



30.11.25—12.04.26

KANDINSKY E L'ITALIA

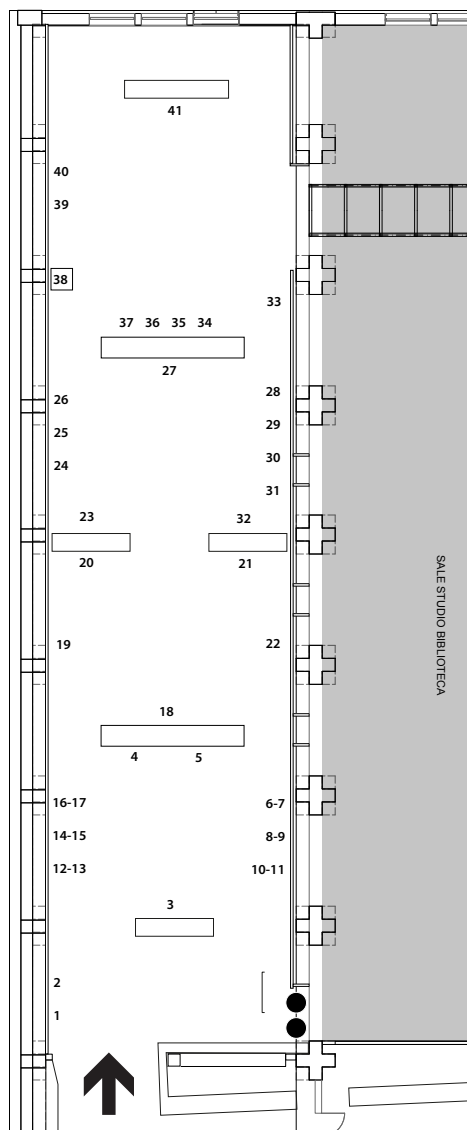
Exhibition made with



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KANDINSKY

AND THE EVOLUTIONS OF EUROPEAN ABSTRACT ART



FIRST HALL

This first section is dedicated to the European international artistic horizon of the 1920s and 1930s, a period in which Wassily Kandinsky's presence at the Bauhaus — together with his theoretical and formal approach — profoundly influenced the development of abstract painting.

In 1911, Kandinsky, together with Franz Marc, founded in Munich the group *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider), promoting — alongside artists such as Paul Klee, August Macke, Gabriele Münter, and Alexej von Jawlensky — a new vision of art as an encounter and synthesis between visible reality and the artist's inner sensibility.

In the group's journal-manifesto, *The Blue Rider Almanac*, Kandinsky brought together artists and musicians around the idea of a unity of the arts, publishing seminal texts such as *On the Problem of Form* and *The Yellow Sound*. In these essays, the artist brought to maturity his conception of painting as a visual symphony, in dialogue with the music of Arnold Schönberg and with the new frontiers of modernity.

From 1922, Kandinsky taught in Weimar at the Bauhaus, where his friends Paul Klee and Lyonel Feininger were also members of the faculty. In his courses on painting, form, and analytical drawing, Kandinsky explored theosophy, Gestalt psychology, and Goethe's color theory, focusing on the structure of visual language and the expressive potential of color, as well as the dynamic tension of lines, points, and planes — fundamental elements in the composition.

From the corpus of lectures given by the artist naturally emerged, in 1926, his book *Point and Line to Plane*, published in the Bauhaus Bücher series. During these years, Kandinsky's thought and painting intertwined with those of artists such as Paul Klee and Alexej von Jawlensky, influencing younger generations including Jean Arp, Joan Miró, Alexander Calder, and Antoni Tàpies — protagonists of a period of profound experimentation that redefined the very meaning of painting, shaping abstraction in directions that were at times lyrical, dreamlike, and surreal.

Together, these masters affirmed the idea of art as an autonomous language, free from any external referentiality and guided by that poetics of "inner necessity" which, for Kandinsky, lies at the very origin of artistic creation.

ARTWORKS

1. Wassily Kandinsky

Market-place with Walking Couple, 1903

In the summer of 1903, Wassily Kandinsky stayed in Kallmünz, a small village northeast of Munich. To this period belongs the painting / *Market-place with Walking Couple* (also known as *Market-place in Kallmünz with Walking Couple*), a work that still reflects the artist's figurative phase. This painting is part of what can be described as the "prehistory" of Kandinsky's art, a time when his watercolors, drawings, and prints were dominated by landscapes and scenes of rural life, observed from nature or recreated from memory and showed influences from Post-Impressionism, Jugendstil, Russian folk art tradition, as well as echoes of German painting and Symbolist literature.

Like all landscapes of the period, the painting is inspired by nature, but it is possible to observe a gradual deepening of colour that moves away from reality, and a composition that no longer follows the rules of perspective: the elements in the scene are positioned on a single horizon line, distances are not emphasised, nor are the proportions between the different subjects.

Through the assimilation of avant-garde ideas, Kandinsky began his journey towards the subjective interpretation of painting.

2. Wassily Kandinsky

Untitled, 1917

3. Wassily Kandinsky

Untitled, 1918

4. Franz Marc

Small horse (First German Salon d'Automne), 1913

5. Alexej von Jawlensky

Still Life (Little Rose Tree), 1936

6-7. Wassily Kandinsky

Small Worlds I, 1922

Small Worlds VII, 1922

Before joining the Bauhaus in 1922, Kandinsky created murals for the Juryfreie at the Glaspalast in Berlin and published a collection of lithographs, woodcuts and chalcography under the title *Small Worlds*. Each technique was chosen by the artist for its unique qualities:

Kandinsky wrote in the poem accompanying the prints «four of the sheets were created with the help of stone, four with wood and four with copper». Drypoint is characterised by precision and is suitable for studying lines; woodcut is characterised by the interaction between foreground and background and by the richness of textures; lithography combines a range of marks and colours to produce an image that is as close as possible to a painting. The series was presented in Italy at Kandinsky's first exhibition at the Galleria Il Milione in Milan, from 24 April to 9 May 1934.

