

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

NEW YORK | ASPEN

PIER PAOLO CALZOLARI

Paintings as a Butterfly

Opening March 18, 2022 – April 23, 2022

507 & 509 W 24th Street, New York, NY 10011



Pier Paolo Calzolari, *Untitled*, 2020. Salt, pastels a l'ecu, oil pastels, tempera grassa, graphite. Overall dimensions: 100 3/8 x 165 3/8 x 2 1/2 inches (255 x 420 x 6.5 cm). Individual panels: 180 x 90 x 6 cm.

Photo: Michele Alberto Sereni

"To me the idea of color is truly tonal, simply because color, the soul and the eye that sees are tonal. The eye breathes, it moves freely, it is not codified."

- Pier Paolo Calzolari

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Painting as a Butterfly*, Pier Paolo Calzolari's (b. 1943) fourth solo exhibition with the gallery, on view March 18 – April 23, 2022, and spanning both spaces. This marks Calzolari's first solo show in the United States since 2017 and will feature more than 30 paintings made over the past four years. Many of these new works were created in isolation and delicately channel a collective longing for human connection. New paintings depicting a howling wolf, flowing rivers, and suspended shoes dancing in space are included alongside works from a new series of paintings entitled "Shop Signs" (2019-ongoing). These smaller scaled paintings are inspired by the absence of daily rituals. Hung salon-style, they reimagine the pleasure of a stroll past a flower shop, a hatter, or a shoemaker in the artist's native Marche Valley village in Italy. The gallery is also pleased to present this new body of work in dialogue with two monumental historical paintings by Calzolari shown for the first time in the United States.

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Born in Bologna, Italy, and currently living and working in Lisbon, Portugal, Calzolari is recognized as one of the pioneering figures in the late 1960s Arte Povera movement, and he continues to be one of the most important contemporary Italian artists working today. *Painting as a Butterfly* follows his first major survey of paintings at the Madre Museum in Naples, Italy in 2019.

The artist has said that “painting should be about getting lost finding oneself or finding oneself getting lost. But for me painting has always been, above all, a lover: I have a bond with it that comes from a fascination of the senses and, at the same time, the loss of the senses. Painting is the gesture that comes before the decision, the insecurity brought to economy.”

Painting as a Butterfly is a continuation of Calzolari’s decades-long poetic fascination with the alchemical. He is seen here growing more transfixed with the narratives embodied by the elements of the natural world; flowers, rain, and celestial bodies are both material and content, like words forming a haiku. While the artist continues to incorporate sculptural elements made of organic matter such as salt, feathers, clover petals, and seashells, it is his striking new use of raw pigment powders and tempera in startlingly saturated colors that imbue these new paintings with an exuberance both radiant and sensorial. The luminous canvases include fields of intense primary yellows, reds, blues, and whites with varying surfaces and textures that call to mind nature in the form of sunlight, fire, and a night sky, making this exhibition a meditation on the transience and delicate beauty of everyday life.

“Calzolari’s paintings are performative and poetic,” said gallery founder Marianne Boesky. “This show is the result of Pier Paolo’s tremendous output over the last few years during isolation imposed by Covid-19. In these new works, the artist is returning to raw pigments in vibrant reds, blues, and yellows with an unexpected exuberance after several decades. This exhibition reflects a kind of laser focused energy that might only have been possible in quarantine.”

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About Pier Paolo Calzolari

Calzolari’s first exhibition at Marianne Boesky Gallery, in 2012, was the artist’s first in the United States in over 20 years. Calzolari’s works are included the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; Art Institute of Chicago; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Sammlung Goetz, Munich; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Palazzo Grassi and Punta della Dogana, François Pinault Collection, Venice; among many others. He has exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1985, 2013); Documenta IX, Kassel (1992); the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris (1994); the Venice Biennale (1978, 2007); Ca’ Pesaro, Galleria Internazionale d’Arte Moderna, Venice (2011); the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (2011); and the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2016). The artist currently lives and works in Lisbon, Portugal.

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About Marianne Boesky Gallery

Since its inception in 1996, Marianne Boesky Gallery has represented and supported the work of emerging and established contemporary international artists of all media. In its first decade, the gallery was instrumental in launching the careers of major artists through an innovative exhibition program; and in 2016, the gallery expanded its flagship location to its adjacent space on West 24th Street. The gallery actively represents many significant international artists, including Ghada Amer, Sanford Biggers, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Donald Moffett, and Frank Stella. To learn more, visit marianneboeskygallery.com.

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For more information about the artists, please contact Senior Director Kelly Woods at kelly@boeskygallery.com or Associate Director Beryl Bevilacqua at beryl@boeskygallery.com or 212-680-9889. For press inquiries, please contact Anika Zempleni, THIRD EYE, at anika@hellothirdeye.com or 212-355-9009.

Image Caption

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