

ANICONISMS

An aniconic vein in Art has existed since the dawn of time. It excludes figurative images from its representational horizon to focus on other elements: lines, colors, volumes, geometries, towards a direction of abstraction. Starting from the nullification of Reality's descriptive features and the experimentation on shapes and composition through repetition and modularity, this Exhibition Room plays with the ambiguity of images through geometry and abstraction, stasis and movement, white and black or polychromies.

Pablo Reinoso's repeated modules, made dynamic by the internal mechanism that alters their perimetral lines by filling them with air, dialogue with Roland Fischer's patterns that, instead, transfigure a hotel's façade through its isolation from the rest of the building and the exaltation of its geometrical design, grazing optical Art. The act of abstraction on a recognizable object is carried out by Aitor Ortiz as well, who decontextualizes architectonic structures by transforming them in reflections on Geometry, to the point that they lose any reference to the Real. Similarly, Ettore Spalletti transforms the column – a key element in architecture – into a solid figure capable of embodying an archetype of Art itself.

Colour becomes an experimentation field as well, from its wavy texture with contrasting tints transforming the surface in a vibrant place in Sol LeWitt's works to the rigorous use of *chiaroscuro* in Nunzio's curved shapes or Mario Cresci's quadrangular ones. In these last artworks, although privileging diverse mediums – from the use of matter typical of *Poor Art* to photographic inquiry – the study of space and how Art can approach it by measuring it remains a constant theme.

Mario Cresci (Chiavari, 1942) *Alterazioni del Quadrato*, dalla serie *Geometria non euclidea*, Venezia 1964 - Bergamo 2010

Cresci's research, starting from the Sixties, uses the language of photography to investigate aspects linked to memory, perception, and analogies, eventually transforming it into an invite to dialogue with Reality in an unprecedented way. The Artist himself recounts his approach to photography: "I decided to dedicate myself with more intensity to the idea of a 'photographic' the nature of which is not only retinal but also sensorial, and where the image is a phenomenon inseparable from corporeity and, mainly, from its sensorimotor basis".

The *Alterations* constitute reflections on that singular icon originating Malevič's Suprematism: the primitive square shape, elementary and primordial, from which variations proliferate from different points of view, reminds us of anamorphic visions as well as of non-euclidean geometries.

The first commentators of Einstein's Theory of Relativity stated: "The observer's position affects the experiment". So it does not modify the experiment, which remains identical to itself, but it affects it. We can observe this phenomenon by obtaining impressions and perceptions which depend on our position in the "event horizon".

Roland Fischer (Saarbrücken, 1958), *Nikko*, 2002

Nikko gets its name from the Parisian hotel of which the Artist portrays the façade. It is part of a series, *Façades*, which started during the Nineties in China and brought the Artist to photograph the exterior of the most suggestive buildings of the world's major metropolises – banks, hotels, museums, company headquarters –, over ten years.

The portrayed façades are isolated from the rest of the building with the intent of letting lines, graphics, patterns, and colors emerge to the point that every reference to the original structure is lost. The image turns into an illusion, unveiling the architectural details but concealing the building, the identity of which is only revealed through the title. Each façade is an "autonomous subject", as defined by the Artist himself, independent from the structure of which it is an integral part, and becomes an abstract artwork, losing every defining feature of the Real. In *Nikko*'s specific case, Fischer highlights the façade's red, white, and black pattern, underlining the interplay of light and shadow.

Sol LeWitt (Hartford, 1928 – New York, 2007), *Horizontal Brushstrokes*, 2002

In the artwork, gouache on paper, thin red brush strokes on a light blue background fill the surface with a wavy, soft and sinuous pattern, confirming the minimalist grammar of Sol LeWitt's language. The Artist begins using gouache, besides his well-known *Wall Drawings*, after a trip to Italy in the Eighties. During the journey, he gets in contact with Italian Maestros from the past and with artists such as Alighiero Boetti, Giulio Paolini, and Mario Merz. Differing from *Wall Drawings*, in which LeWitt handed the project to his collaborators who cured the realization on a wall, gouache is applied by the Artist himself. These works constitute an experimentation field of irregular, wavy, and curved shapes that, although not sharing the same geometrical rigor of the *Wall Drawings*, still remain inside a minimalist and conceptual approach, refusing the rhetorics of spontaneity and immediateness of the expressionist gesture.

