

# RICHARD SALTOUN

**Richard Saltoun Gallery  
to open second space in Rome  
with a solo show by Mozambican-Italian  
artist Bertina LOPES**

9 March - 7 May 2022

Private view: 8 March

Via Margutta, 48a-48b

00187, Rome



**London's Richard Saltoun Gallery is delighted to announce the opening of a second space in Rome this March.** The new gallery will be located at the city's heart on Via Margutta, one of the most famous Roman streets, just off Piazza di Spagna and Piazza del Popolo. Home to Federico Fellini and featured in William Wyler's comedy "Roman Holiday", Via Margutta is also known as the "Via degli Artisti" since many leading artists including Picasso, Cy Twombly, Alberto Burri and Giulio Turcato had their studio on the street.

The new space will provide Richard Saltoun Gallery with a European platform and the chance to further engage with the country's cultural institutions, collectors, and public audiences.

"We are very excited to establish a permanent presence in Rome, as the cultural communities across Italy and throughout Europe have played a pivotal role in the gallery's international growth," said **Richard Saltoun**, the gallery's founder. "Strengthening relationships with communities of collectors around the world is a key element of our mission to advance the international engagement with our artists' work and an opportunity to support and engage with the local art scene."

**Caterina Antonaci** will be joining the gallery from Magazzino in Rome as *Associate Director, Sales*, and **Chiara Marino**, previously at the London space, will be *Gallery Manager*.

**Richard Saltoun Gallery will inaugurate its programming in Rome with a special solo exhibition of works from the estate of Mozambican-Italian painter Bertina LOPES (1924–2012). Considered the mother of contemporary African painting, Lopes was one of the earliest pioneers to bridge the gap between African and European art.** Her work has become a symbol of political activism and social criticism, and her story is unique in contemporary art and politics.

Born under colonialism in Mozambique, Lopes completed her art studies in Lisbon and returned to Maputo as a teacher in 1953. Her contact with her country's poets, writers, and political activists was fundamental in forming her anti-fascist and anti-colonial beliefs. This forced Lopes to leave Mozambique in 1961, returning to Lisbon to continue her artistic work. Prosecuted by the PIDE (Portuguese International and State Defence Police), she fled Portugal, arriving in Rome in 1963 thanks to a scholarship from the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon.

Although it was not easy for an African artist in Italy to attain recognition, Lopes covered a vital role in the capital, later serving as the cultural attaché of her country's Embassy. Her rooftop apartment was famous for its dinners hosted with her husband Francesco Confaloni; a salon for African and European diplomats, journalists, and intellectuals. She befriended many of the protagonists of the Italian art scene, including Marino Marini, Renato Guttuso, Carlo Levi and Antonio Scordia as well as critics and museum directors.

Lopes represented Mozambique in numerous official cultural exhibitions worldwide, twice in the Venice Biennale, and received awards and citations for her efforts in promoting both art and peace. Despite her trailblazing work - subject of two exhibitions at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon (1973; 1979) and two major retrospectives in Rome at Palazzo Venezia (1986) and Palazzo della Cancelleria Apostolica (2002) - Lopes rarely worked commercially.

**Marking the 10th anniversary of the artist's death, the exhibition at Richard Saltoun Gallery celebrates her 70-year-long career by bringing together an important historical selection of Lopes' paintings.** These include *Grido grande* [Big Cry] (1970) and *In memoriam de Picasso* [In memory of Picasso] (1974). The latter is one of Lopes' most important and intense works on canvas, a homage to the death of Picasso, whom she had met in the last days of his life and considered the "genius of the 20th century".

**The Archivio Bertina Lopes played a pivotal role in the production of this exhibition, which marks the debut of the gallery's collaboration with the Lopes Estate and the artist's first commercial international representation.** Archivio Bertina Lopes was founded after the artist's death in 2012 to preserve her legacy and her house/studio. A catalogue with a text by Mary Angela Schroth, director of Sala 1 in Rome and long-time friend of Bertina, will be published to accompany the exhibition.

#### Gallery information

#### Opening hours:

Tuesday to Saturday, 10:30 am–7:00 pm

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Artwork image: Bertina LOPES *Grido grande [Big Cry]*, Oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm, 1970.

### Notes to editors:

Founded in 2012, **Richard Saltoun Gallery** is based in Mayfair, London, and Via Margutta, Rome. The gallery specializes in contemporary art, with an emphasis on feminist, conceptual and performance artists from the 1960s onwards. It is guided by a strong focus on rediscovering the work of important yet under-recognized artists through presentations at its central location in Dover Street, a series of online exhibitions, and participation in art fairs around the world. The gallery is considered a leader in its representation of female artists, from avant-garde pioneers of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Eleanor ANTIN, Renate BERTLMANN and Gina PANE, to a mid-career generation including BRACHA (L ETTINGER), Vivienne KOORLAND and Everlyn NICODEMUS and a younger generation of female artists including Silvia GIAMBRONE and Marinella SENATORE. Additionally, Richard Saltoun Gallery is noted for its support of pioneering artists who have pushed the conceptual and disciplinary boundaries in which they work, from LI Yuan-chia, one of the earliest proponents of abstract and conceptual art in Taiwan, to ULAY, the late photographer and performance artist, as well as British artists Victor BURGIN, Rose ENGLISH, Peter KENNARD, BOB LAW, Penny SLINGER and more. The gallery also preserves the legacy of artists through its representation of artist estates, including Helen CHADWICK, David HALL, Alexis HUNTER, Bob LAW, Bice LAZZARI, Marinella PIRELLI, Jo SPENCE, Barbara LEVITTOUX-ŚWIDERSKA and Shelagh WAKELY, among others.

**Bertina Lopes** (1924–2012) was a Mozambican painter, sculptor, and activist whose work highlighted the social criticism and nationalistic fervor that influenced other Mozambican artists of her time. Born in Maputo, Lopes was the daughter of a Portuguese father and African mother. At an early age she left Mozambique to study in Lisbon where she was inspired by and engaged with the avant-garde painting of Portuguese Modernism as well as contemporary artistic international movements. After returning to Mozambique in 1953, cultural nationalism became a crucial influence both ideologically and artistically. Much of her body of work presents not only African iconography but also political events of the time. After a tumultuous and forced return to Europe, Lopes moved to Rome in 1963 where she remained for the rest of her life: during this period the subjects of African identity took on a new meaning, expressing an end to colonialism and a desire for independence. Her works from 1970 until the late 1980s connote the grave economic and military problems of Mozambique's victory for independence as well as the subsequent civil war ending in 1992. From the late 1990s up to the 2000s, Lopes' work denotes a freedom of gestural abstract works and extraordinary colour, often with industrial paints. Bertina Lopes achieved significant cultural recognition and won numerous awards and prizes. Her artworks are included in many private and public collections worldwide. In addition to her two participations in the Venice Biennale, major solo exhibitions include the FAO Global Headquarters (Rome) in 1996, the Italian Cultural Center in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) in 1995, the National Museum of Modern Art of Baghdad in 1981, the Museo de Fundação Clouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon (Portugal) in 1972, twice at the National Museum Maputo (1982, 2012) as well as two major retrospectives in Rome (1986 and 2002).