The twelve plates that make up this engraving experiment therefore constitute a compendium of different printing techniques and highlight the chromatic triad, as well as the variation and combination of heterogeneous graphic signs — wedges, grids, chequerboards, triangles — on which Kandinsky was conducting his research. In doing so, the artist created a direct continuation of the ideas expressed in *On the Spiritual in Art* (1912), while also anticipating the theoretical developments later formulated in *Point and Line to Plane* (1926).

As the title of the series suggests, each image is a visual universe in which the signs seem animated by rhythm and lively notes: sound, colour, light and movement merge into a musical synthesis of the cosmos.

8-9. Wassily Kandinsky

Small Worlds IV, 1922

Small Worlds V, 1922

10-11. Wassily Kandinsky

Small Worlds II, 1922

Small Worlds III, 1922

12-13. Wassily Kandinsky

Small Worlds VI, 1922

Small Worlds VIII, 1922

14-15. Wassily Kandinsky

Small Worlds IX, 1922

Small Worlds XII, 1922

16-17. Wassily Kandinsky

Small Worlds XI, 1922

Small Worlds X, 1922

18. Wassily Kandinsky

White Zigzags, 1922

By 1922, Kandinsky had been pursuing his abstract path for over a decade. That year, he joined his friends and colleagues Paul Klee and Lyonel Feininger at the Bauhaus Institute in Weimar, following an invitation from its founder, Walter Gropius. Encouraged by the school's fusion of technical and practical training, theory of form, and experimentation, Kandinsky began an investigation into the physical foundations of colour order, concentrating on the triad of yellow, blue and red and focusing on the analysis of individual elements — line and point — in relation to the plane and their infinite possible combinations.

The painting *White Zigzags* — created in Weimar and later acquired by the City of Venice on the occasion of the 1950 Biennale — bears witness to the transition from the lyrical abstraction of the second decade of the 20th century to the subsequent geometric period. In this work, the last figurative traces, still present at the margins of the compositional space, are ultimately overcome by the full autonomy and evocative power of color and the use of dynamic, broken, rhythmic geometric shapes that chase each other and come together in a dense and vibrant compositional structure.

19. Wassily Kandinsky

Three Triangles, 1938

Three Triangles is a work that bears witness to the new and final great transformation of Kandinsky's pictorial language. In a varied and tension-filled context — 1930s Paris, where the artist moved after the closure of the Bauhaus in 1933 — Kandinsky became close to figures such as Jean Arp, who had begun to explore soft and organic forms, and the magical repertoire of Miró and the surrealists, who led him towards a process of "de-geometrisation" of his visual vocabulary. The forms he had explored and theorised in previous years dissolved, becoming multiform, biomorphic and organic.

In this work, the lines are clear and the shapes simple and unmistakable: triangles and rectangles stand out on the surface alongside serpentine lines and cellular and embryonic forms. The black background—which reappears after having already been present in the artist's work during the 1920s—further highlights the colours chosen: pure, bright, almost phosphorescent.

20. Wassily Kandinsky

Two Tensions, 1934

21. Wassily Kandinsky

Varied Stripes, 1933

22. Wassily Kandinsky

Transverse, 1931

23. Paul Klee

Three Subjects, Polyphonic 1931

24. Paul Klee

Landscape with Rocks and Fir Trees, 1929

25. Paul Klee

Figurine in the Style of Aristophanes, 1924

26. Paul Klee

Eats Out of the Hands, 1920

27. Paul Klee

Small Town Idyll, 1913

In 1911, Paul Klee became involved with the avant-garde circle of the Der Blaue Reiter, forming relationships with Kandinsky, Marc, and Jawlensky, while the following year in Paris he met artists such as Le Fauconnier, Karl Hofer, and Robert Delaunay.

1913 was a significant year for the artist's public recognition as he participated in the First German Salon d'Automne at the Der Sturm gallery in Berlin and was one of the founders of the Neue Münchner Secession (New Munich Secession). On these occasions, Klee demonstrated his assimilation of developments in cubism and orphism. *Small Town Idyll*, belonging to the early phase of his production, shows these aspects combined with his characteristic spontaneous graphic style, which had found full expression in his drawings for Voltaire's *Candide* – begun in 1911–12 – and which is now enriched with colour in the evocative rendering of a rural landscape suspended between wakefulness and dream.

28. Paul Klee

Flowers of the Night, 1938

After leaving the Bauhaus, with the advent of Nazism, Klee was dismissed from the Düsseldorf Academy and moved to Paris in October 1933. In December, he emigrated with his family to Bern, where he faced serious financial difficulties and declining health. In this final phase of his

career, Klee abandoned his refined small-format compositions in favour of a more direct and gestural approach. He experimented with fragile materials and unusual techniques, such as pastels on fabrics (muslin, damask), eventually — as exemplified by *Flowers of the Night* — turning to the use of raw jute thereby emphasizing the tactile quality of the surface.

This is how his late style developed, marked by radical simplification: thick black lines, freely drawn on the surface, stand out as enigmatic signs. Their regular distribution suggests an expansion of space and contributes to the dissolution of traditional perspective, erasing any residual illusionism and restoring an inner symbolic value to the painting.

