

galerie gmurzynska St. Moritz

LAM AND ITALY

Opening: July 9, 2015

Exhibition dates: July 10 – August 30, 2015



Wifredo Lam, Untitled (Albisola Mare), 1959. Glazed Ceramic

Galerie Gmurzynska is pleased to start the summer season in St. Moritz with an exhibition focused on Wifredo Lam and his influential stay in Italy. The exhibition comprises a wide range of Lam's fantastic work in ceramic, a suite of unusually casual drawings, and fine examples of his mature and enigmatic paintings. Taken together, the selection of works gives a deeper insight into the thematic as well as formal trajectory of Lam's practice since the mid 1950s, when the artist would begin to frequently visit Italy during the summer months, in particular the Ligurian seaside resort of Albisola, which he would eventually call home for nearly two decades.

Lam's first visit to Albisola was occasioned by the invitation of his friend and colleague Asger Jorn, the CoBrA and soon-to-be Situationist artist who already resided in Albisola, along with the artist and writer Enrico Baj, both of whom wanted Lam to participate in their annual "International Meeting of Sculpture and Ceramics".

Albisola was renowned for its artistic terra cotta manufacturing since the renaissance and the scenic Mediterranean tranquility, Lam's close circle of friends and the exquisite local artisan workshops all made a profound impact on Lam and his young family. Lam thus acquired a residence in the early 1960s, built a large painting studio and set out to work, increasingly focusing on the beautifully colored and finished plates and crockery displayed in this exhibition.

Lam's passion for Italy was not limited to Albisola, where he and his family would spend some of their happiest moments for the next twenty years, while he and his circle of fellow artists turned the sleepy fishing village into an insider venue for experimental arts and crafts throughout the 1960s.

Milan soon became another regular place to work and exhibit, especially after Lam had met the graphic artist and master engraver Giorgio Upiglio of the Studio Grafica Uno, which led to some of Lam's finest works on paper, often in collaboration with esteemed writers such Aimé Césaire and Michel Leiris.

Lam and his wife Lou further enjoyed many trips to Milan, Venice and Rome, frequently meeting with a colorful set of artists, poets, writers and intellectuals: From Piero Manzoni to Lucio Fontana, from Michel and Zette Leiris to Victor Brauner and Jean-Jacques Lebel to name just a few.

All these encounters and trips proved to be highly stimulating to Lam's artistic concerns all the way through the 1970s, culminating in his widely praised presentation at the 36th Venice Biennale of 1972, where he was celebrated as the show's best painter.

"Lam and Italy" reflects the diversity of Lam's later practice and his masterful exploration of ceramic in the country and its culture he much adored, and the works exude the colors and energy of the many summers Lam spent on the Italian Riviera, making "Lam and Italy" the perfect exhibit to commence the season.

Wifredo Lam's exhibition "Imagining New Worlds" was recently shown at the High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Lam will be the subject of a monographic survey at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris in the fall of 2015, which will travel to the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid and Tate Modern, London.

Galerie Gmurzynska
Via Serlas 22
7500 St. Moritz
+41 81833 3651
galerie@gmurzynska.com

Press Contact:
Mathias Rastorfer
mathias.rastorfer@gmurzynska.com

galerie gmurzynska
20th century masters since 1965
www.gmurzynska.com