

# DOMINIQUE LÉVY

For Immediate Release

## TRANSATLANTIC EXHIBITION TO EXPLORE A PIVOTAL MOMENT OF INTERSECTION IN THE CAREERS OF THREE EXALTED POSTWAR ARTISTS

### *Local History* Brings Together Rarely Seen Works By Enrico Castellani, Donald Judd, and Frank Stella

#### **Dominique Lévy London**

22 Old Bond Street, London October 14, 2014 – January 17, 2015 Private view: Monday October 13, 2014

#### **Dominique Lévy Gallery, New York**

909 Madison Avenue, New York October 30, 2014 – January 17, 2015 Private view: Thursday October 30, 2014

**New York/London...** Dominique Lévy gallery is pleased to announce a transatlantic exhibition that captures a fleeting but profound moment of creative intersection in the careers of three exalted Post-war artists. *Local History* brings together rarely seen early works of the 1950s through early 1970s by Enrico Castellani, Donald Judd, and Frank Stella, and juxtaposes them with important later examples that reveal each artist's distinct evolution and the varying degrees of reverberation from their brief aesthetic collision in the 1960s. The exhibition takes as its starting point Judd's effort to formulate what he dubbed a "specific object" - an artwork that was neither painting, nor sculpture but something beyond the confines of those existing categories - and spotlights the surprising impact upon his quest of Castellani's and Stella's early experiments with radical painting.

*Local History* will take place concurrently in London and New York, inaugurating the gallery's new space at 22 Old Bond Street on October 13, and opening at Dominique Levy's space at the historic landmark 909 Madison Avenue on October 30. The exhibition has been organized by noted curator and art historian Linda Norden, with Peter Ballantine, who is regarded a leading expert in the work of Donald Judd and was one of the artist's long-time fabricators. A book featuring essays by Norden and Ballantine will complement the exhibition.



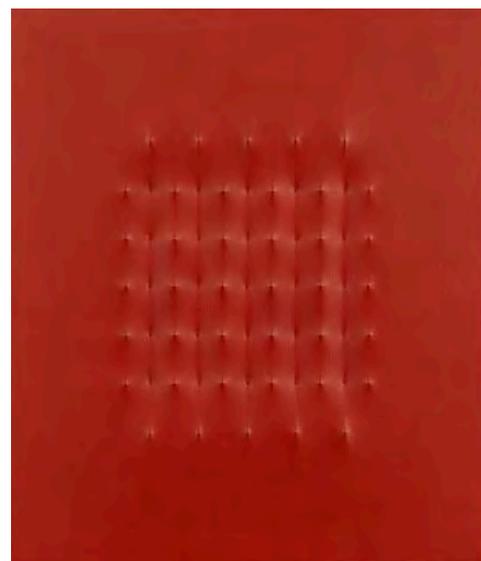
The exhibition coincides with *AZIMUT/H: Continuity and Newness*, currently on view at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice through January 19, 2015, celebrating Azimut/h, the Milan gallery and eponymous review founded in 1959 by Enrico Castellani and Piero Manzoni. Castellani's work is also featured in the major exhibition *ZERO: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s–60s*, on view October 10, 2014 through January 7, 2015 at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.



***Local History*** takes its title from a passage in an essay Donald Judd penned in 1964, examining some of the best art being shown in New York City at the time. Ostensibly an exhibition review, Judd's text in fact was a manifesto calling for a new kind of art freed from the concerns of expressionism and medium-specificity, ideas he elaborated more fully in his better-known 'Specific Objects,' which followed soon after. Enrico Castellani, whom Judd regarded as father of the style that came to be known as Minimalism, and Frank Stella were both championed in these texts, and their experiments exerted strong influence on Judd's own. ***Local History*** at Dominique Lévy revisits the cornerstone objects of this transformative period, testing Judd's hypotheses in physical form.

## Exhibition Highlights

In the late 1950s, Enrico Castellani began making works that utilized the canvas as a three-dimensional property to radically redefine the notion of painting. The canvases of his Superficie monochromes have been pushed, pulled, and poked from above and below, by orderly patterns of nails that radically alter their surface structure, yielding effects that border on the metaphysical without ever allowing the viewer to forget the material means through which these optically reflective and absorbing surfaces are generated. Meanwhile Stella, fresh out of Princeton University, was progressively articulating a new agreement between painting as image and as object in which the physical and visual were similarly held in tension. In his essay 'Local History', Judd describes Stella's paintings as "slabs [that] seem like objects" whose "successive painted angles create phenomena in the form of optical illusions." Both artists were essential for Judd's formulation of a specific art object that "need only be interesting."