29. Paul Klee

Alarm, 1927

30. Paul Klee

Entwining, 1934

31. Paul Klee

Nocturnal Landscape, 1932

32. Paul Klee

With the snake, 1924

When he began teaching at the Bauhaus in 1921, Klee remained in contact with Kandinsky, Feininger and Jawlensky, with whom he founded the group Die Blaue Vier (The Blue Four) in 1924, bringing their works to the attention of the American public. During the early twenties, in Weimar and then in Dessau, Klee's reflections were strongly influenced by Kandinsky's theories on colour, the elements of composition and their balance with the surface, allowing him to develop a more conscious openness towards abstraction; however, his language never completely abandoned the figurative dimension.

With the snake belongs to a phase of artistic experimentation dominated by the use of watercolour and a lyrical chromaticism that subtly evokes Kandinsky's triad. In this work, the form is primarily organic and the relationship with external reality is filtered through a subtle symbolism with surrealist echoes. The title given by the artist serves as a key to unlock the inner narratives that intertwine between line and form.

33. Jean Arp

Alu with Claws, 1942

A key figure in European dadaism and abstract art, Jean Arp worked across painting, collage and sculpture, developing an organic and poetic language. In 1912, he met Kandinsky and participated in the second exhibition of Der Blaue Reiter, enthusiastically following the publication of their *Almanac*.

After his dadaist beginnings in Zurich and his collaborations with Sophie Taeuber, which were oriented towards a primarily abstract-concrete language, he arrived at a freer form that manifested a softer and more organic transformation of matter.

Alu with Claws was created in Grasse, in the south of France, where Arp took refuge with Sophie Taeuber-Arp during the war and where they were joined by Sonia Delaunay and Alberto and Susi Magnelli: "For two years we lived in that wonderful place, surrounded by trembling crowns of light, gliding flower wings, sounding clouds, trying to forget the horror of the world." The polished bronze piece expresses the body as a growing mutation of nature. The curved line that Arp favoured after the geometric structures influenced by his wife allowed him to describe aspects of an organic inverse still in gestation.

34. Jean Arp

Untitled, 1934

35. Jean Arp

Germ and Sleep, 1962

36. Joan Miró

Untitled, 1950

In the early twenties, Joan Miró moved to Paris. In Rue Blomet, he took a studio next to the one of the painter André Masson. Here he discovered the work of Paul Klee, which deeply impressed him. In the French capital, he quickly assimilated the ideas of Surrealism, beginning to define the traits of his poetics, mixing reality and imagination through simple geometric shapes, graphic signs and writing. In his *peintures de rêve*, Miró reproduced the visual structure of dreams, leaving room for spontaneity of gesture and the fluctuation of elements: stars, crescent moons, broken and serpentine lines, triangles, birds and anthropomorphic figures multiplied in the mesh of a network that was chaotic only in appearance.

In the series of paintings produced between 1949 and 1950, however, the complexity and

abundance of these elements gradually decrease. *Untitled* is one of a series of drawings executed impulsively, with quick strokes and without laborious creation. Asterisks and anthropomorphic figures take up more space – compared to the previous *Constellations* – on wilder surfaces, consisting of drips, stains that evaporate into clouds of colour, angry or careless brushstrokes.

37. Joan Miró

Landscape, 1977

38. Lyonel Feininger

Mole on the Rega, 1927

39. Antoni Tàpies

Offering, 1952

40. Yves Tanguy

To Build and to Destroy, 1940

41. Alexander Calder

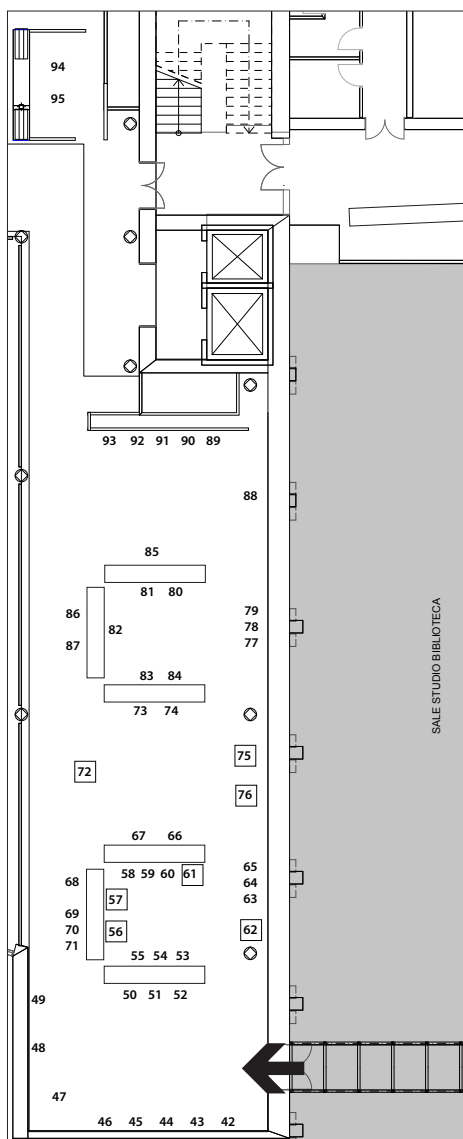
Red Yellow and Blue Gong, 1951

In 1925, after graduating in mechanical engineering and training in life drawing at the Art Students League in New York, Alexander Calder encountered the world of *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus*, following its activities as an illustrator. This experience led to the development of the *Cirque Calder* project, a travelling sculptural theatre.

In 1926, he was in Paris in contact with the avant-garde and inspired by Kandinsky and Mondrian, he abandoned figurative art for abstraction, giving life to his famous mobiles, light and dynamic sculptures where the geometric forms of abstraction combine with the natural dynamism of the characters – animals and humans – of his *Cirque*.