Nunzio (Cagnano Amiterno, 1954), *Senza titolo*, 1993

Nunzio has always been interested in experimenting with matter and exploring its interaction with space and light to bring out its expressive potentialities. He shares the simplicity of materials and the geometrical rigor with *Poor Art* and Minimalism, which he poses in constant dialogue with the environment. The Artist prefers to work with wood, lead, and plaster materials. Wood, in particular, subjected to the process of combustion, becomes the center of his Nineties works. The three concave and curved pieces of wood displayed in the exhibition, set up in rhythmic succession to form an apparently light structure, have been blackened by treating the organic matter with a blowtorch. This operation made their surface darker and almost polished, capable of interacting with its surrounding space through the reflection of the light. As a result, the three elements seem to take the semblance of quick black signs, accents traced on the wall in their apparent lightness.

Aitor Ortiz (Bilbao, 1971), *Modular Mod 001/016*, 2002

Ortiz's photographs almost always portray architectural structures. Specifically, the Artist searches their not immediately recognizable details to generate abstract or geometrical shapes, losing every reference to the Real in the process. As a result, he creates those he describes as "dilemmas between interpretation and representation". In particular, the two exhibited artworks belong to the *Modular Mod* series, developed between 2002 and 2003. In this series, the Artist plays with images, creating optical illusions that disorient the visitor regarding the subject of the pictures themselves. The misleading perspectives, portraying architectural details as if they were sculptural objects, invite the visitor to pause and decipher what is represented in the artworks. This series' photographs, including the two exhibited here, though they can be considered independent from one another, are conceived as a single unit and are therefore combined in a single structure through a tilting chassis, which can modify their perspective.

Pablo Reinoso (Buenos Aires, 1955), *Senza titolo*, 2001

The artwork exhibited here belongs to the *Breathing Works* series, begun by the Artist during the Nineties to conduct his formal research regarding the use of air as an artistic medium and investigate the applications of a wide range of materials, including fabric. Between sculpture and architecture, these monochrome installations evoke the passing of time and the precarity of existence through the unconscious yet universal act of breathing, the most natural and spontaneous human gesture, yet the most immaterial and abstract one. From a formal point of view, the artwork is composed of a series of white pads laid out in a rectangular grid. On each of them is placed a small electric fan that inflates each pane, emulating the act of breathing and breaking the rigor of the lines. The fabric, chosen due to its characteristic lightness and thinness, allows the air to pass through, while the fans evoke the idea of a breathing body/machine.

Ettore Spalletti (Cappelle sul Tavo, 1940 – Spoltore, 2019), *Colonna tagliata, rosa*, 2004

In the Seventies, Spalletti defined his poetics as founded on the simplification of shapes, the monochrome, the investigation of surfaces' optical and tactile qualities, the relationship between sculpture and architecture, and among color, light, space, and shape. His work is often inspired by the past, including this artwork: a column representing a Classical memory combined with Minimalism's modern and essential lines. Its result is a timeless object; as for the artist, time should not be considered a linear progression but rather an eternal present. Along these lines, Spalletti insists on the idea of a column as a "module", dwelling on such an architectural element and characterizing it with a geometric and essential lyricism, as well as with a sharp color contrast between black and pale pink, evoking the contrast between light and shadow. The marble's black surface, polished to a mirror, seems to emanate light, creating an antithesis with the light pink opaque surface. The latter is created through the usual executive technique adopted by Spalletti. It involves an initial hot mixture of plaster and glue applied on the chosen surface, to which the color is later added, penetrating through the entire thickness of the material. Once solidified, the surface is treated with an abrasive paper to obtain a thin layer of colored dust, giving it an illusion of depth and an optical vibration.