

shame and fear. Gilje's underpainting portrays Susanna as a version of Gentileschi herself—raped by her father's painter friend Agostino Tassi in 1611—screaming with a knife in her hand. Subjected to torture by thumbscrews during Tassi's trial, Gentileschi gave testimony that was unnervingly similar to Dr. Ford's. Tassi was convicted.

That Gentileschi's victory seems progressive today proves the centuries-long acceptance of rape culture, as Susan Brownmiller explained in her 1975 book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*. This show surveyed works by twenty women artists who have dealt with the theme. Most of the exhibition featured figurative works, from Kara Walker's 2016 drawing of a twelve-year-old African American girl being violated by a white man, to photographs of Ana Mendieta's performance *Rape Scene*, 1973. *Three Weeks in May*, 1977, a consciousness-raising project by the pioneering social practice artist Suzanne Lacy, is represented here by a short documentary and a Los Angeles city map to which Lacy applied stamps at the sites where rapes had occurred.

Abstract sculptures on view, created by women of color, offered alternative methods of materializing the trauma of sexual assault. Alaska Native artist Sonya Kelliher-Combs fashioned phallic objects from rawhide sheepskin studded with porcupine quills, while Senga Nengudi contributed *R.S.V.P. Revisited—Underwire*, 1977/2004, breast-like forms hanging from an armature resembling mattress springs. Naima Ramos-Chapman's semiautobiographical film *And Nothing Happened*, 2016, traced a rape survivor's complex landscape of emotions, beginning with footage of the artist masturbating to rape-themed pornography and ending with a rote description of her assault to a female lawyer via speakerphone.

Exhibited for the first time, Carolee Thea's *Sabine Woman*, 1991—a life-size chicken-wire sculpture of a gang rape—was the hardest to reconcile with contemporary feminist mores. Thea created the work in response to the Central Park jogger case of 1989, for which five teenagers (thereafter dubbed by the media the Central Park Five), four black and one Latinx, were falsely convicted of raping a white woman. After another man confessed to the attack in 2002, the charges against the young men were vacated. Thea's work emphasizes the anonymity of the male perpetrators, but their "racelessness" feels dubious. Indeed, it was precisely the Central Park Five's racial identity that mobilized public resentment against them—resentment that was further inflamed by Donald Trump's full-page ads in four New York newspapers, before their trial, calling for the death penalty. John Lennon and Yoko Ono's brutal film *RAPE* (1968), documents an all-male camera crew's relentless pursuit of the model Eva Majlath—a Hungarian-born immigrant on an expired visa who was murdered in 2008. Displayed alongside the film was Ono's 1968 word score for the film, which specifies that men and boys can also be "chased." A statement Ono made about the film in 1969 is widely interpreted as a feminist response to male violence. Explaining that she and Lennon were in a hospital when the film was shot, Ono disturbingly vouches for her cameraman, Nick. In her trademark poetic style, Ono wrote: "Nick is a gentleman, who prefers eating clouds and floating pies to shooting *Rape*. Nevertheless it was shot." Such positioning reverberates with a culture that demands women's silence.

—Wendy Vogel

"NeoRealismo: The New Image in Italy, 1932–1960"

GREY ART GALLERY, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

The word *realism* conjures the everyday, the unfussy, the small. But what's real when the world has gone mad? It's a question that gripped Italian photographers, directors, journalists, and writers around World

War II and is surely worth asking again. This exhibition heralds artists who captured quotidian life in an era of daily shocks. With a street-level perspective on poverty and labor in the shadow of war, Neorealism became synonymous with Italian cinema's golden age. If you've seen Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948), you'll know in part what to expect from the Grey Art Gallery's survey of more than 170 works by sixty-plus artists: a social-reformist view of ordinary people scratching out a living, immune to great-man narratives, just getting by. And that's all here. But curator Enrica Viganò gives still photos pride of place in a show featuring magazines, books, posters, and film clips. Her approach makes the interdependence of Neorealism's various forms apparent while also clarifying the style's evolution, revealing its roots in Mussolini-era propaganda, its flourishing in street photography and reportage after the war, its takeover of mass media, and its influence on Italian art photography as it was critiqued and debated in spirited camera clubs.

The sprawling show is presented in five sections: "Realism in the Fascist Era," "Poverty and Reconstruction," "Ethnographic Investigation," "Photojournalism and the Illustrated Press," and "From Art to Document." In the first part, we're introduced to the primary motif: a fanfare for the common man. In images manufactured by the propaganda outlet Istituto Luce, fishermen, factory workers, peasants, and pilgrims are always pious, robust, and hardworking—they make the nation great. The pictures seem unplanned; it takes a moment to realize that squalor has, for the most part, been left out of the frame. Just a few years later, the fascist regime has collapsed and everything turns stark: Wild hope mixes with crushing deprivation and kids play on rubbled streets. As the country rebuilds in the late '40s and early '50s, Neorealism becomes genial, democratic, idealistic, searching. The hunger for a unified Italian identity is fed by imagery of all kinds. Photographers travel and experiment, taking chances with the medium's elastic relationship to facts. Styles within styles proliferate. The photos are sometimes political, other times fanciful; they are often earnest, occasionally weird. What's constant is their preoccupation with documenting faces and bodies in ugly-pretty environments.

Sometimes the moment is decisive, but more often it's diffuse. There's a hint of Henri Cartier-Bresson in the more subjective works, such as Enzo Sellerio's *Montelepre*, 1958, a photo of a boy caught midstride as he bounds with a balloon on a string. On the other end of the spectrum, there are the many ethnographic portraits that coolly observe how individual personality and social position interact, as in Renzo Chini's *Dante Agropi*, former worker at the *Magona*, 1955–56. Documenting the aftermath of a factory closing, Chini captures a man staring the camera down with presence and dented pride; he may be unemployed, but he's still on the job. Most of the photos don't fit into either—or any—category. But while the images rarely look like anything else, they aren't exactly original, either. Many are *almost* fascinating, like any one rock on a beach. That coupling of individuality and banality, of poetry and boredom, is of course very real.

The best photos are, unsurprisingly, cinematic. These shots, almost accidentally, deliver us from our plain world: Nino Migliori's atmospheric *People of Emilia. Summer's Evening*, 1953, which peers in on



Alfredo Camisa, *The Sickie*, 1955, gelatin silver print, 23 3/8 x 19 1/2". From "NeoRealismo: The New Image in Italy, 1932–1960."