MoMA PS1

REVIEWS PARIS

Beatrice Bonino

Fondation Pernod Ricard

By Marzena Jarczak



Beatrice Bonino, *Funny and Fun*, 2024, silicone, plastic, paper, Bakelite, fabric, rubber, 45 1/4 × 39 3/8 × 1 1/8".

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Beatrice Bonino once said that she was interested in how to hold together what resists being joined. That was in 2024, just a year after her first solo show, when her objects were typically tied, closed, pierced, layered, covered. Bows, rendered in materials such as ceramic and lead, emerged as a recurring motif across several works. Looking at the sculptures, one could usually reconstruct the process of their making—a methodological transparency that continues to define Bonino's practice. The idea of preservation became even more pronounced in her second solo exhibition, *"Cosetta"* (Trifle), at MMXX, Milan, in 2023. Bonino introduced display cases that were filled—as in *Untitled*, 2023, where strings of plastic are joined by three bows into a necklace-like form—and then sealed. She works with both found and made objects, but even in the case of the former, the process of creation is always accompanied by transformation, however minimal. In *Oinops pontos* (Wine-Dark Sea), 2024, a found photographic print of the sea was inserted into a plastic sleeve, untouchable. Although Bonino told me she resists interpreting her work through a biographical lens, she was right to point out certain correlations between her artistic practice and translation (she holds a Ph.D. in Sanskrit): Bringing something to life is a process shaped by exclusion and choice.

Bonino's latest exhibition, her institutional debut in France, summed up her development so far. Curated by Catherine David, "In the main in the more" presented nineteen of her works alongside eleven pieces by eight contemporary and historical artists chosen by Bonino herself. This approach could be seen as a risky attempt to situate a younger artist within a predefined lineage and to reduce her concerns to visual correlations, such as material transparency. Yet, as she has shown in earlier projects, the value of transparency lies precisely in its capacity to reveal deeper layers. Marisa Merz's delicate slippers made of pale-green nylon thread pierced with iron nails (*Untitled*, 1968) function as shoe-shaped imprints of the body. Dieter Roth's *Two Shirts*, 1988, frames a couple of cotton shirts, each with a tie hand-drawn in marker, showing how little it takes for something to become something else. His sculpture *Untitled*, 1989, composed of various cups and mugs stacked one on top of another on cardboard, directs attention to the specificity of materials and the subjectivity of meaning.

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Bonino's concern is not to produce fixed meaning or impose specific readings. She is concerned with creation, both as the act of marking the presence of a thing and as the thing that emerges from that act: a residue of making, a memory. She told me that her notes frequently return to the idea of the bare minimum required for a thing to exist. Three works titled *Gonna* (Skirt), 2025, resemble sewing patterns made of silicone and plastic. A prototype, by definition, reveals only essential features. Like a contour, it is a container of an idea. In *The Carrier Bag*, 2025, a stiffened plastic sack stores a dried rose covered with mesh. Like a membrane, the plastic encircles the flower, which might be dead but isn't gone. *Untitled (Fallen Column)*, 2025, is a column made of pleated paper, pleated cotton, plastic, and cardboard and is presented horizontally. The piece appears fragile—its horizontality stemming from the fall stressed in the title—yet it also conveys an intrinsic resistance, a quality shared by the reclaimed, often translucent industrial materials she frequently finds in the back rooms of hardware stores. In *She is not dead but sleepeth*, 2025, a medal case with a card labeled BONINO attached to it is placed inside a clear plastic box together with a dried rose, suggesting an earlier self that has not faded from view. American historian Timothy Snyder has observed in his book *On Freedom* (2025) that when memory fails, our future has no past, and we are less rooted in the present. However, if preserved, memory serves as a binding force. With all of its continuities, Bonino's work carries an insistent presence. Somewhere between what's gone and what's left lies her minimum of existence, loud and bare.

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Marc Kokopelli, *Times Square Alliance Playset* (detail), 2025, digital video (color, sound, 9 minutes 15 seconds), LCD cabinet, LED screen, resin, fabric, mixed media, 36 5/8 × 60 5/8 × 31 1/2". Photo: Grayse.

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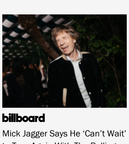
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