



it successfully avoids describing Volpi's trajectory as one of progress. Volpi rarely dated his works; all we know, when we know, is the decade when the work was produced. This refusal to date is indicative of the artist's resistance to developmentalist logic. We find religious thematics and figurative works across Volpi's career. Instead, the through line of the show seems to be the impact of Italy on the artist. Born in Lucca in 1896, Volpi immigrated to Italy when he was two years old. The show's informational wall texts describe Volpi's informal art education in the suburbs of São Paulo, as well as a formative trip to Italy in the 1950s, funded by Brazilian-Italian patrons. This information is helpful to understanding a little-known history of immigrant experience in Brazilian modern art, and seems primed for further investigation. A caveat, related to this inquiry, might be worth mentioning: such a study should be wary of the cliché of the Latin American artist of European origin who travels abroad to the "motherland" in order to "discover Latin America for the first time." For a figure like Volpi, whose appreciation of Brazilian art history and interest in its popular traditions could have been emphasized more in this show, it seems important to complicate this narrative.

14 YDESSA HENDELES
Death to Pigs

Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna
By Christoph Chwatal

Showcasing her multiple roles as collector, curator, and artist, the first level of Hendeles's exhibition gathers an ensemble of artist's mannequins, automatons, and curved mirrors, which she connects to fairy tales, literary works, and historical accounts. Accessible via QR codes throughout the exhibition, Hendeles's research carves out the colonial histories, racial stereotypes, and power structures that underlie these systems of knowledge.

Moving upstairs, there is a different pace at work. The darkened display and density of the downstairs gallery vanishes into a lucid space that features specifically manufactured objects such as the Aero-Car, an enlarged automated sculpture based on a wind-up toy originally produced in postwar Germany. Expanding to photographs, paintings, and a video installation, the presentation combines different bodies of work and singles out recurring motifs and symbols. This archival impulse that permeates Hendeles's multifaceted work draws on an overwhelming density of references while allowing the visitor to focus on the materiality of the exhibits and "artifacts."

closed door achieves its reality effect when slamming or sliding sound off across the syntax of a line. The same might be said about figure and ground in Volpi's work: color humbles the iconicity of the depicted object so that the painting can "be" itself as an individual work or as part of a series.

To describe Volpi as a poet elicits a series of historical considerations. An exhibition vitrine, containing concrete poetic objects by Ronaldo Azeredo financed by Volpi, also includes photographs of the "Exibição Nacional de Arte Concreta" (São Paulo, 1956), in which one of Volpi's paintings was placed beside a concrete poem by the Noigandres group. Beyond this archival material and an isolated abstract geometrical painting, the show overlooks Volpi's most "concrete" production from the late 1950s. It would have been helpful for the viewer to see his work juxtaposed with that of members of the Grupo Ruptura or less orthodox figures such as Willys de Castro and Hércules Barsotti. Indeed, Volpi shook the foundations of concrete art by using semantic building blocks (sails, poles, windows, etc.) to narrate the transition from an object-oriented to information-oriented aesthetics. In a room dedicated to his seascapes, sea and sky gradually disappear in serialized and non-chronometric checkered strips.

Despite the chronological sequence that organizes the show's transitions,

13 Alfredo Volpi, *Sans titre*, 1960. Tempera on canvas. 74x55cm. Private Collection, São Paulo.

14 Ydessa Hendeles, *Princess (1964)*, 2015. Leslie Van Houten as Homecoming Princess, 1964; *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*, George Orwell, 1945. Detail from the series *Death to Pigs*, 2015-16. Photography by Robert Keziere. Courtesy and © Ydessa Hendeles.



Recurring objects in the presentation are both historical, hand-wrought and contemporary, polished, cast-aluminum keys that appear to either give access to locks or function to wind up mechanical systems, as in the Aero-Car. Or, in the fairytale of Bluebeard, a key unlocks a chamber that reveals a gruesome secret and, concomitantly, gives way to a pivot turn in terms of power-knowledge. Placed as clues, keys are positioned, for instance, in the head of a wooden mannequin, which stands in front of a seated, heterogeneous army of its kind. Yet the keys at times seem to not fit or appear misplaced. Comparably, Hendeles does not deliver a final set of hermeneutic keys but contributes to an extended catalogue of material (and immaterial) objects and incites a way of looking without delimiting the viewer's participation.

For Hendeles, keys appear as ostensible means to access the objects' historical dimensions and as an allegory of the artist's meticulous research. And yet, perhaps they also evoke the question, "Who is able to let objects of material culture speak, and who is in charge of making sense of them?"

15 POST ZANG TUMB TUUM
Art Life Politics. Italia 1918-1943
Fondazione Prada, Milan
By Michele D'Aurizio

Last October, the *New Yorker* published an article by historian and New York University faculty member Ruth Ben-Ghiat, which asked why Italy has allowed its Fascist monuments to survive unquestioned. Ben-Ghiat uses the example of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, erected in Rome in 1942 as part of Benito Mussolini's master plan for a new neighborhood – the so-called EUR (Esposizione Universale Roma), the

intended location of a world's fair that never happened because of the war. In 2004 the Palazzo was recognized by the state as a site of "cultural interest," and today it hosts the headquarters of Fendi, one of the most characteristic "Made in Italy" fashion companies. While Ben-Ghiat legitimately notes the lack of a full-fledged Italian law against Fascist apologism (the 1952 Scelba Law prosecutes organizations and groups aiming to reconstitute the dissolved Fascist party, but it never prompted the removal of the most unambiguous aesthetic remnants of Fascism), her framing of the problem in terms of "Italians' comfort with living amid Fascist symbols" feels relatively perfunctory, and doesn't account for the subtle but certainly permeating feeling of discomfort that many Italians still share when confronted with the exquisite but equivocal creative achievements of the regime.

Never has this feeling been so acute for me than during my visit to Fondazione Prada's largest endeavor to date: the exhibition "Post Zang Tumb Tuum," a chronological account of artistic production in Italy between Mussolini's rise to power in the aftermath of World War I and his removal from office following Italy's defeat in World War II. "PZTT" develops across twenty-four partial reconstructions of both public and private displays of works of art and decorative objects, alongside vitrines containing contextual historical documents. By reenacting the material and physical conditions of the art's original presentations, curator Germano Celant and his team aim to revive the complex commingling of politics, ideology, and aesthetics that subtended the creation, exhibition, and reception of many universally recognized masterpieces of the Italian artistic avant-garde – the inextricable link between the artist's ethos and the state's agenda being precisely the source of the "discomfort"