

## DOMINIQUE LÉVY

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### DOMINIQUE LÉVY TO REPRESENT CAROL RAMA IN THE UNITED STATES AND UNITED KINGDOM IN COLLABORATION WITH ISABELLA BORTOLOZZI GALERIE IN BERLIN AND THE ARCHIVIO CAROL RAMA IN TURIN



Photo by Bepi Ghiotti © Archivio Carol Rama, Torino

(New York & London — September 15, 2016) Dominique Lévy is pleased to announce the gallery's exclusive collaboration with the Archivio Carol Rama in the United States and United Kingdom; the gallery is proud to work with Isabella Bortolozzi Galerie, Berlin, who will continue to represent the artist in collaboration with the Archivio, maintaining their role in tirelessly furthering Rama's legacy and reputation. Rama's iconoclastic practice holds a singular place in the history of twentieth-century art. Although subject to censorship and marginalization during her lifetime due to the highly subversive nature of her work, Rama has been celebrated in recent years as a key avant-garde figure in the development of both abstraction and figuration from 1930s onward. The influence of her innovative oeuvre on

both her contemporaries and a younger generation of artists worldwide has been recognized internationally. A figure parallel to such artists as Louise Bourgeois, Méret Oppenheim, and Eva Hesse, Rama has received her place in art history since 2003, when she was awarded the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 50th Venice Biennale. From October 2014 until August 2016, the retrospective exhibition *The Passion According to Carol Rama*, co-organized by and first held at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) and the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris (MAMVP), has traveled to the Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA), Finland; the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), Dublin; Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (GAM), Turin. An artist far ahead of her time, Rama proposes an embodied vision of humanity beyond binary gender confines, figuring the body as a site of intensity, desire, affect, and resistance to normalcy in a multitude

of ways and media over the course of her seven-decade career. Credited with pioneering such radical ways of painting as “organic abstraction” and “queer abstraction,” as described by the curators of the traveling retrospective, “Rama invents sensurrealism, an art of the visceral-specific, porn brut, organic abstraction. And, today, she appears as an essential artist for understanding the mutations of representation in the twentieth century and the later work of artists like Cindy Sherman, Kara Walker, Sue Williams, Kiki Smith and Elly Strik.”

Born in 1918 in Turin, Rama never received formal training. She began her artistic production in the mid-1930s, before the onset of the Second World War. In her evocative watercolor paintings of the thirties and forties, Rama insists on the corporeality and vitality of the human experience: in these paintings, bodies actively copulate, defecate, and disobey. Her early paintings were received by the public as being scandalous and obscene, anticipating the dismissal of Rama’s work by the dominant art historical discourse for many decades to come.

In the 1950s, Rama turned to geometric abstraction and became involved with the Concrete Art Movement (MAC). Then from the early 1960s onward, themes of the body and discarded objects re-emerged in her work not by means of representation, but as material itself. This method is now widely referred to as “bricolage,” a term coined by the Italian poet and intellectual Edoardo Sanguineti, a life-long close friend of Rama, specifically in reference to Rama’s work of the 1960s. Rama applied paint in viscous, splattered configurations as if it were bodily fluid, and made collages in which taxidermist’s and doll glass eyes, surgical tubes, syringes, and electrical cords evoke organisms in various stages of life and decay. Throughout her career, Rama was profoundly influenced by writers and artists such as Felice Casorati, Pablo Picasso, Albino Galvano, Edoardo Sanguineti, Corrado Levi, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Italo Calvino, Luciano Berio, and Carlo Mollino, among others. In the 1970s, Luciano Anselmino, her gallerist at the time, introduced her to Andy Warhol, Orson Welles, and Man Ray, among others. Around this time, she began to incorporate rubber bicycle tires into her work, using the material in a way that simulated not only machine parts but also human skin and loose appendages.

In the 1980s, Rama returned to figuration in full, prompted by the critical acclaim her early work earned as a result of curator Lea Vergine’s exhibition *L’altra metà dell’avanguardia* (The Other Half of the Avant-Garde). Vergine would go on to organize the first retrospective of Rama’s work in 1985 at the Milan Sagrato del Duomo, which included the artist’s late drawings of mythological beasts and sexually explicit figures, done directly on various kinds of found paper (topographical maps, architectural blueprints, and mathematical diagrams). Rama would continue working figuratively until 2007. Her artistic production continued until she was ninety years old; she died in Turin on September 24, 2015. Other recent exhibitions of Rama’s work have been held at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin and MART, Museo di Arte Contemporanea di Rovereto e Trento (both in 2004); the Ulmer Museum, Ulm (2004–05); the Museo Materiali Minimi de Arte Contemporanea,

Paestum (2007); and the Palazzo Ducale, Genova (2008). Isabella Bortolozzi Galerie, Berlin has worked with the artist since 2009.

Dominique Lévy will celebrate its representation of Rama with a series of focused thematic group exhibitions highlighting the artist's traversal of European and American avant-gardes, and will stage a focused solo presentation of the artist's work at its New York location in late 2017. The gallery will publish a scholarly catalogue to accompany the exhibition.

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