MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo

GORDON MATTA-CLARK
NOT THE WORK… THE WORKER

Curated by **Jessamyn Fiore and Francesco Stocchi**

November 13, 2026 > February 28, 2027

Gallery 4 | *maxxi.art* | *Press Area*

Rome, November 12, 2026 – From **November 13, 2026, to February 28, 2027**, MAXXI, the National Museum of 21st Century Arts, presents *Gordon Matta-Clark. Not the Work… The Worker*, an exhibition curated by **Jessamyn Fiore** and **Francesco Stocchi**, dedicated to one of the most innovative figures on the international art scene of the 1970s.
Through sculptures, photographs, films, and spatial interventions, the exhibition explores the artistic practice of the American artist (New York, 1943–1978), who transformed architecture into a field of artistic, political, and social experimentation. Particular attention is given to his experiences in Italy, which played a decisive role in the evolution of his artistic language.
The exhibition was also developed in consultation with an international scientific committee of artists, architects, and scholars, comprising Laurie Anderson, Martien De Vletter, Elizabeth Diller, Julien Fronsacq, Lorenzo Fusi, Francesco Garutti, Alfredo Jaar, Joan Jonas, Noah Khoshbin, Sylvia Lavin, Camila Mancilla Vera, Azikiwe Mohammed, and Sokio.

THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition traces Matta-Clark's artistic development from his early experiments between 1970 and 1974 to the large-scale architectural interventions of the following years, bringing together sculptures, photographs, films, drawings, projects, and spatial reconstructions.
Among the most significant works is *Open House* (1972), exhibited here for the first time in Italy, an industrial dumpster transformed into a walk-through structure through the addition of doors, partitions, and salvaged materials. Divided into small rooms and corridors, it becomes an alternative architectural environment that challenges conventional notions of domestic space. At MAXXI, the work enters into dialogue with the fluid forms of Zaha Hadid's building, inviting visitors to experience the transformation of space firsthand.
Matta-Clark's exploration of the urban environment emerges in *Graffiti Photoglyphs* (1973), developed from an extensive photographic survey conducted in the South Bronx and Harlem documenting this new rising artform. The artist took more than 2,000 photographs of graffiti-covered subway cars, subsequently reworking them into long compositions hand-painted with color.
This period also includes *Bronx Floors* and *Walls Paper* (both 1972), a series of interventions in abandoned residential buildings in the South Bronx. By removing sections of floors and walls, Matta-Clark connected previously separate spaces while exposing the consequences of urban neglect and questioning the social function of architecture.
A central section of the exhibition is dedicated to the artist's time in Italy, during which his cutting practice acquired a new level of spatial and conceptual complexity.
Created in Milan in 1973, *Infraform* represents a pivotal moment in Matta-Clark's artistic development. Working inside an abandoned industrial building, the artist made geometric cuts into walls and corners, opening up unexpected perspectives and altering the perception of space. The exhibition features a reconstruction of the work, allowing visitors to experience firsthand the principle of cutting and its ability to redefine architecture.
Also in 1973, in Genoa, Matta-Clark created *A W-Hole House*, intervening for the first time on an entire building and thereby expanding the scale of his experiments.
These projects are presented alongside the *Cut Drawings*, three-dimensional works created by cutting through layers of paper and cardboard, translating the geometries of his architectural cuts into sculptural form.

Matta-Clark's relationship with Italy once again became central in 1975 with *Arc de Triomphe for Workers*, a project conceived for an industrial complex in Sesto San Giovanni occupied by a group of young communists.
Struck by the workers' ability to mobilize the local community, Matta-Clark further explored the social and collective dimensions of architecture, understanding it not merely as a form of formal experimentation but also as a tool for participation and urban transformation.
This experience also helped inspire *A Resource Center and Environmental Youth Program for Loisaida*, an unrealized project intended to engage artists and local residents in the rehabilitation of abandoned buildings in New York.
His experiences in Italy thus marked a decisive turning point in the development of his practice, strengthening its political and community-oriented dimensions.
Matta-Clark's work reached a monumental scale with his major building cuts, including *Splitting* (1974), a vertical cut through a house in New Jersey, and *Day's End* (1975), which transformed an abandoned pier in New York into a light-filled space envisioned for collective use.
These were followed by *Conical Intersect* (1975), the iconic conical opening carved through two buildings slated for demolition next to the future Centre Pompidou in Paris, and *Circus (Caribbean Orange)* (1978), the artist's final major architectural intervention, which transformed a building in Chicago through a system of circular and spherical cuts.
F**ilm**, an integral part of Matta-Clark's artistic practice, plays a central role throughout the exhibition.
Alongside screenings presented throughout the galleries, a dedicated cinema offers visitors an opportunity to explore the relationship between moving images, architecture, and performance.
At the heart of Gallery 4, the area surrounding *Open House* is conceived as a gathering space, hosting performances and public programs, including music, performance art, public talks, and more exploring the relationship between art, architecture, the city, and communities.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalog edited by Jessamyn Fiore and Francesco Stocchi published by Skira that includes individual conversations with the members of the scientific committee - scholars and friends who collectively bring groundbreaking insight to the work of Gordon Matta-Clark. The catalogue also includes a section focused on images of the artworks included in the exhibition and historic documentary photographs.

GORDON MATTA-CLARK

Born in New York City in 1943 to Anne Clark and Chilean Surrealist painter Roberto Matta, **Gordon Matta-Clark** studied architecture and graduated from Cornell University in 1968, returning to New York the following year and embedding himself in the downtown arts scene. In the ’70s he experimented across various media and began staging monumental interventions and smaller-scale installations in a city fraught with economic crisis and political upheaval, bringing attention to New York’s abandoned spaces, failing social policies, and displaced people. Engaged with peer artists and non-artists in collaborations that aimed to improve their surroundings, he helped establish alternative spaces such as **112 Greene Street** and **FOOD**, an artist-run restaurant in SoHo. Additionally, he pursued large-scale architectural interventions in Europe, including major projects in Italy, France, and Belgium where he physically cut through buildings slated for demolition. Gordon Matta-Clark died from cancer in 1978 at the age of 35, leaving behind a singular body of work that has gone on to inspire generations of both artists and architects.

MAXXI PRESS OFFICE
+39 06 324861 | press@fondazionemaxxi.it