

# DISASTERS

DANIELLA LUXEMBOURG AND AMALIA DAYAN

Disasters over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have provoked a continuous existential debate among artists of the Avant Gardes in Europe and America.

The development and deployment of technologies of destruction and social and ecological collapse have nurtured an apocalyptic view of the world occupying the consciousness of many artists. From the 1<sup>st</sup> World War to the present, artists have pursued and redefined the 'Vanitas' tradition, continuing to explore the transience of life, the certainty of death, and the promise of ruin.

THE MAASTRICHT ART FAIR

12 - 21/03/09

STAND 487

13/03 - 22/03/09

DAILY 11:00 - 19:00

SUNDAY 22, 11.00 - 18:00

**PINO PASCALI** (1935-1968)

*Cannone 'Bella Ciao'*

painted wood, scrap metal

150 x 450 x 130 cm (59.1 x 177.2 x 51.2 in)

Conceived in 1965



The artist with *Bella Ciao* in 1966

*Bella Ciao* is the centrepiece of the *Armi* series, life-size replicas of 1960s state-of-the-art weaponry and tanks. While the American intervention in Vietnam escalated, the artist plays with his tanks, made from found material, and re-enacts the games of his childhood. Most importantly, Pascali compels us to enquire about the real nature and purpose of these dummy machines for killing- and their real-life counterparts.





**KELLEY WALKER** (b. 1969)

*Black Star Press; Black Star*

digital print and chocolate on canvas

two panels, each panel 133.4 x 209.6 cm (52.5 x 82.5 in)

overall 266.7 x 209.6 cm (105 x 82.5 in)

Executed in 2006

In *Black Star Press; Black Star*, Walker appropriates journalistic photographs of 1960's American race riots and obfuscates the imagery with an overlay of chocolate and toothpaste. By referencing the social chaos of the image with a literal visual chaos, the work creates an echo chamber of trauma and disruption.



**ANDY WARHOL** (1928-1987)

*5 Deaths*

acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas

51.1 x 76.2 cm (20.3 x 30 in)

Executed in 1963

*5 Deaths*, part of Warhol's Car Crash series, uses the concept of serialization to examine the facility with which images of disaster are rendered impotent by virtue of their ubiquity.



**LUCIANO FABRO** (1936-2007)

*Sullo stato*

lead and wood

124 x 63 x 16 cm (48 x 24.8 in)

Executed in 1970

*Sullo stato* refers to the Roman philosopher Cicero's fundamental dialogue *De Re Publica*, in which he debates the concept of the ideal state and its government. Fabro violently subverts this dream of utopia to the reality of 1970s Italy. The iconic Italian road map is imprisoned under shields of lead, referring to the so-called 'years of lead', a period characterized by widespread social conflict and acts of terrorism.



**LUCIO FONTANA** (1899-1968)

*Attese*

waterpaint on canvas

73 x 74 cm (28.7 x 29.1 in)

Painted in 1959

1958 Lucio Fontana cuts the canvas for the first time, surpassing the limits of the bi-dimensionality of the canvas, conquering the third dimension, the spatial concept. Art criticism traditionally denies the iconoclastic quality of the revolutionary gesture, yet who can deny that in order to discover new systems and concepts old ones need to be destroyed and overcome?



**DAMIEN HIRST** (b. 1965)

*Two skulls*

oil on canvas

91.4 x 121.9 cm (36 x 48 in)

Painted in 2006

Hirst's *Two Skulls* conflates the tradition of Vanitas and Memento Mori with the 19th century ideal of courtly love. The work examines the incontrovertible fact of finality, simultaneously referencing the love token and the dual burial plot.



**PABLO PICASSO** (1881 -1973)

*Poireaux, crâne et pichet*

oil on canvas

80 x 130 cm (31½ x 51⅙ in)

Painted in March 1945

Although the Occupation was over in March 1945, grief and loss were still very much part of every day life. Probably the most successful in a series of seven still-lives, Picasso presents us with a powerful and profound meditation on the subjects of death, loss and vanitas mundi.



**RICHARD PRINCE** (b. 1949)

*He couldn't swim either*

acrylic, silkscreen on canvas

190 x 147 cm (74 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 57 $\frac{7}{8}$  in)

Executed in 1988-1989



**JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT** (1960-1988)

*Swiss House on Fire*

acrylic on canvas

50 x 70 cm (19.7 x 27.6 in)

Painted in 1980



## CINDY SHERMAN

*Untitled #173*

colour coupler print

152.4 x 228.6 cm (60 x 90 in)

Edition 5 of 6

Executed in 1986

The post-apocalyptic horror-scape of Sherman's *Untitled #173* examines what human artifacts will be left behind in the event of global catastrophe. The image offers us a telescope through which to see a future nuclear holocaust, a surrealist landscape made terrifying by its utter possibility.



