IMAGES FOR SOUNDS
Artist Covers for Music Records

Rita Ackermann, Josef Albers, Kai Althoff, Andreco, Tauba Auerbach, Irma Blank, Sylvano Bussotti, Francesco Clemente, David Kennedy Cutler, Nathalie Du Pasquier, Matteo Fato, Reverend Howard Finster, Urs Fischer, Luigi Ghirri, Piero Golia, Delia Gonzalez, Keith Haring, Mike Kelley, Emma Kohlmann, Barbara Kruger, Sol LeWitt, Emiliano Maggi, Lucy McKenzie, Birgit Megerle, Bruno Munari, Magdalo Mussio, Luigi Ontani, Giulio Paolini, Raymond Pettibon, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Cloti Ricciardi, Cinzia Ruggeri, Mario Schifano, Edith Schloss, Lorenzo Scotto di Luzio, Cindy Sherman, Michael Snow, Wolfgang Tillmans, Cy Twombly, Nico Vascellari, Luigi Veronesi, Andro Wekua, Christopher Wool

Curated by Vittoria Bonifati
Special thanks to Giuseppe Garrera

IMAGES FOR SOUNDS: Artist Covers for Music Records is the first exhibition at Villa Lontana to explore the medium of the music record, and above all of the album cover, as a potential artistic space open to the development of a visual language. The show unites more than 140 albums released since the 1950s together with artists' covers conceived for the express purpose of giving images to sounds. The exhibition reflects on the collaboration between visual artists and musicians, playing on the duality between visual and sound material. In doing so, it focuses not on records made by artists but on artists' covers for a variety of musical projects, which range from the odd casual collaboration to broad solutions for entire discographic series.

The main part of the exhibition draws from the extensive record collection of the musicologist, art historian and collector Giuseppe Garrera, featuring more than 100 records and artists' covers designed by Irma Blank, Francesco Clemente, Luigi Ghirri, Keith Haring, Sol LeWitt, Bruno Munari, Magdalo Mussio, Giulio Paolini, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Cloti Ricciardi, Mario Schifano, Edith Schloss, Cy Twombly and Luigi Veronesi. This section of the exhibition traces a history of artists' covers within Italian music publishing from the 50s to the 90s, attempting to provide an initial survey of the subject in the absence of any major discographic collections or bibliographic studies, and emphasizing the visual-musical relation or experience of the album object. The selection moves from Bruno Munari's cover designs for Ricordi and La Voce del Padrone to Luigi Ghirri's series of covers for RCA Seal Gold, passing through various one-off projects, each linked to a distinct expressive urgency: such as Michelangelo Pistoletto's mirrored surface creation for Enrico Rava, Giulio Paolini's rotating spiral design for a Giorgio Gaslini record, or Cy Twombly's emotional seismograph for the songs of his friend Lucio Amelio…not to mention the work of Mario Schifano, Irma Blank, Sol LeWitt, Edith Schloss and so on.

The idea of "collection" remains central to the curatorial development of Villa Lontana, as it hosts within it, and for the first time, another collection, and thus another archive of images and sounds—which allow for a new reading of an issue that has been examined in the past, albeit in a different key. In 1977, the iconic exhibition *The Record as Artwork: From Futurism to Conceptual Art* opened at the Fort Worth Art Museum in Texas, introducing Germano Celant's collection of artists'

records to the American public. Since the 1960s, the album has found its own space within the art world as a new expressive tool, alongside other media such as video, telegrams, photography, books and film. On the one hand, the album isolates one component of the work, namely sound; on the other, it expands the vocabulary available for developing the work's visual element. This trend has its roots in the first fifteen years of the last century, when the Italian and Russian futurists began to transform language into a more expressive and active written and oral tool, emphasising harsh, distinct sounds and presenting their innovative creations on, also, a visual level.

The exhibition *IMAGES FOR SOUNDS: Artist Covers for Music Records* features collaborations born from a passion for and study of musicology, as well as from encounters with sound pieces that also possess visual qualities. Here the album, with all of its aural pleasure and delight in the reproducibility of invisible sound, assumes a double, image-sound identity: it belongs to listening and at the same time becomes part of a visual journey. In either case (whether developed by an artist or a musician), it becomes movement—prompted, as Goethe might say, "by the actions of supernatural beings."

Two themed sections will be presented throughout the course of the exhibition. The first is an homage to the late Sylvano Bussotti, featuring a selection of his most radical and brilliant covers for his own sheet music. These too derive from Giuseppe Garrera's collection, with many of them exhibited in public for the first time. The other section is dedicated to more international and often more contemporary collaborations, including artists' covers by Rita Ackermann, Josef Albers, Kai Althoff, Andreco, Tauba Auerbach, David Kennedy Cutler, Nathalie Du Pasquier, Matteo Fato, Reverend Howard Finster, Urs Fischer, Piero Golia, Delia Gonzalez, Mike Kelley, Emma Kohlmann, Barbara Kruger, Emiliano Maggi, Lucy McKenzie, Birgit Megerle, Luigi Ontani, Raymond Pettibon, Cinzia Ruggeri, Lorenzo Scotto di Luzio, Cindy Sherman, Michael Snow, Wolfgang Tillmans, Nico Vascellari, Andro Wekua, Christopher Wool.
This latter section will be in continuous evolution for the duration of the exhibition, with a regular rotation of different records borrowed from the collections and archives of the artists themselves or from the records' respective labels. The musical contents of the exhibited records will provide the soundtrack to the exhibition—it too in continuous evolution and chosen by the viewers, who will be able, upon request, to listen to the music and so explore in space the visual translation of sounds into images, moving from the great masterpieces of classical music, to folk songs, to the experimental sounds of electronic music and techno tracks.