

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

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Beat poetry and heavy beats, Marisa Merz's mesmerising mixed-media, Jim Nutt's nutty portraits and Bedwyr Williams's wooden spoon in this week's London exhibition roundup

by LOUISA BUCK | 14.10.2016



Installation view of Marisa Merz at the Thomas Dane Gallery, London

Marisa Merz, Thomas Dane (until 12 November)

Marisa Merz was the only female artist to be actively involved in Arte Povera, and is a formidable artist in her own right. But, as is so often the way, she has been overshadowed by her more famous husband, Mario. Erroneously so, as this small but stunning show confirms. Now in her 90s, based in Turin and still working full throttle, Merz continues to demonstrate a profound preoccupation with the human form and a vigorous engagement with the physical

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qualities of her wide range of materials. These include clay, iron, several forms of paint, wax, graphite and gold. In both her choice of media and her subject matter Merz overtly refers to Western art-historical traditions. But these expressive, mysterious works are also utterly and intensely her own, whether a simple votive-like female torso in unfired clay or the dramatic giant red, silver, blue and gold angel, painted on a giant sheet of paper and enveloped in flowing hair and soaring wings. Swirling blue hands swoop around another giant female head, whose mask-like Byzantine impassivity is incongruously at odds with smoky, surrounding scribbles of black spray paint and her voluptuous pair of giant red lips.

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