personas and protagonists of popular culture. TV took art over by employing a duplicity of approaches, all founded on two different theoretical angles: television as a “medium” (as conceived by Rudolf Arnheim and Marshall McLuhan) or, alternatively, as a space for communication overturning (as in Guy Debord’s Situationist perspective). This duality generated, on one side, Giulio Paolini’s experimentations, such as the set designs for the Rai adaptations of theatre and literature classics like *A Doll’s House* and *Don Quixote*, and the subversive, disconcerting use of television as depicted in Fabio Mauri’s work *Il televisore che piange* (1972) on the other.

The second section, “Politica e Televisione” (Politics and Television), analyzes the fragmentary and obsessive nature of 1970s political messages through the screening of excerpts from news programs of the time. These testify the general climate during those “Years of Lead” (anni di piombo), which were marked by state massacres, terrorist attacks, tension strategies and social protests. The exhibition takes into consideration the codes of visual communication with the series of 12 collages on paper *Non capiterà mai più* (1969) by Nanni Balestrini, which manipulates and demolishes mass languages, and Ketty La Rocca’s video *Le Mani* (1973), that articulates a new female lexicon.

Between the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s, Carla Accardi questioned artistic practice as a male prerogative, and elaborated an anti-institutional language that erased the boundaries between the private and public spheres, between intimacy and sharing. Her works in sicofoil are presented in the exhibition along with excerpts from TV shows like *Processo per Stupro* and *Si dice donna*, and footage from demonstrations of feminist groups active during that decade.

The third section, “Intrattenimento e Televisione” (Entertainment and Television), is introduced by Gioietta Fioroni’s installation *La spia ottica* (1968), which focuses on the female body as an object of gaze and desire for the observer, as well as an active and self-aware subject. This part of the exhibition explores the unsteady confines between sexual liberation and the exploitation of the female body, between political affirmation and individual rebellion. Francesco Vezzoli interprets these dynamics through an articulated vision encompassing TV shows such as *Milleluci*, *Stryx*, *C’era due volte* and *Sotto il divano*, and works by women artists like Tomaso Binga (Bianca Menna), Lisetta Carmi, Elisabetta Catalano and Paola Mattioli.

“TV 70” comes to an end at the Fondazione’s Cinema with the screening of a new work by Francesco Vezzoli *Trilogia della Rai* (2017), a selection of TV excerpts edited by the artist. By including the icons that marked his childhood and adolescence within the TV flow featuring different genres and styles, the artist transforms archive footage into a living substance, and

his personal, intimate memory into a shared narration. Vezzoli combines in an intense collection the traces of contradictions and aspirations of a country mirrored in its media production. The Cinema also host Gianni Pettena's installation *Applausi* (1968), an ironic invitation for visitors simultaneously experiencing the double and ambiguous condition of television and exhibition audiences.

During the course of the exhibition Fondazione Prada will organize a series of marathons of the most significant Rai shows that experimented with TV storytelling: from documentary to women variety shows, from TV series to avant-garde theater. Contemporary audiences will be able to test how the innovative concepts, along with entertainment and research skills behind some of the shows produced by Rai, are still relevant after forty years and capable of producing an inspiring dialectic between past and present times.

The exhibition "TV 70: Francesco Vezzoli guarda la Rai" is completed by an illustrated publication edited by Fondazione Prada that include essays by international art critics and theorists, scholars and television professionals (Maria Pia Ammirati, Lucia Annunziata, Massimo Bernardini, Klaus Biesenbach, Nicolas Bourriaud, Simon Castets, Germano Celant, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Nicholas Cullinan, Carlo Freccero, Flavia Frigeri, Lauren Mackler, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Cecilia Penati, Raffaella Perna, Cristiana Perrella, Letizia Ragaglia, Marco Senaldi, Lynn B. Spiegel, Linda Yablonsky), addressing the themes highlighted in the exhibition project.

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