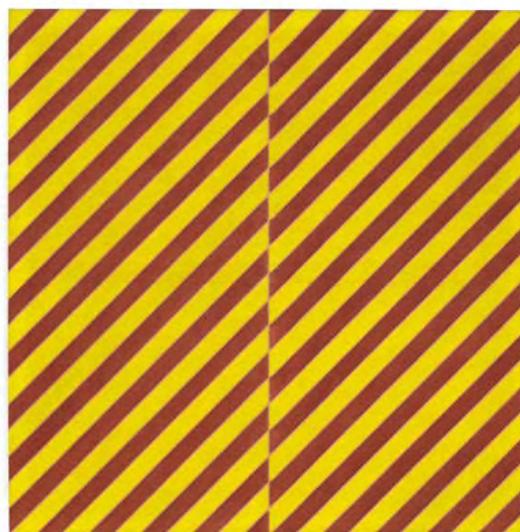
Among key Castellani works in ***Local History***, three in particular stand out. In New York City, the tempera painting 'Superficie Nera' (1959) is a precursor to the manipulated, dimensional canvases that the artist eventually articulated more precisely with his ordered arrangements of nails beneath and above the canvas. In this work, Castellani uses chestnuts to achieve sculptural effects, calling to mind the grids of things like bread and eggs in the Achromes of his close friend and collaborator

Piero Manzoni; unlike Manzoni, however, Castellani concealed his “non-art materials” beneath the surface of the work. The 1963 painting ‘Superficie rigata bianca e blu’ witnesses Castellani actively transforming painting into a sculptural object and an exploration of architectural space. And in London, the exhibition presents Castellani’s magnificent ‘Superficie rossa’ (1964), made the same year that Judd published his ‘Local History’ and ‘Specific Objects’ essays.



Judd is represented *Local History* with works spanning three decades. In New York, the artist’s ‘Untitled (DSS 41)’ of 1963 gives viewers a look at an early, formative, articulated and now iconic Judd floor piece. The channel cut into this work reveals a progression of similarly notched parallel wood panels that mete out space in much the same way Stella’s stripes do. In London, *Local History* includes two of Judd’s late “recessed” wall pieces – ‘Untitled, 1992 (recesses)’ - that evidence his ongoing commitment to objects over sculpture, investigations of open volumes that are spatial in an architectural rather than pictorial sense, without being massive. As in the 1963 Judd floor piece in New York, the “action” in ‘Untitled, 1992 (recesses)’ takes place within each volume’s interior. In the London “recesses,” however, the gallery walls are pressed into service as the four sidewalls of the piece.

Among the masterworks by Frank Stella on view in the New York portion of *Local History* are ‘5 Eldridge Street (Blue Horizon)’ of 1958, and ‘Untitled’ (1959) – two paintings that reveal a young artist in rapid progression. ‘5 Eldridge Street (Blue Horizon)’ is an example of Stella’s initial explorations of the stripe as an incremental, structural element. This work reveals a conventionally expressive brushstroke giving way to ordered lines that measure out length and width on the canvas. A mere year later, silver metallic paint is a material in its own right, distinct from the ground that Stella leaves visible through incised, parallel, structural lines and unpainted margin. (The painting appeared on the cover of *Art International*, 1960 IV/1, with the magazine title running down that unpainted margin.) By 1964, Stella was confidently testing boundaries between painting, sculpture, and architecture, as evidenced in ‘Tetuan 1’ (1964),



on view in the London portion of *Local History*. His material and structural manipulation - the painting's fluorescent yellow alkyd and the dramatic misalignment of this diptych's configuration - parallel similar experiments in both Judd's and Castellani's art at that moment. In this one powerful work, viewers can find evidence of a brief but powerful coincidence of intention and effort on the part of three great artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## About the Artists

**Enrico Castellani** is regarded one of Italy's most important living artists. Born in Castelmasa in 1930, he studied art and architecture at Belgium's Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts and École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, respectively, in the early 1950s and soon began a practice challenging the confines of painting, sculpture, and architecture in search of a new paradigm. A catalytic figure in the European post-war avant garde, he founded the Azimut gallery – and the related journal *Azimuth* - in Milan in 1959, with Piero Manzoni. They organized international exhibitions and published essays that opposed the dominant art movements in Europe at the time, and promoted the idea of an art that did not imitate but instead sprang self-referentially from its own techniques and materials. In 1959 Castellani also showed his now celebrated *Superficie nera* pieces for the first time. To make them, he worked his monochrome canvases with a nail gun to produce a relief-like surface that induced light and shade effects through alternating depressions and raised areas. In the 1970s and 1980s, he expanded his approach to include other materials; but Castellani's focus upon a poetic marriage of painting, sculpture, architecture, and space has never wavered. Castellani has exhibited at prestigious museums around the world, including The Museum of Modern Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York; the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris; and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. He represented Italy at the Venice Biennale in 1964, and in 2010 became the first Italian artist ever to receive the Praemium Imperiale for Painting.

