



Gina Pane © photo. Anne Marchand

GINA PANE

Frieze Masters · Booth C5
Regent's Park
London NW1 4HA

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It is to YOU that I am speaking, because you are the 'unity' of my work: THE OTHER.

—Gina Pane, *Lettre à un(e) inconnu(e)*
[Letter to A Stranger], 1974

Following the recent exhibitions 'Gina Pane. Terre protégée' at 47 rue Saint-André-des-Arts in Paris and 'Gina Pane' at 51 Brooke Street in London, Kamel Mennour is pleased to present a solo exhibition of Pane's work at his booth at Frieze Masters.

Gina Pane was a central figure in the French arts scene in the 1970s-1980s, a prolific artist who skilfully practiced in a range of media throughout her career. These included painting, sculpture, installation, action, and photography, the latter in close collaboration with Françoise Masson—who photographed all of Pane's actions after a period of planning in which the two artists sketched out the imagery of the action in texts and preparatory drawings.

Gina Pane made use of a great range of materials that she chose for their intrinsic qualities and their symbolic overtones (felt, wood, glass, aluminum, brass, iron, earth, copper, ashes, marble), as well as objects that could be either everyday and playful, using bowls and spoons, feathers and children's toys, or cutting, using glass and razors. But between the late 1960s and the end of the 1970s, it was her own body that Pane privileged as the principle material of her creation and the instrument of the new language of body art. 'All my creation is directly materialised by my body as a principle material and tool for my concepts,' Pane wrote in her Notes. It was with her body that she would explore and test the world and its limits like no artist before her.

The paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures, notes and archival documents

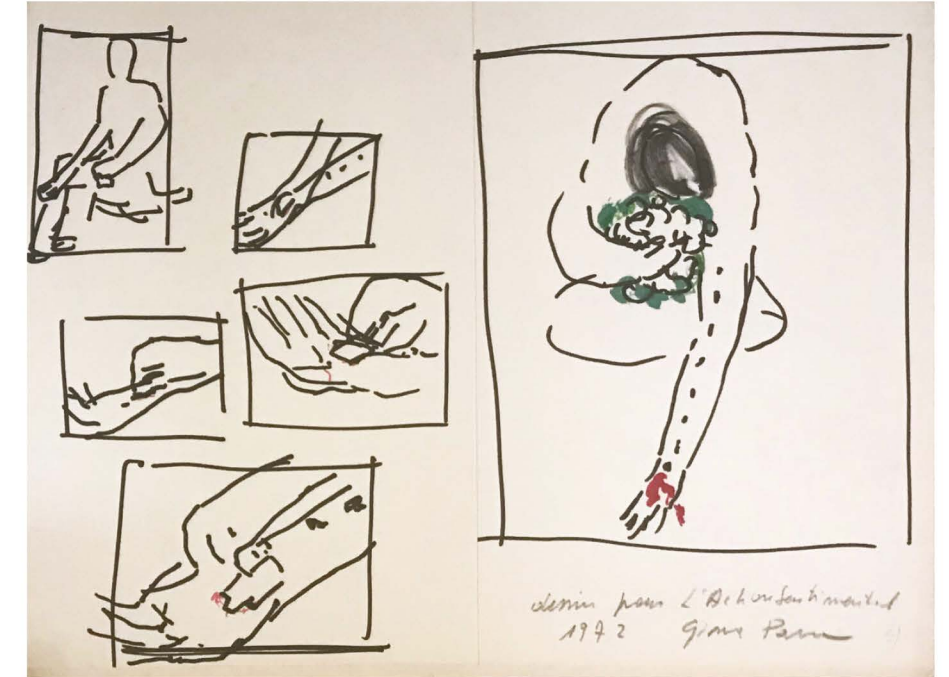
presented here testify to the richness of Gina Pane's work. The show emphasises the crucial role in her practice played by colour, composition, and construction, as well as the diversity of subjects and materials, with a series of masterpieces chosen to reflect the different stages of her career. These run from her earliest paintings, heavily influenced by geometric abstraction (1964-1967), to the works made in homage to nature (1968-1970), to the heavily symbolic public actions with their rituals of wounding (1971-1979), to the *Partitions*, her final sculptural works inspired by the lives of the Christian martyrs (1980-1989). This retrospective exhibition draws out not only the strength but also the conceptual and formal coherence of the artist's work, at the crossroads of the poetic and the sacred, politics and questions of identity, the intimate and the estimate, between the earth and the sky.

Gina Pane's basic wish was to awaken people's minds from an anaesthetising, media-driven torpor. In the process, she built her own myth and left us with a rich body of work that in its various facets asks questions that are still relevant today. Vibrant and open, radical and visionary, generous and sincere, her productions are endlessly seeking for an eternal communion with the spectator.

Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin

This exhibition is made possible thanks to Anne Marchand, who watches over and protects the work of Gina Pane.

