



**Lucio Fontana**  
(Argentinian, 1899 - 1968)

## Biography

Lucio Fontana was a Argentine-Italian painter and sculptor born in 1899, in Argentina. In 1905, Fontana moved with his father to Milan and after serving in the Italian army in World War I, he obtained his diploma as a 'master builder'. After graduating, Fontana returned to Argentina, where he worked as a sculptor in his father's studio before opening his own, in 1924. He moved back to Milan in 1927 to study under Adolfo Wildt at the Accademia di Brera. He spent the duration of World War II in Argentina where he developed and published in 1946 his new theory of art in *Manifesto Blanco*, which proposed a 'spatial' form of art, instead of a 'virtual' approach.

Fontana is considered founder and representative of Spatialism. Followers of 'Spazialismo' (the Italian translation), which arose in the late 1940's, intended to synthesize colour, sound, space, movement, and time into a new type of art. Fontana published his ideas of the movement in his *Manifesto Blanco* in Argentina in 1946. He proposed a 'spatial' attempt in art instead of a 'virtual' approach, combining art and science through the use of techniques such as neon lighting and television. He also cut and stabbed paintings, which are also considered Spatialist works. Known as *Concetto Spaziale* ('spatial concepts'), these evolved throughout the remainder of his career. These forms of art ranged from holes and slashes in monochrome paintings to egg-like shapes in undefined spaces and were created using different techniques. In his *Pietre* ('stones') series, he fused the sculptural with painting by encrusting the surfaces of his canvases with heavy impasto and colored glass. In his *Buchi* ('holes') cycle, he punctured the surface of his canvases, breaking the membrane of two-dimensionality in order to highlight the space behind the picture. In his *Tagli* ('slashes') cycle, he sliced through matte monochrome surfaces.

Fontana also developed ties with the Italian *Arte Povera* (literally 'poor art') movement between 1967 and 1972. Like the term 'Impressionism', this term was derived from art criticism. Artists from this movement adopted a radical stance against established institutions of government, industry and culture, by creating unconventional art composed of different materials and styles.

Fontana died at the age of 69 in Varese on September 7 1968.

### Selected Collections

Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA  
Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA  
Kunstmuseum, Basel, CH  
Haifa Museum, ISR  
Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, NL

### Selected Exhibitions

2013

*Destroy the Picture: Painting the Void, 1949–1962*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA), Chicago, USA  
*The 60s In The Guggenheim Collections. From Informel To Pop Art*, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, IT

2009

*Lucio Fontana. Le scritte del disegno*, Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Milan, IT  
*Lucio Fontana: Zeichen und Zeichnung*, Museum Liner, Appenzell, CH

2008

*Lucio Fontana, Scultore*, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, IT  
*Lucio Fontana: Paintings, Sculptures, Works on Paper*, Ben Brown Fine Arts, London, UK

2007

*Via Crucis - Lucio Fontana*, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Sao Paulo, BR  
*Lucio Fontana Sculptor*, Castello di San Giorgio, Torino, IT  
*Living, Looking, Making: Sculpture by Giacometti, Fontana, Twombly, Serra*, Gagosian Gallery, London, UK

2006

*Lucio Fontana*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA  
*Lucio Fontana: Venice/New York*, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, IT  
*Lucio Fontana: Alle Radici Dello Spazialismo*, Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimo, New York, USA

2004

*Lucio Fontana*, Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, CH

2000

*Lucio Fontana*, Sperone Westwater, New York, USA

1999

*Minimalia: An Italian Version in 20th Century Art*, New York, USA

1998

*Gold: Gothic Masters and Lucio Fontana*, Compagnia Di Belle Arti (& other locations), Milan, IT  
*Lucio Fontana*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, IT  
*Lucio Fontana. Entre Materia y Espacio*, Museo National Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, ES

1996

*Lucio Fontana: Retrospektive*, Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, DE; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, AT

1987

*Lucio Fontana*, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR  
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL

1977

*Lucio Fontana: A Retrospective*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA

1966

*Retrospective*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, NL

1959

V. Bienal Sao Paulo, BR

1930

Venice Biennale, Venice, IT

### Selected Literature

F. Enrico Crispolti (ed.), FONTANA, Fondazione Lucio Fontana, Edizioni Charta (1999), Milan, IT

### Selected Art Fairs

TEFAF Maastricht, Maastricht, NL  
The Palm Beach Show, Palm Beach, USA