**Donald Judd** (1928 – 1994) was one of the most significant American artists of the post-war period. His oeuvre has come to define what is widely referred to as Minimalist art. The unaffected, straightforward quality of his work demonstrates his strong interest in color, form, material, and space. With the intention of creating art that could assume a direct material and physical presence without recourse to grand philosophical statements, he eschewed the classical ideals of representational sculpture to create a rigorous visual vocabulary that sought clear and definite objects as its primary mode of articulation. Born in 1928 in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, Judd served in the United States Army in Korea, then attended The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia; the Art Students League, New York; and Columbia University, New York, where he received a B.S. in Philosophy, cum laude, in 1953. His first solo exhibition was in 1957 at the Panoras Gallery, New York, the same year he began graduate studies in art history at Columbia University. Over the next decade, Judd worked as a critic for ARTnews, Arts Magazine, and Art International; his subsequent theoretical writings on art and exhibition practices would prove to be some of his most important and lasting legacies. Judd's work has been exhibited internationally since the 1960s and is included in numerous museum collections. A survey exhibition of the artist's work was organized by the Tate Modern, London, in 2004 and traveled to the K20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, and Kunstmuseum Basel. Permanent installations of the artist's work can be found at Judd Foundation spaces in New York City, at 101 Spring Street, and Marfa, Texas, along with the neighboring Chinati Foundation.

**Frank Stella** (b. 1936) has been a dominant figure in abstract painting since the early 1960s and is recognised as one of America's most important living artists. Born in Malden, Massachusetts, and educated at Princeton University, he first attracted critical praise and public attention in the 1959 exhibition *Sixteen Americans* at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. The show established Stella as one of the most radical young artists working in the United States. He gained instant notoriety for his Black Paintings and a year later had his first solo exhibition in New York City. Throughout the 1960s, Stella exhibited regularly; his work was included in numerous national and international group shows, the most important of which were the São Paulo Biennial and the Fogg Museum of Art's *Three American Painters*, both held in 1965. His reputation and influence grew steadily, his work evolved continually, and in 1970 Stella was honoured with a major exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art. Since that time, Frank Stella has continued to challenge the boundaries of both his own art and the general definitions of painting and sculpture. His work is exhibited regularly in museums and galleries internationally, and is included in foremost museum collections worldwide, including those of Tate Modern in London; the Menil Collection, Houston; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Whitney Museum of American Art and MoMA. Beginning fall 2015, the Whitney Museum of American Art will present a retrospective exhibition devoted to Frank Stella – the most comprehensive presentation of the artist's career to date, co-organized with the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth – in its new building in downtown Manhattan.

### **About the Gallery**

**Dominique Lévy** formed her eponymous gallery in January 2013 specializing in the works of Alexander Calder, Willem de Kooning, Alberto Giacometti, Yves Klein, Pablo Picasso, and Andy Warhol amongst others. In September 2013, Dominique Lévy gallery opened its current space in the designated historic landmark building at 909 Madison Avenue in Manhattan, presenting the critically acclaimed exhibition *Audible Presence: Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein, Cy Twombly*. Since then, the gallery has presented critically admired solo exhibitions devoted to Gino de Dominicis, Tsuyoshi Maekawa, Boris Mikhailov, Roman Opalka, Germaine Richier, and Pierre Soulages, as well as and the group show *Hypothesis for an Exhibition*.

**Dominique Lévy** gallery currently represents the Estate of Yves Klein, the Estate of Roman Opalka, and the Estate of Germaine Richier in the United States, as well as artists Enrico Castellani, Frank Stella, Pierre Soulages, and Günther Uecker.

In October 2014, Dominique Lévy's London space will open at 22 Old Bond Street in the Mayfair district.

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Enrico Castellani

*Superficie rigata bianca e blu*

1963

Canvas in relief

27 13/16 x 39 3/8 x 2 3/4 inches (70.7 x 100 x 7 cm)

Collection of the artist.

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Photo Credit: Courtesy Archivio Castellani, Milan.

Frank Stella

*Untitled*

1959

Silver paint and pencil on paper laid on cardboard, 13 9/16 x 9 2/3 inches (34.5 x 24.5 cm)

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New York

Enrico Castellani

*Superficie rossa*

1964

Acrylic on canvas

27 9/16 x 23 13/16 inches (70 x 60.5 cm)

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Photo Credit: Elizabeth Bernstein, Courtesy Dominique Lévy Gallery, New York.

Donald Judd

*Untitled (DSS 41)*

1963

Cadmium red light oil on plywood

19 1/2 x 45 x 30 1/2 inches (49.5 x 114.3 x 77.5 cm).

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Photo Credit: Photo Jeff Jahn. Courtesy Dominique Lévy Gallery, New York.

Frank Stella

*Tetuan I*

1964

Fluorescent alkyd on canvas

77 x 77 1/4 inches (195.6 x 196.2 cm)

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Courtesy Dominique Lévy Gallery, New York.