The development of this research includes *Red Yellow and Blue Gong*, in which coloured mobile elements move in space producing sounds: a balance of form, colour and movement that amplifies the performative and relational component of the sculptural dimension with the environment and the viewer. The work was donated by the artist to the city of Venice as a sign of gratitude for the award of the Premio della Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, the highest official recognition of the Biennale in those years, awarded to him as best foreign sculptor at the XXVI edition in 1952.

IL MILIONE AND THE GROUP OF COMO: THE LABORATORY OF ITALIAN ABSTRACTION



This second section of the exhibition explores the vibrant debate surrounding the visual arts in Italy during the 1930s and highlights the importance of the exhibition activities of the Galleria Il Milione in Milan.

From 1932 onwards, the Milione progressively acquired vitality, an innovative spirit, and an international outlook, offering visibility—through a succession of exhibitions—to the leading figures of the abstract season of the historical avant-gardes. Works by Fernand Léger (1932), Josef Albers (1934), and Jean Arp (1938) were presented, while in 1934 the gallery hosted the first solo exhibition dedicated to Wassily Kandinsky.

The first exhibition of Italian abstract art, organized by the Galleria in 1934, featured Oreste Bogliardi, Virginio Ghiringhelli—founder of the Milione—and Mauro Reggiani. The three artists, though with differing outcomes, worked pictorially on the reduction of volume to surface and on the deconstruction of composition into geometric forms, arranged according to chromatic harmonies and tonal resonances of color.

The Galleria Il Milione quickly became a meeting place for artists laying the aesthetic, linguistic, and theoretical foundations of Italian abstraction, as well as a space for reflection and dialogue among figures such as Enrico Prampolini, Atanasio Soldati, and Luigi Veronesi—interpreters of a new artistic research opposed to the more conservative figurative tradition.

Within this context, artists such as Mario Radice and Manlio Rho emerged, defining a Como line of abstraction characterized by greater geometric rigor, while others—such as Lucio Fontana, Osvaldo Licini, and Fausto Melotti—were protagonists of an aesthetic experimentation that would soon lead to significant sculptural reflections on space.

It was precisely in this climate that various visual experiences and declinations of the abstract language took shape.

42. Lucio Fontana *Abstract Sculpture, 1934*

Lucio Fontana, an Italo-Argentine artist, revolutionized twentieth-century sculpture and painting by introducing new ideas about space and material that anticipated contemporary art. In the 1930s, just after graduating from the Brera Academy of Fine Arts, he became close to the Galleria Il Milione, the first Italian abstract artists, and the Parisian group Abstraction-Création.

The three sculptures in the exhibition date from this very period; they were all created in 1934 and are titled *Abstract Sculpture*.

They are characterized by the use of humble materials, often drawn from the world of construction, by geometric gestures, and by a carefully sought lightness. The reinforced concrete sculpture presents itself like a painted panel, with rectangular volumes of varying sizes finding balance through chromatic contrast. The two iron sculptures, on the other hand, share a vertical and gestural thrust, light and dynamic: in particular, the colored iron sculpture seems to draw in space, creating a sign that sculpts the air and stands out in the light.

The working method experimented with in these early works already contains, in seed, the idea of frontal sculpture that Fontana would develop in his famous “Holes” and “Cuts” more than twenty years later.

43. Lucio Fontana *Composition, 1933*

44. Lucio Fontana *Composition, 1934*

45. Lucio Fontana *Composition, 1934*

46. Lucio Fontana *Abstract Sculpture, 1934*

47. Lucio Fontana *Abstract Sculpture, 1934*

48. Osvaldo Licini *Caprice No.2, 1932*

49. Osvaldo Licini *Composition - Fantastic Flower, 1935-36*

Oswaldo Licini, born in the Marche region, was one of the leading figures of lyrical abstraction in the early twentieth century. His visionary poetics would gradually spread, radiating into the vocabulary of contemporary art.

In 1932, he began establishing initial contacts with the Galleria Il Milione in Milan, a fertile center for the promotion of abstraction and modernism. Here, in 1935, he held his first solo exhibition, accompanied by an important statement of artistic poetics.

From these years comes the first section of works on display, essential for understanding his abstract experiments as well as his free vision, attentive to the themes of the “primitive” and imbued with a certain surrealism that characterizes his pictorial language.

While the painting *Bird* (1932) is rigorous in its use of geometric forms, both elementary and dynamic, and a color palette reduced to the bare minimum, in *Composition - Fantastic Flower* (1937/38) and *Caprice No.2* (1932), Licini minimizes abstract rigor and introduces frayed forms, a vibrant and irregular gestural quality that foreshadows his postwar works.

The late 1930s were a significant period for the maturation of Licini’s language, marking a gradual move beyond the geometric simplicity of his earlier abstract period.

50. Oswaldo Licini

Bird, 1932

51. Lucio Fontana

Mermaid with Horse, 1938

52. Lucio Fontana

Seahorses, 1937-39

53. Lucio Fontana

Studies for Portraits and Mermaid, 1938-39

54. Lucio Fontana

Lovers, 1936

55. Mario Radice

Composition C.F., 1936-38

One of the leading figures in Como abstract art, Mario Radice developed a rigorous geometric language in the thirties that was in dialogue with rationalist architecture. He collaborated with architect Giuseppe Terragni, who encouraged him to explore international abstract art, which

he also encountered through his frequent visits to the Galleria Il Milione in Milan. With Terragni, Radice designed the frescoes for the Casa del Fascio in Como in 1936, which are now lost. *Composition C.F.* was created as one of the preparatory studies for that project: fields of pure colour are organised into a balanced structure of lines and planes that translate the principles of harmony, measure and functionality of modern architecture onto the canvas. In it, the neoplastic lecture is combined with constructive tension, affirming a synthesis between art and space, between pictorial form and architectural form.

