

An Exploration of Tension and Pain: "Salvatore Scarpitta 1956-1964"

Samantha Janazzo (November 22, 2016)



The Luxembourg & Dayan gallery is running "Salvatore Scarpitta 1956-1964," a gorgeous retrospective of Salvatore Scarpitta's contemporary postwar pieces that are filled with dimension, emotion, wounds, and healing.

[Salvatore Scarpitta 1956-1964](#) [2] is currently on display at the [Luxembourg & Dayan](#) [3] gallery in New York City until December 23rd. [Salvatore Scarpitta](#) [4] (1919-2007) was a contemporary Italian-American artist with a cultural influence deeply rooted in his upbringing.

Born in New York City; raised in Hollywood, California; and educated at the [Italian Academy of Fine Arts in Rome](#) [5] in 1936, it is impossible for his artwork not to be impacted by what was an extremely controversial time for European and American relations. Despite the ongoing pressure of fascism in Italy and the Nazi threats, he unceasingly sided with futurism and cubism rather than fascist informed realism.

This exhibition presents the work Scarpitta created after his Italian education and service in the US



Navy, where he was responsible for locating and restoring art that was stolen by the Nazis and Fascists. Each canvas is an indication of his decision to literally tear away at the borders of the artwork of his time. Some pieces have "stress wires" lifting the canvases to their breaking points while others are gashed and torn. The choice to bring depth and detail to the canvas itself allows us to delve into his mindset of leaving behind the norms that come from war and creating a new future instead. Litigation and the healing process are the main trajectories of his work; this is clearly due to postwar sentiments as he experienced the consequences of it first hand.

His artwork uses shadow and depth to create a limitless motion through the canvas. He fuses cloth and other pieces from previous work and layers them up to create tension and gravity. This display is a fitting choice for the Luxembourg & Dayan Gallery because they are notorious for finding unique artists from the postwar epoch who have approached art in a way that was ahead of the popular views of their time.

Implementation of raw and emotional materials were always evident and connect directly to Scarpitta himself. One of his beautiful pieces resembles bandages covering a wound; he used real medical bandages and pieces of a blanket that once swaddled his newborn child. In other works he had used pieces from fatal car accidents until he switched interests completely. Always passionate about racing, he used his innovation and skill to create functioning and non-functioning life-sized racecars, which will also be included in this fascinating display.

To witness and trace the diversity of skill that make up the lifetime and career of Salvatore Scarpitta, visit the Luxembourg & Dayan gallery before this exhibition comes to an end in late December.

Source URL: <http://iitaly.org/magazine/focus/art-culture/article/exploration-tension-and-pain-salvatore-scarpitta-1956-1964>

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- [1] <http://iitaly.org/files/salvatorescarpitta2png>
- [2] <http://www.luxembourgdayan.com/exhibitions/49/works/>
- [3] <http://www.luxembourgdayan.com>
- [4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvatore_Scarpitta
- [5] <http://www.aarome.org/about/school-fine-arts>