

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of early work by Marisa Merz. Born in 1931 in Turin, Italy, Merz was a central figure and the only woman associated with the Arte Povera movement of the late 1960s and '70s. Known for her unusual use of materials such as copper-wire, clay, and wax, Merz's sculptures and drawings reflect the poetic sensibility that delicately entwines her vision of art and life.

Executed in 1966, *Untitled (Living Sculpture)* consists of a group of sculptural works that acutely demonstrate Merz's attitudes toward form and materiality. This exhibition will feature two works in Merz's series that brilliantly testify to the lasting relevance of her artistic vision. Both works are composed of layered metal sheeting, cut and manipulated to assemble curvilinear bodies of glinting silver surfaces. Merz's ethereal reconstruction of a chair which plays with figures of domesticity and femininity, makes ordinary objects appear strange and uncanny, as if conjuring a mysterious apparition of itself. Extending from the ceiling to the floor Merz's dangling morphological configuration echoes the sinuous, floating forms of underwater life, a resemblance that beautifully underlines her attention to organic shapes, symbolizing the continuum of growth, transformation, and progress that is at the core of her thinking. Though the contours of the installation embody organic forms, her use of industrial metal sheets illustrates the frequent employment of synthetic materials to simulate natural shapes that is characteristic of the broader Arte Povera movement. Not only are these themes of evolution aesthetically formalized throughout *Untitled (Living Sculpture)*, but they are also deeply connected to Merz's commitment to social change and the radical role art can play in society and culture at large, a belief that has been summed up in her famous remarks: "There has never been any separation between my art and my life." Holding true to this conviction, Merz's work continues to offer a refreshing and richly evocative glimpse into the creative cosmos of one of the most fascinating artists of the 20th century.

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