

Mino Maccari: Love's Fool, Prints 1966 - 1975

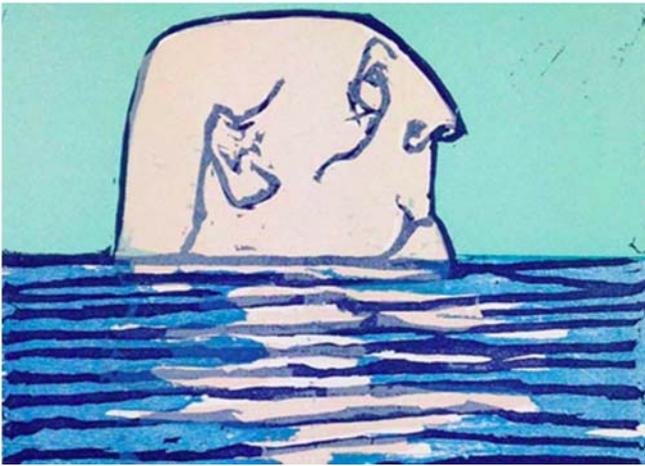
**First Floor Gallery
30b Great Sutton Street
London, EC1V 0DU**

Private View: Tuesday 4 November, 6 – 9 pm

Show runs: 5 November – 13 December 2014

Open: Wed – Fri, 12 – 6 pm | Sat, 12 – 4 pm

Or by appointment



Untitled, Mino Maccari, print, c.1970

BREESE LITTLE are delighted to present *Love's Fool*, a rare exhibition of prints by Mino Maccari (b. Siena, 1898 - 1989) in this country. Maccari was a much-acclaimed satirical artist who lampooned twentieth century Italian society with savage humour. The artist was prolific in painting, drawing and printmaking, complemented by his graphic and directorial work for newspapers and political magazines such as *Il Selvaggio (The Wild One)*, *La Stampa* and *Il Mondo*. These posts followed Maccari's draught into the Great War in 1916 as an artillery officer and subsequent capture in 1918. Maccari subsequently pursued a legal training and profession between 1920 and 1926, when he took up command of *Il Selvaggio*, imprinting his liberal outlook onto the periodical. Maccari's work was exhibited across Italy and internationally, including multiple exhibitions at the Venice Biennale where he was awarded the international prize for engraving in 1948, 1950, 1952, 1960 and 1962.

The exhibition presents approximately 50 prints from 1966 – 1975: a period of recognition and seniority in Maccari's career. The prints convert the cultural anxieties of Italy's post-Fascist era into a theatre of the absurd, diminishing figures of authority into clumsy and lascivious objects of ridicule. Stout, bald men with protruding features share Mussolini's profile, sometimes explicitly so in his recognisable uniform and knee-high boots. Caught in striking compositions of lewd scenes, these figures strike pathetic, salivating figures at the prospect of orgiastic satisfaction. Ritual humiliation is liberally doled out upon these characters that open themselves up as easy targets, undoing the cult of personality rigorously maintained by the Italian Fascist regime and its European counterparts.

Acidic block colours and thick outlines emphasise the caustic nature of Maccari's subjects, loudly drawing attention to scenes of degradation and moral turpitude. This approach has been compared with the artist's twentieth century contemporaries such as George Grosz (1893 - 1959) whose irreverent depictions of Weimar and Nazi Germany recall Maccari's similarly outspoken and occasionally gruesome aesthetic. Maccari's work however retains good humour through its removal from reality and evocative caricature, excluding specific political motifs and lending itself to wider associations.

Recent posthumous solo exhibitions include *Maccari: La Commedia nell'Arte*, Palazzo Mediceo, Seravezza, Italy (2013) and *Satire and Tenderness: Mino Maccari's Retrospective Exhibition*, Guangdong Museum of Modern Art in Guangzhou, China (2006). Group shows include *Against Mussolini: Art and the Fall of a Dictator*, Estorick Collection, London (2010) and *Paper Trail: Prints from the Merlini Collection*, Estorick Collection, London (2008). Solo exhibitions during Maccari's lifetime included a retrospective at the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy (1977) and Gallery 63, New York (1963), among others. Maccari participated in the 31st International Art Exhibition, Venice, exhibiting in *Grand Prizes of the Biennale from 1948 – 1960* and *The Post-War Period, Painting in Italy 1945-1955*, Palazzina di Marfisa d'Este, following his fifth participation in the Venice Biennale. He first participated in 1928. Publications include *Addenda, Disegni inediti (1926 – 1984)*, Pananti, Florence (1985), *Mino Maccari*, Cesare Vivaldi, Comune (1984), *Catalogo ragionato delle incisioni*, Francesco Meloni, Electa Editrice, Milan, (1979), *Mino Maccari: disegni, pastelli, acquerelli, acqueforti, linoleum*, Galleria Pananti, Florence (1971). Maccari joined *Il Selvaggio* in 1924 for its duration until 1943, edited *La Stampa* in the early 1930s and was a contributor to *900, Primato (Primacy)* from 1940, *Document*, 1943 and *Il Mondo*, 1949 – 1963. Maccari died in 1989 in Rome.

Tom de Freston: Orpheus and The Minotaur runs concurrently in the ground floor gallery.

www.breeselittle.com

Josephine Breese: josephine@breeselittle.com, 07919 416290

Henry Little: henry@breeselittle.com, 07984 950951

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