56. Mario Radice

Composition, 1937-1938

57. Mauro Reggiani

Composition, 1936

58. Manlio Rho

Composition 95 R.D.S.A. (Ritratto Di Stato d'Animo), 1940

At the beginning of the 1930s, Manlio Rho opened a new studio in Via delle Cinque Giornate, Como, soon to become a meeting place for Carla Badiali, Aldo Galli, Carla Prina, and the architects of Italian Rationalism such as Pietro Lingeri, Alberto Sartoris, Giuseppe Terragni, and Luigi Zuccoli. Over the course of the decade, he developed a geometric language influenced by Neoplasticism and Constructivism, in constant dialogue with Rationalist architecture and textile design.

In *Composition 95 R.D.S.A. (Portrait of a State of Mind)*, the orthogonal compositional grid is deconstructed through a multiplicity of overlapping planes, made legible by transparent chromatic layers that allow the light background to show through. The forms—defined solely by vibrant, delicate color—are free to interact with one another in a dreamlike dynamism, as evoked by the title, closely aligned with Kandinsky’s spiritual quest.

59. Carla Badiali

Composition No. 12, 1935-36

After spending her childhood in France, Carla Badiali, a student at the National Silk Institute of Como, brought together in her artistic practice both her textile training and a geometric rigor. A pupil of Manlio Rho, she engaged with the artists and architects of Lombard Rationalism

and Como-based abstractionism, developing a language in which art and design harmoniously converse.

Composition No. 12 belongs to her first abstract period: a geometric structure that is not rigid, crossed by curved and straight lines that animate the surface with semi-fluid geometric forms and pastel colors. In this work, Badiali translates the constructive severity of Rationalism into a lyrical and vibrant balance, where form opens to movement and chromatic sensitivity, foreshadowing an even freer and more dynamic dimension of line in her later research.

60. Bruno Munari

Useless Machine, 1934 (replica 1983)

61. Aldo Galli

Composition, 1955

62. Virginio Ghiringhelli

Composition No.3, 1933

Artist, critic, and collector, Virginio “Gino” Ghiringhelli was one of the leading figures of Italian historical abstraction. In the 1930s he shifted decisively toward geometric abstraction, a path that ran parallel to his work as a cultural promoter. In 1930, together with his brother Peppino, Edoardo Persico, and Maria Cernuschi, he founded Galleria Il Milione in Milan—a vital center of the Italian avant-garde that introduced to Italy the works of Kandinsky, Fernand Léger, Josef Albers, and Pablo Picasso.

Composition No.3 marks his first approach to abstraction, focused on the reduction of volumes into chromatic surfaces. Bands of varying colors—from greys to blues and pinks—are aligned side by side, creating interlocking forms that nonetheless reveal a spatial rhythm not yet entirely analytical.

63. Carla Prina

Abstract Composition, 1939

64. Oreste Bogliardi

Composition, 1934

65. Atanasio Soldati

Seascape of Grottammare, 1931

Atanasio Soldati was one of the founders of the Movimento Arte Concreta in Milan in 1948, together with Gillo Dorfles, Bruno Munari, Augusto Garau, and Gianni Monnet. Their goal

was to promote a form of abstraction entirely detached from reality, rooted in geometric clarity.

Ambiguity stands as one of the most significant works of this production. Beyond being among the first abstract paintings to win a postwar Italian prize—marking the Premio Gallarate for its experimental rigor—it encapsulates the essence of Soldati’s aesthetic inquiry. The artist crafted the composition with meticulous attention to colour contrasts, the relationships between complementary hues, and the dialogue of lines and surfaces.

The formal equilibrium is challenged by a diagonal axis that seems to bisect the canvas, without invoking symmetry. The intricate interweaving of shapes heightens, as the title suggests, the ambiguity of the work. This painting remains a cornerstone of Italian concretism and, in particular, of the Movimento Arte Concreta (M.A.C.).

66. Atanasio Soldati

Composition, 1937

67. Atanasio Soldati

Balance, 1949

68. Atanasio Soldati

Untitled, s.d.

68. Atanasio Soldati

Composition, 1937

70. Fausto Melotti

Sculpture No. 14, 1935

Fausto Melotti, a multifaceted artist—sculptor, painter, and musician—stands out for his complete devotion to abstraction, a balance of mystical and spiritual tension with scientific thought.

In 1935, he created and exhibited at the Galleria Il Milione a series of non-figurative works, among them *Sculpture No. 14*. Constructed from stainless steel, a revolutionary material for industry, the sculpture asserts a bold vertical thrust. Straight and undulating elements, voids and solids, alternate and support each other seamlessly, without the need for a pedestal. Architectural and musical resonances emerge in the piece: lines and surfaces act as counterpoints, coexisting with equal weight in the composition, reflecting Melotti’s wide-ranging cultural references.

71. Alberto Magnelli
Green Zita, 1938

72. Luigi Veronesi
Composition P, 1939

73. Fausto Melotti
Theme, 1968

74. Fausto Melotti
The Shack, 1965

A testament to the evolution of Fausto Melotti's sculptural language and his quest for lightness, *The Shack* (1965) is an anti-monumental, poetic creation.

Here, as elsewhere in his work, abstraction is intrinsic. The sculpture evokes architecture without ever depicting it: it transforms fragility into lightness, offering a meditation on space and the nature of sculptural art.

