

PRESS RELEASE

Jannis Kounellis
23 March - 12 May 2007

SPROVIERI
27 Heddon Street London W1B 4BJ

Sprovieri is pleased to present two seminal works from Jannis Kounellis's 1980s oeuvre.

The pieces present in the show, dating from 1983 and 1987 respectively, are part of what Kounellis calls his "formalization" period, a time of critical changes in both form and content.

Concluding the 1970s era Kounellis started being preoccupied with pushing the boundaries of Arte Povera and defining its ideological realm in a sharp opposition with other artistic movements such as Pop Art and Minimalism. He reacted against these diametrically opposed movements, producing work that transgressed the dogmatic and restrictive essence of the Minimalist sculpture of the time. He was intensely engaged with and fascinated by the genuine and necessary tension at the origin of things.

At this time, Kounellis introduced new materials or, rather, a new "policy of form". He married different construction elements— wood pieces and wax filled forms with a pre-defined iconological support—the iron shelves. He therefore echoed new lexical signifiers—a coffee maker and tin can—with a new conception of space and the tension behind it. He fragmented the idea of space by physically layering the metal shelves while at the same time keeping them in one unitary piece. Innovatively, he amalgamated individuality and generality within single pieces.

Of high relevance for the development of the Kounellis style that we are familiar with today, the two pieces in the exhibition are fundamental to the understanding of the artist's treatment of space and relationship to history. By being literally as well as conceptually layered, these works hold the essence of Kounellis's exploration of history, of the materiality and the diaphanousness of space and of the ways we generate our present in respect to tradition. Therefore the role of Kounellis's 1980s work is that of providing a crucial and multi-directional bond with the history of art and that of humanity implicitly, redefining tradition:

"Tradition does not mean the exaltation of the past, but rather the need to reorder actions in order to have a present..." (Jannis Kounellis)

SPROVIERI
27 heddon street london w1b 4bj

PROGETTI
travessa do comercio 22 rio de janeiro 20010-080

sprovieri.com