All works: © Gina Pane, Adagp. Courtesy Anne Marchand and kamel mennour, Paris/London



Dessin pour l'Action sentimentale [Drawing for the Sentimental Action], 1972

Born in Biarritz to an Austrian mother and Italian father, GINA PANE left Italy in 1961 to study at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Paris. She took courses in sacred art with Edmée Larnaudie and in lithography and made Paris her home. In parallel to her artistic practice, Pane taught painting at the École supérieure des beaux-arts du Mans from 1976 to 1989. In 1978, she created and ran a performance workshop at the Centre Pompidou. She died in Paris in 1990 from the complications of a long-standing illness.

Gina Pane's work has been included in important private and public collections including the Guggenheim and MoMA—Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Centre Pompidou and the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris; La Gaia, Busca; MAMbo—Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna; mumok—Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; Frac des Pays de la Loire, Nantes; Frac

Bretagne, Rennes; MAC VAL, Vitry-sur-Seine; CNAP, Paris; [mac]—Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille. She has been widely exhibited, including at the Centre Pompidou, Paris and Metz; Tate Modern, London; La Fondation d'entreprise Hermès—La Verrière, Brussels; Mamco—Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva; Art Institute, San Francisco; Documenta, Kassel; Palazzo Grassi and the Venice Biennale; CAMH—Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; Magasin des Horizons, Grenoble; Art & Essai and the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes; Hangar à Bananes and the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes together with Frac des Pays de la Loire, Nantes; Mamac—Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice; Mart—Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Rovereto and MUSAC—Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, León.



Sans titre (n° 13), 1962-1968
Oil on canvas
130 x 97 cm

The paintings, drawings, and lithographic prints that Gina Pane made after graduating from the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Paris (1961-1963) are heavily influenced by geometric abstraction and the vocabulary of Suprematism, principally coming from Kazimir Malevitch and the Russian Constructivists. These early studio works are composed of simple or complex geometrical shapes—round, triangular, or polygonal shapes attempting to blend into the interior of the surface of the paper or the canvas. They are variously layered and combined, painted in primary colours with the aim of introducing movement and a feeling of space—the cool colours appearing to recede in relation to the surface, while the warm colours advance.



Souvenir enroulé d'un matin bleu, 1969
Blue felt, wood and aluminum
8 x 90 x 30 cm

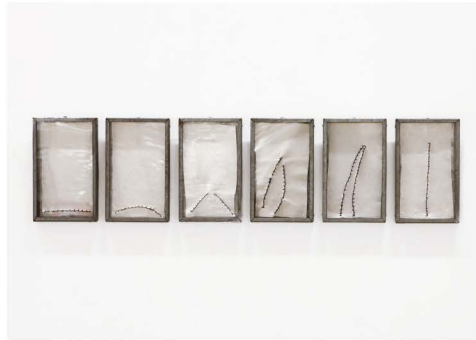
Souvenir enroulé d'un matin bleu [Rolled-up Memory of a Blue Morning], exhibited for the first time in Turin in 1969, takes the form of a wooden cylinder covered in blue felt and fixed to an aluminum structure on which the words *Ricordo avvolto di un mattino blu* have been stamped in the artist's native language. The delicate colour of the felt, the evocative power of these few words, the gentle restraint emanating from the whole assemblage give the work an exceptionally strong poetic resonance, accentuating the intimate and doubtless agreeable event that is being remembered. Gina Pane would reveal in a late interview that this recurrent use of felt in her productions is tied to a childhood memory: 'It's the first material I came into contact with, when I was a child, cutting discs for the pianos to be repaired*... but this blue is also the blue of the sky above the Piedmont mountains of my childhood.'

* Gina Pane's father was a piano maker. Felt is used in some piano parts, for the hammers and dampers, for instance.



Azione sentimentale, 9 November 1973
Constat of the action performed at Galleria Diagramma, Milan. 7 colour photographs assembled on panel. Photographer: Françoise Masson
122,5 x 102 cm

Azione sentimentale [Sentimental Action] is Pane's most famous action. Before an audience—women sitting front row, and men standing at the back—Pane executed a series of back-and-forth, mechanical gestures, progressively moving from standing to the foetal position, with a bunch of red, then white roses. Between these two sequences, she drove thorns into her left arm, held out towards the women in the audience, then made a superficial incision in the palm of her hand with a razor blade, reconstituting a red rose. Simultaneously, two female voices are reading out loud a correspondence between two women, in French and Italian. In an adjacent room the recorded voice of one woman tells of the death of her mother, while another expresses her affection by sending a bunch of roses. The action ends with the diffusion of *Strangers in the Night* by Frank Sinatra. The red rose, associated with eroticism, is used here as a symbol of maternal love and as a stereotype of the sentimental relationship that exists between two women.