For Melotti, sculpture is an event, a happening—not a finished object or a triumph of modeling. *The Shack*, a delicate, almost weightless structure, a minimal monument and a tender, poetic hymn to transience, suggests a building without ever representing one.

75. Osvaldo Licini
Purple Flying Dutchman, 1942-43

76. Osvaldo Licini
Miracle of Saint Marr...co (Rebel Angel on a Yellow Background), 1951

After the encounter, in 1938, with the philosopher and historian of religions Franco Ciliberti, Osvaldo Licini began to explore the themes of the primordial and the symbolic dimension of painting. Fantastic figures start to emerge in his canvases, interwoven with numbers and letters, forming a precise and instantly recognizable stylistic signature. New, extraordinary presences begin to inhabit his works: the *Characters*, the *Flying Dutchman*, and, in the immediate postwar period, *Amalasunta* and the *Rebel Angel*.

In these paintings, Licini embraces unreality and timelessness, creating a spatial dimension suspended between heaven and earth.

Miracle of Saint Marr...co (Rebel Angel on a Yellow Background) exemplifies this approach. A vast moon looms over the horizon, barely revealing the night sky; its semicircular shape gently divides the space while embracing the angel in the foreground. Abstract lines twist

and coil, tracing the movement of a visionary creature retreating into the corner of the canvas.

77. Osvaldo Licini
Missile Angels + Moon, 1956-57

78. Lucio Fontana
Spatial Concept, 1952

79. Lucio Fontana
Spatial Concept, 1960

80. Lucio Fontana
Spatial Concept, 1961

In 1946, after returning from Argentina, Lucio Fontana wrote the *Manifesto Blanco*, a cornerstone text that defined the new ideas about space central to his mature work. This was soon followed by the *Manifesto of Spatialism*, where the term "spatial concept" was first coined—a title that would accompany many of his creations, including the five works on display, produced between 1952 and 1965.

From the early 1960s, Fontana turned his focus to the series of "Oils," marked by a dense, tactile application of color on generally uniform surfaces, enlivened by delicate "graffito" gestures. The malleability of oil paint allows for any intervention—incising, tearing, or piercing—without resistance.

In *Spatial Concept* (1961), the thick golden layer is punctuated by a series of holes, accentuated by fragments of pink and green glass directly embedded into the canvas, enriching the composition, and lending it a subtle, three-dimensional presence.

81. Lucio Fontana
Spatial Concept, Expectations, 1964

82. Lucio Fontana
Spatial Concept, 1961

83. Enrico Prampolini
Composition, 1950

84. Enrico Prampolini
Cosmic Analogies, 1931 ca.

85. Atanasio Soldati
Untitled, 1952/53

86. Atanasio Soldati
Still in Time - Too Late, 1953

87. Atanasio Soldati
Ambiguity, 1951

Atanasio Soldati was one of the founders of the Movimento Arte Concreta in Milan in 1948, together with Gillo Dorfles, Bruno Munari, Augusto Garau, and Gianni Monnet. Their goal was to promote a form of abstraction entirely detached from reality, rooted in geometric clarity. *Ambiguity* stands as one of the most significant works of this production. Beyond being among the first abstract paintings to win a postwar Italian prize—marking the Premio Gallarate for its experimental rigor—it encapsulates the essence of Soldati's aesthetic inquiry.

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88. Gianni Monnet
Construction, 1946

89. Mario Radice
Pentagonal Composition, 1950

90. Bruno Munari
Project for Negative-Positive, 1950

91. Bruno Munari
Negative-Positive, 1951

92. Gillo Dorfles
Ambiguous Images, 1951

93. Gillo Dorfles
Composition with Tail, 1951

A multifaceted figure, Gillo Dorfles soon complemented his scientific education with an intense theoretical and artistic production. His early works from the 1930s reveal affinities with the aesthetics of Kandinsky and the Der Blaue Reiter group, alongside Surrealist suggestions, and archetypal forms of the unconscious.

In 1948, with the founding of the Movimento Arte Concreta (M.A.C.), he entered a systematic dialogue with international abstract research. Yet his painting, unlike that of other members of the group, retained a more lyrical and imaginative dimension.

Composition with Tail documents this phase, in which geometric rigor merges with a sinuous linearity tinged with Surrealist echoes—an expression of a language balanced between form, color, and creative impulse. In *Ambiguous Images*—donated to the Civic Gallery of Gallarate when the historic M.A.C. exhibition organized in 1984—the blue, green, and black elements recall distant organic forms, surrounded by orange and vermilion fields that suggest rhythmic contrasts and a deeper spatial tension.

94. Bruno Munari
Useless Machine, 1945-95

95. Bruno Munari
Useless Machine Max Bill, 1933-93

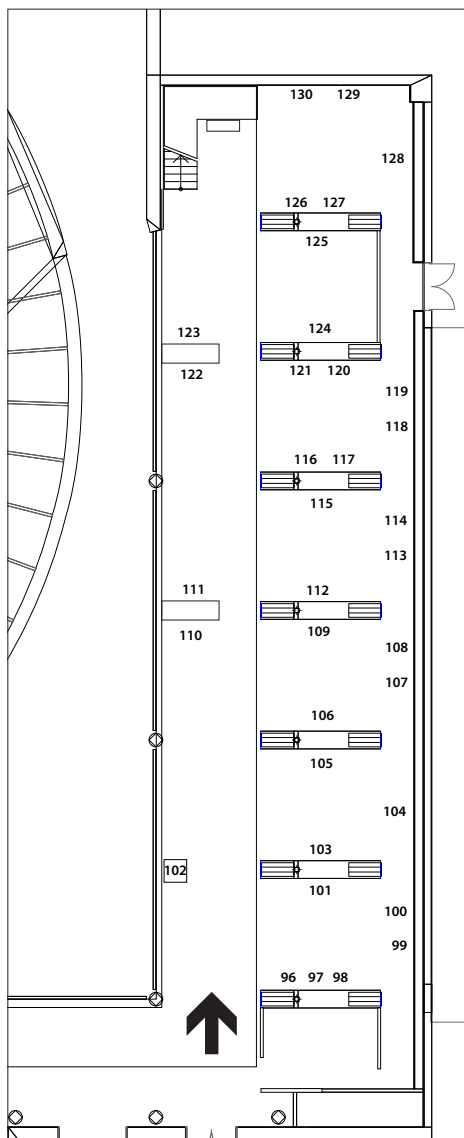
Bruno Munari was one of the leading figures in twentieth-century Italian visual culture, design, and art. His work consistently explored the relationships between space, movement, and the idea of “function.”

