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View of "Gianni Pettena," 2012. Installation view, Galleria Federico Luger.

MILAN

Gianni Pettena

ENRICO FORNELLO
Via Massimiano 25
January 19–March 16, 2012

In a pair of solo shows, Gianni Pettena—artist, architect (or more precisely *anarchitetto*, or “anarchitect”), and leading figure in the Italian late-1960s and early-'70s “radical architecture” movement—presents a selection of early works

and a series of more recent creations. Conceived as a “score” to be read and interpreted, the exhibitions successfully establish a channel of communication and complement one another. Moreover, they reveal the theoretical continuity as well as the command of materials and space that have always distinguished the practice of this extraordinary experimentalist.

At Enrico Fornello, a display of framed photographs and drawings documents Pettena’s architectural interventions in the United States in the '70s. *Clay House*, 1972, and *Ice House II*, 1971, show Pettena’s conversion of two suburban homes in Salt Lake City and Minneapolis, which he covered with clay and ice, respectively, thus merging the natural and built landscape into one. The show also features *Io sono la spia* (I Am the Spy), 1973, a diptych composed of a silk screen that bears the title phrase and a black-and-white picture of the architects and designers (among them Alessandro Mendini, Gaetano Pesce, and members of the groups Archizoom and Superstudio) who gathered together in the editorial offices of *Casabella* magazine that year to form the “Global Tools” collective. The show also includes a new wall installation, *Human Face*, 2012, made with several handmade balls of clay that fit neatly into a niche.

Creating a seamless dialogue with that work, Pettena presents *Human Wall*, 2012, at Federico Luger. It is a barrier of clay that will be modified by visitors during the course of the exhibition. In addition to other older photographic works and one new video, the Luger show is completed by another architectural project, *Breathing Architecture*, 2012. Here, a surface portion of the wall is slightly detached, as if it requires separation from the rest of the structure in order to actually exist.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

This exhibition is also on view at Galleria Federico Luger, via Circo 1, until March 16.

— Vincenzo de Bellis

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