

Bruno Munari, Center for Italian Modern Art

Center for Italian Modern Art, Oct 6, 2022–Jan 14, 2023

Application deadline: May 15, 2022

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CENTER FOR ITALIAN MODERN ART

FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION

General Information

Each year the Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) awards multiple Fellowships to support research on and the study of Italian modern and contemporary art for doctoral and post-doctoral scholars. Citizens of all nationalities are eligible. CIMA offers a unique experience to its fellows: its exhibition program serves as a hub for scholars from different academic backgrounds to share—with each other and with the public—research that speaks to the artworks on view. The fellowship has two main components: 1) research conducted through close examination of the artworks and individualized study of a topic raised by the exhibition; 2) community engagement, through public programming in collaboration with CIMA staff and in-person exhibition tours. During their residency, fellows also have the opportunity to pursue their own research and connect with scholars and other professionals in and around New York.

2022 Fellowships

The Fall-Winter exhibition for CIMA's 2022-23 season is Bruno Munari: The Child Within, scheduled for October 6, 2022 - January 14, 2023. It will focus on his children's books and demonstrate how his experimental and commercially produced publications expressed his wide-ranging ideas about the possibilities offered by art to communicate visually. Play is at the heart of even Munari's most serious production, and his work across genres, formats, and disciplines is all of a piece.

Bruno Munari was an artist, inventor, graphic designer, and a designer of objects. The totality of his work can perhaps be best understood through the lens of the children's books he wrote, designed, and illustrated. These books bring together his ideas regarding art, design, and pedagogy in an accessible form.

It was Munari's goal to develop a purely visual language, one not reliant on verbal or textual meaning, that fostered new modes of communication. In the 1940s he started to create his series of "unreadable books," completely devoid of text, but full of tactile and visual expression. From these, he removed the elements readers traditionally identify with books: title, author name, title and copyright pages, table of contents, running text, etc. His goal was to emphasize the grammar of the book as object, through its form, color, proportions, and rhythm. The "unreadable books" featured a wide variety of colored pages, paper stocks, textures, formats, and shapes. They might be pierced by threads and marked with spots or lines or create a kinetic illusion through

transparent or overlapping pages. These books were not designed just to be seen, but as objects with which to interact playfully and imaginatively.

Between 1945 and 1968 Munari produced a remarkable array of books that exemplify the ideas and achievements of his broader career: an unerring graphic sensibility, elements of surprise and humor, and a fluency with the mechanics of book-flaps and holes within pages, which contribute to the narrative qualities of these publications as much as their words or images.

Munari's books for children weave together all the threads of his theoretical and creative practice, thus, the show at CIMA will underscore the artist's various areas of activity through these works. For a contextual framework, the exhibition will also feature modern artist's books from other cultures, including Russian revolutionary children's books that played a role in Munari's own formation and approach to the genre. Furthermore, the presentation will include artworks and design objects by Munari that share themes—as well as visual and formal connections—with his children's books.

Some of the possible research subjects include:

- Avant-garde sources for Munari's books: Futurism, Constructivism, Cubism, Dada, Bauhaus, and Surrealism.
- The relationship between avant-gardes and childhood.
- The relationship between experimental art books and children's literature.
- The relationship between literature and the visual arts through the lens of Munari's practice.
- Munari in dialogue with key experimental art trends of the 20th century.
- Munari's social commitment through his engagement in pedagogy and the production of didactic materials and activities.
- Playfulness as a means of aesthetic and conceptual exploration.
- Experimental art books for children in an international context.

The deadline for the 2022 CIMA Fellowship application is Sunday, May 15, 2022. Finalists will be interviewed via video or phone in early June 2022, and the selection process will be completed by the end of June 2022. Application materials must be submitted in English.

Fellowship Details

- Fellowship Duration: the 2022 CIMA Fellowships will last four months, encompassing the Fall semester of the 2022–23 academic year, from October 1st to January 31st, 2023. Graduate and Post-Graduate Fellows from the disciplines of Art History, Italian Studies, Education, and other fields in the humanities may apply.
- Stipend and Benefits: Fellowship stipends vary in range, based on need and length of term, and typically include a living allowance of \$3,000 per month. Health insurance coverage will also be reimbursed, as well as travel costs from a fellow's permanent residence to and from CIMA. CIMA fellows' tax liability to the U.S. government will be determined in accordance with the tax regulations of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.
- Resources: Fellows are given a desk at CIMA but are also encouraged to work at a desk provided for them in the main gallery, surrounded by the works that they are researching. They may apply to receive privileges at New York City research libraries through the MaRLI program, and through the research branch of the New York Public Library.
- Responsibilities: Fellows are expected to be present in New York during the term of their fellow-

ship and to participate in the intellectual life and programming of CIMA, though a small research budget to support short research trips to archives elsewhere in the United States will be made available. Fellowship responsibilities include but are not limited to leading CIMA's public tours (which occur twice a week on Fridays and Saturdays) as well as private guided visits for school groups and special constituents (on average once or twice a week, with the possibility of tours for children or other special activities) and to participating in the public and members' programming through the run of the exhibition; these duties are shared evenly among the fellows. Fellows interact with a wide variety of public audiences, sharing their research in many different ways, including through guided tours. For this reason, CIMA is seeking candidates who have the ability to express themselves clearly in English.

- CIMA fellows will be present for the installation and de-installation of the exhibition and will collaborate on the planning of the season's public programs. All the fellows work together to organize the exhibition's Study Days—an international conference that brings together the fellows and other scholars to share research that stems from the exhibition on view. Fellows are encouraged to contribute to CIMA's blog and to propose public programming; they are also invited to pursue their own projects and take advantage of the rich cultural life of New York. CIMA makes every effort to assist the fellows in making professional contacts during their residency.

The Selection Process

A committee of experts drawn from CIMA's advisory board and CIMA's university partners will meet to select the 2022 fellows. Candidates for CIMA Fellowships are chosen based on their academic potential and curriculum vitae, their proposed plans of study, their spoken and written English and Italian language abilities, and the correlation between their proposals and CIMA's annual study topic. At CIMA we wish to foster a mix of emerging scholars from different schools of thought, who employ different methodologies and approaches, in order to encourage dialogue and exchange. All other factors being equal, preference will be given to those applicants who have not had extensive prior experience living, studying, and/or working in New York. CIMA selects fellows on an objective and non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. CIMA only accepts pre-doctoral applicants or those who have attained their PhD within the past 7 years.

The Application

The application should be emailed to info@italianmodernart.org by Sunday, May 15, 2022. The email subject line should identify the fellowship the applicant is seeking and their first and last name. If the applicant does not receive confirmation or receipt within one week, please contact CIMA by phone or email. Please submit the following information in a single PDF document in 12pt Times font. Please do not send multiple attachments.

- Cover letter with applicant information and project summary

Name, Email, Phone, Address, Current Position

Brief statement describing your background, relevant experience, and particular interests (250-word limit)

Brief summary of proposed study, also relating your project to CIMA's study theme (350-word limit)

- Proposal

Project Statement (1,500-word limit)

- Curriculum Vitae

A curriculum vitae (maximum of three pages)

- References

Please provide the names, phone numbers, and email addresses for three references. Please instruct your references to submit their letters directly to CIMA by Sunday, May 15, 2022. CIMA prefers letters as single page PDFs sent to info@italianmodernart.org with the applicant's first name and last name in the email subject line.

Reference:

STIP: Bruno Munari, Center for Italian Modern Art. In: Arthist.net, Apr 18, 2022 (accessed Sep 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/36439>>.