Beginning in 1930, Munari conceived aerial sculptures that, within a few years, evolved into the celebrated *Useless Machines*.

Three examples of these iconic works are on display: created between 1933 and 1945, they were later reimagined and reissued over the following decades through his collaboration with the Galleria and Casa Editrice Corraini in Mantua. At a time when machines were becoming regular and indispensable tools of daily life, Munari envisioned ingenious contraptions without purpose: the *Useless Machine*. Their title captures a playful paradox, inviting contemplation.

Through the oxymoron of the uselessness of what is useful (the machine) and the usefulness of what is useless (art), Munari worked with light, mobile materials to create open-ended compositions in perpetual flux.

KANDINSKY AND ITALY: THE EVOLUTION OF ABSTRACT ART AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR



THIRD HALL

The final section illustrates how, in the postwar period, Kandinsky's thought continued to exert a profound influence on Italian art. Exhibitions such as *Abstract and Concrete Art* (Milan, 1947) and *Abstract Art in Italy* (Rome, 1948) marked the birth of a new generation of artists committed to freeing painting from the constraints of naturalistic representation.

At Palazzo Reale in Milan, in 1947, *Abstract and Concrete Art* opened as the first major European exhibition devoted to abstraction after the war.

On that occasion, Kandinsky's works were displayed alongside those of Italian artists such as Lucio Fontana, Bruno Munari, Manlio Rho, Luigi Veronesi, and Ettore Sottsass, marking a decisive moment for the renewal of artistic research in Italy. The following year, Rome took up the baton with the exhibition *Abstract Art in Italy*, which featured, among others, Carla Accardi, Atanasio Soldati, Pietro Consagra, Alberto Magnelli, Osvaldo Licini, Achille Perilli, Gianni Monnet, Antonio Sanfilippo, Piero Dorazio, and Emilio Vedova.

In those same years, in Milan, the abstract language found fertile ground in the Movimento Arte Concreta (M.A.C.), founded in 1948 by Gillo Dorfles, Bruno Munari, Atanasio Soldati, and Gianni Monnet. For these artists, Kandinsky's reflections on the autonomy of color and form offered both solid theoretical legitimacy and a shared field of experimentation.

While the M.A.C. looked toward a rational abstraction closely linked to design, architecture, and visual communication, in Rome another group of artists was destined to profoundly renew the Italian scene: Forma 1, founded in 1947 by Carla Accardi, Ugo Attardi, Pietro Consagra, Achille Perilli, Antonio Sanfilippo, and Piero Dorazio. For them as well, the dialogue with Kandinsky was fundamental: his lesson pointed the way to restoring painting's vital energy — its vibrant and sensory force.

96. Galliano Mazzon

Fantasy in Blue, 1946

Galliano Mazzon, born in the Vicentine hinterland and raised in Brazil, nurtured a profound interest in art from an early age. In the 1930s, he gravitated toward the Galleria Il Milione, developing a deep fascination with abstract painting.

The work on display predates his formal engagement with the Movimento Arte Concreta (M.A.C.) and reveals a surprising dialogue between geometric abstraction and soft, organic forms drawn from surrealist inspiration. The result is a hybrid poetics, one that resonates with both Italian and French experimental currents.

During this period, Mazzon explored the interplay of color, form, and perception, as *Fantasy in Blue* demonstrates. The composition pivots around a striking chromatic contrast, with a central orange element engaging with the expansive blue background. The complementary colors heighten both the visual tension and the freedom of the composition, evoking a vibrant, dynamic emotional universe.

97. Gianni Bertini

Black Vertical, 1950

98. Mauro Reggiani

Composition, 1951

99. Luigi Veronesi

Construction A. 15/3, 1977

100. Luigi Veronesi

Tangents No.4, 1986

103. Nino Di Salvatore

Spatial Structure in Tension, 1952

102. Angelo Bozzola

Function-Development of Concrete Form, 1958

103. Renato Birolli

The Harbour, 1951

104. Ennio Morlotti

Peace, 1949-50

105. Renato Birolli

Legend of the Sea, 1951

106. Giuseppe Santomaso

Window, 1952

107. Tancredi Parmeggiani

Composition, 1962

108. Afro Basaldella

To De Falla, 1952

109. Giuseppe Santomaso

Wall and Algae, 1954

Giuseppe Santomaso, born in Venice, was one of the founders of the Fronte Nuovo delle Arti in 1946. By the mid-1950s, his work had evolved toward a freer, more lyrical language, where reality dissolves into the oscillations of light and color. *Wall and Algae* marks this moment of transition: a Venetian wall, encrusted with algae and reflecting water, serves as a pretext for a painterly exploration of matter and time. Color fields soften into delicate veils, while the dark, earthy tones of the wall meet the translucence of blues and greens, evoking the endless dialogue between water and stone that defines the lagoon city. In this phase, Santomaso achieves a delicate synthesis between formal structure and emotional resonance, between order and the subtle vibration of light.