Sans titre (Cicatrices), 1974
Black cotton sewing, white felt, metal boxes
23 x 14 cm each

Sans titre (Cicatrices) [Untitled (Scars)], which was made in the same period as the body actions, is a unusual, unique piece in Gina Pane's oeuvre. The rectangles of white felt (a symbol of purity) have been surgically cut and stitched edge to edge with thread, like a scar. The work, which is composed of six frames, offers a progression, a heavenly ascension. Felt, a material Gina Pane often used, is generally associated for her with ideas of sharing, comforting, and memory, as is also the case in *Souvenir enroulé d'un matin bleu*.



Voyage sentimental - Partition pour une tablette de chocolat, 1983-1984
6 bars and 12 painted metal cut, 15 colour photographs, 3 earthenware bowls, 3 spoons
281 x 277 x 16 cm

At the end of the 1970s, Pane embarked on a new body of work, in which the pieces were informed by the vocabulary of her past actions and involved the viewer in a new way. *Voyage sentimental - Partition pour une tablette de chocolat* [Sentimental Journey - Score for a block of chocolate] functions as an enigma, a charade that the viewer must reconstruct. Each image, each object, is to be read as a clue, helping us to interpret a work that remains open, susceptible to the association of ideas of the person deciphering it. Certain objects appear as leitmotifs, and there are recurring images from the actions, for instance from *Azione sentimentale*. The chocolate of the title, which appears in the colour of the metal cut-outs as well as in the earthenware bowls, plays an ambiguous role. Synonymous with both bitterness and sweetness, it serves as a sculptural and conceptual link between the different components: toys evoking the world of childhood, skulls, and images of explosion. By juxtaposing these contradictory and disparate elements, Pane acts as the archaeologist of the life of a mind and of a work where memories, 'sentimental actions' and creation weave complex and mysterious links.



Dehors - Partition pour une feuille de menthe, 1985
8 colour photographs assembled on panel, wood shelf, glasses
164 x 243 x 8 cm

This work strongly evokes the action *Transfert*, performed by Gina Pane in 1973, where a glass of mint cordial and a glass of milk placed on a tray occupied the centre of attention. The glass of mint was placed beyond the artist's reach. Frustrated by not being able to consume both, Gina Pane ended up breaking the glasses and lapping up the mixed liquids from the floor, injuring herself with the shards of glass. A metaphor for an interior conflict whose 'ins and outs' we are ignorant of, this action is re-enacted in *Dehors - Partition pour une feuille de menthe* [Outside - Score for a mint leaf]. A group of broken glasses, through which the milky white of the wall can be seen, contrast with a series of green glasses with intact stems, which form against the wall the contours of a mint leaf. With great sobriety, this work brings to light the driving forces and heroic choices that govern our existence, from the most banal to the most intimate. A glass of milk or a glass of mint cordial? Maternal love or desire for another?



La Cena/Passage, 1985-1987
Carrara Marble, bluish copper, ashes, mahogany wood
189 x 430 x 2 cm

The question of the sacred runs through Gina Pane's entire body of work, from her postures in the form of a cross in her early works in the 1960s, to the omnipresence of the notions of self-sacrifice, wounds, and alterity in her 1970s actions. The theme is overtly present in the *Partitions* [Scores] of the 1980s, where it is embodied in her materials: steel, brass, copper, wood, marble, and glass, which she has worked over in order to accentuate their brilliance, opacity, or transparency, like gradations in dematerialisation, caught up in a passage beyond this world. These final works, like large reliquaries, present the 'bodies' of the Christian martyrs, or the symbolic heritage of the universal figures that Gina Pane loved so much. *La Cena/Passage* [The Last Supper/Passage] evokes one of the great themes of Christian iconography: *The Last Supper*, which Jesus Christ, in the company of his twelve apostles, took the night before his crucifixion, and during which he instigated the Eucharist ('This is my body, this is my blood'), beginning the Christian ritual of the bread and the wine, the symbols of his body and his blood, offered in sacrifice on the cross and before he rose again.



François d'Assise, trois fois aux blessures stigmatisées. Vérification - version 3, 1986-1987
Glass, aluminum, brass, copper
187 x 194 x 3,5 cm

A lover of nature, his flesh marked by the apparition of his stigmata, Saint Francis of Assisi was an exemplary figure for Gina Pane, who made a number of scores in his name. This bas-relief, *François d'Assise, trois fois aux blessures stigmatisées. Vérification - version 3* [Francis of Assisi, thrice with stigmata. Verification - version 3], represents in three stages his progression from life towards death, from the earthly to the heavenly kingdom. The body of Saint Francis vanishes as our gaze rises up. The first section is made of a copper plaque, a symbol of the flesh and the life force. In it, the saint's skeletal body appears in light relief, as if he had left his mark there, like the contours of a bird. In the second section, the skeleton is marked out on a brass plaque with gilded reflections. On the upper section, in translucent glass, the transcended body has entirely disappeared, leaving only the circles of the stigmata.