

Fontana, ca. 1965

[Fondazione Lucio Fontana](#)

Luca Massimo Barbero, Editor of [Fontana: Catalogue Raisonné of the Works on Paper](#) and Choghakate Kazarian, Curator of the 2014 Fontana Retrospective at [Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris](#) sat down to [at Art Basel to discuss](#) the work of "living with" Fontana's diverse production and practice to bring forth such monumental surveys in book and exhibition format.

[The Nasher Sculpture Center](#) in Dallas included Fontana's clay and ceramic works in [a 2014 group exhibition](#) focusing on sculpture from 1943-1963. [Post-doc scholar Marin Sullivan discussed](#) the relationship between Fontana's sculptural practice and that of his friend and fellow artist Fausto Melotti.

Melotti and Fontana were also the focus of a 2016 exhibition at [Mazzoleni London](#), exploring the parallels in each artist's approach to the concepts of space and geometry late in their careers.

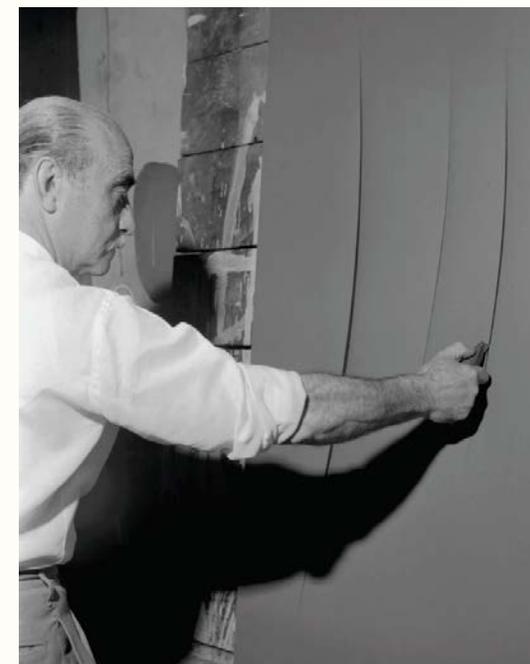
[Nahmad Projects](#) showcased Fontana's lesser known series of [Teatrini](#) in a 2018 exhibition. Created between 1964 and 1966, these "little theaters" deliver visions of landscapes in canvas and wood.

"Fontana's works are at the same time a meditation and a performance which leaves a very distinctive trace. He eluded all of the categories because in his own words, he didn't want to be a painter, he didn't want to be a sculptor, he wanted to be a spatial artist." [Watch Christie's specialist discuss Fontana's visionary legacy](#), with brief archival footage of the artist punching holes in a canvas.

In 2019, [the MET](#) and the [Guggenheim Bilbao](#) produced the comprehensive retrospective, *Lucio Fontana: On the Threshold*, bringing together the artist's early terracotta and ceramic sculptures, *Spatial Concept* paintings, painted terracotta sculpture series from the 1950s, and his immersive spatial environments. [El Museo del Barrio](#) in New York presented Fontana's 1949 *Ambiente Spaziale*, reconstructed from his specifications when the work debuted at [documenta 4](#) in 1968. View the [Guggenheim's exhibition resources](#).

[A panel of curators and art historians gathered at NYU](#) to celebrate the retrospective and discuss Fontana's continuing relevance.

[Hauser & Wirth Gallery in Los Angeles](#) presented the first comprehensive exhibition of Fontana's spatial environments in 2020. Nine spaces, arraigned chronologically, reconstruct the historical versions of these three-dimensional environments. Watch curator [Luca Massimo Barbero](#) talk about the conceptual focus of the spaces. [The gallery will present two more consecutive exhibitions](#) through 2021: in New York, featuring Fontana's ceramics and sculptures, and a retrospective in Hong Kong.



Fontana in his Milan studio, 1960
Photograph: Giancolombo

Lucio Fontana (Argentine-Italian, 1899-1968)

Concetto Spaziale, Attése (Spatial Concept, Waiting), 1961

Waterpaint on canvas

Private Collection; L2020:36.1

Lucio Fontana's aesthetic philosophy was influenced by a diverse set of experiences, including his father's sculpture studio in Milan, avant-garde collaborations in Paris, and his birthplace and maternal homeland of Argentina. After founding the Academia de Altamira in Buenos Aires in 1946, Fontana published the first manifesto of Spatialism, a new movement dedicated to "abandoning the use of known forms" and "initiating the development of an art based on the unity of space and time." Fontana revised these initial thoughts upon return to Milan, publishing the definitive *Primo Manifesto dello Spazialismo* (First Manifesto of Spatialism) in 1947.

In an iconic series spanning 1949 to 1960, Fontana gave tangible form to the *concetti spaziali* (spatial concepts) at the center of this new movement. Monochrome canvases punctured by *buchi* (holes) and *tagli* (slashes) explore the possibilities of painting with spatial as well as temporal dimensions. As in this *concetto*, Fontana gouged the canvas and inserted black gauze to create the sensation of an endless void. The Italian adjective *attésato/attésato* (waiting, awaited, expected), accompanies most of the *concetti*, expressing the temporal dimension of Spatialism. In this case, the plural form of the adjective, (*attése*) references the multiple number of slashes in the canvas.

On view September 2 – December 6, 2020