## ANSELM KIEFER (b. 1945)

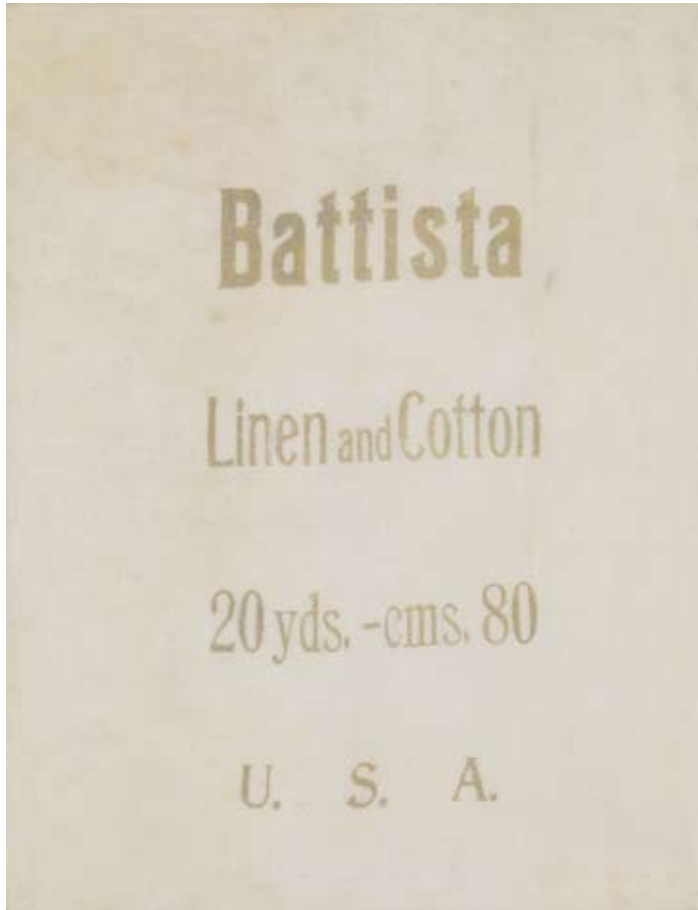
*Noch ist Polen nicht verloren*

oil on canvas

170 x 190 cm (66.9 x 84.8 in)

Painted in 1978

The title refers to the hopelessness of the Polish army facing the German invasion in 1939, represented by the simple juxtaposition of the horse of the Polish cavalry and the German tank. Yet the portraits of the Albert Leo von Schlageter, a military hero of the Weimar Republic and of Heinrich von Kleist, the poet of German Romanticism, are the overpowering protagonists in this work, witnessing another chapter of National Socialist atrocities.



**PIERO MANZONI** (1933-1963)

*Achrome*

ink on canvas

40 x 30 cm (15.7 x 11.8 in)

Executed circa 1960

Absence of colour, absence of surface paint, and the cotton with its manufacturer's stamp, Battista, famous for producing the whitest of cottons, in this Achrome the artist surmounts all existing concepts of Art in the most radical way.



**MARIO MERZ** (1925-2003)

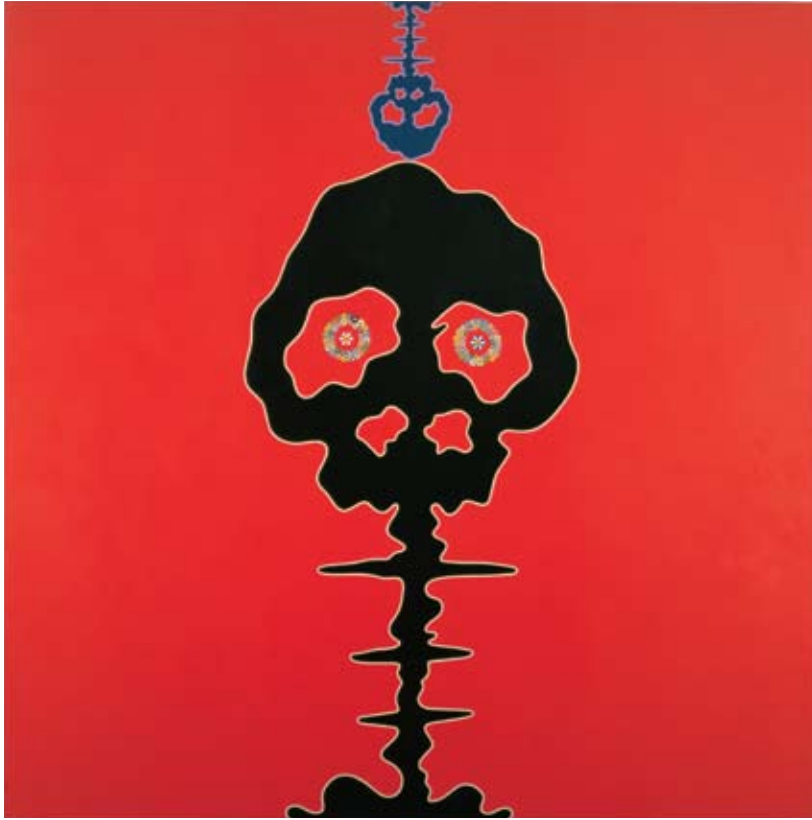
*Impermeabile*

painted raincoat, wax, wood and neon

variable dimensions

Executed in 1966-1967

This is one of the first works in which Merz explores the possibility of piercing neon tubes through objects, like umbrellas, raincoats or igloos. By doing so, the protective shell, in this case the raincoat, is sublimated, yet at the same time its wearability and impermeability is compromised losing its original raison d'être.



**TAKASHI MURAKAMI** (b. 1963)

*Time Bokan - Red*

acrylic on canvas over panel

180 x 180 cm (70 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 70 $\frac{7}{8}$  in)

Painted in 2001

By referencing the catastrophe of the American nuclear attacks on Japan in 1945 in his signature Superflat cum anime style, Murakami interrogates the manner in which tragedy is re-historicized and deactivated by consumer culture.