The work on display was generously donated to Ca' Pesaro by the artist following his award of the Painting Prize at the 1954 Venice Biennale.

110. Bruno Cassinari

Woman in Purple, 1953

111. Renato Guttuso

Still Life, 1962

112. Emilio Vedova

The Impact, 1949

Raised in a working-class family, Emilio Vedova was largely self-taught, and from childhood he nourished his visual imagination with material knowledge and with the architectural and pictorial imagery of Venice. During the Second World War he joined the Corrente group, drawing from his sketches of partisans a deeply creative and political experience.

In the following years he took part in the Fronte Nuovo delle Arti and created his *Black Geometries*, moving beyond controlled geometry toward a more gestural and tactile form

of painting. The Impact belongs to this series: geometric forms, dynamically constructed around oblique axes, evoke the drama of war, combining Cubist-derived abstraction with an intense expressive and emotional charge. The work was acquired in 1950 on the occasion of the First Edition of the National Visual Arts Prize, City of Gallarate.

113. Antonio Sanfilippo

Composition, 1955

114. Giuseppe Capogrossi

Surface 14, 1953

After earning his law degree, Giuseppe Capogrossi immediately devoted himself to painting. In the 1940s, his artistic language began to transform: colors grew more vibrant, brushstrokes more substantial, signaling a gradual move away from figuration. By 1949, he developed an entirely new visual language, centered on a single elementary sign in the shape of a trident-comb, which he explored in infinite variations across his works.

Surface 14, from 1953, exemplifies this mature phase. The canvas is organized by a web of black, white, and colored marks, arranged in vertical and horizontal sequences, subtly varied to create rhythm. Background fields of blue, ochre, terracotta, black, and white establish an active spatial plane that interacts with the marks and the empty spaces, generating a visual dynamic both controlled and free.

The strokes, archetypal and two-dimensional, serve as constructive elements, shaping rhythm and structure, blending the impression of a secret script with the essence of abstract painting.

115. Emilio Vedova

Journey through Sicily, 1955

116. Piero Dorazio

Untitled, 1957

117. Piero Dorazio

Counterform Study 3, 1949

118. Carla Accardi

Orange-green, 1964

After studying in Trapani, Palermo, and Florence, Carla Accardi moved to Rome in 1946, and the following year she participated in the founding of the Forma 1 group. In 1950, Libreria Age d'Or

hosted her first solo exhibition, establishing her presence in the Roman art scene. Accardi developed a language based on essential pictorial signs, often in white on black, repeated in ever-changing arrangements—a form of automatic, gestural, non-representational writing. In the early 1960s, color became the central element, enhanced through contrasts created by the juxtaposition of complementary hues and their variations.

In *Violet-Blue*, the colors combine to produce an optical effect that stimulates visual perception, while the intertwined, sinuous signs are contained within a painted frame incorporated into the work itself. In *Orange-Green*, contrast arises from the opposition of warm and cool tones, amplified using fluorescent pigments. Here, one can also observe how the signs evolve compared to earlier works: they take on a more serial aspect, with simplified, sinuous lines repeating according to opposing movements and rhythms.

119. Carla Accardi

Violet-Blue, 1961

120. Piero Dorazio

The Great Encounter, 1948

121. Piero Dorazio

Silent Contrasted Ascensions, 1948

Piero Dorazio was among the founders of Forma 1 in Rome, asserting the autonomy of abstract research. In Paris, he came into contact with the European avant-gardes and developed a painting in which colored lines synthesize Cubist and abstract influences, evoking artists such as Klee, Delaunay, and Kandinsky, whose studio he visited.

Silent Contrasted Ascensions and *The Great Encounter* show the reworking of his own vocabulary of rigid and soft forms—such as the rounded comb-like figure—and the contrasts between straight and curved lines. In *Controforma prova 3*, color applied in flat fields constructs the figure-ground relationship, in dialogue with the painting of Alberto Magnelli.

Between 1953 and 1954, Dorazio stayed in the United States and experimented with an abstract painting style marked by strong gestural expressionism, visible in *Untitled*, where black enhances the brightness of the light colors in a dialogue with American Action Painting.

From the late 1950s and throughout the

following decade, his canvases came to life with chromatic grids and weaves in which different hues were evenly distributed, giving rise to solid and luminous structures.

122. Roberto Crippa

Untitled, 1950

123. Tancredi Parmeggiani

Jokes, 1960

124. Tancredi Parmeggiani

Homage to Kandinsky, Klee, Picasso, and Osvaldo Licini. Revelation, 1960

Tancredi Parmeggiani studied at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts, where he met Emilio Vedova, who encouraged his early artistic investigations. In 1950, he moved to Rome and joined the Age d'Or group, a circle deeply interested in postwar international artistic developments. It was in this context that he embraced abstract painting.

In the work on display, *Homage to Kandinsky, Klee, Picasso, and Osvaldo Licini. Revelation*, one can see how Tancredi's language, while rooted in abstraction, increasingly embraces a lyrical and musical sensibility. The title honors the legacy of artists who served as crucial reference points for the development of his own poetic vision, helping him define a non-figurative artistic language that is at once intimate and poetic.

Here, color flows in sinuous, thread-like elements across a luminous field of warm, vibrant tones. The painterly gesture becomes rhythm and score, each mark contributing to a subtle choreography.

125. Achille Perilli

Journey to the Heart of Things, 1958

126. Mark Tobey

Precipice, 1957

127. Karel Appel

Composition, 1967 ca.

In 1948, Karel Appel co-founded the CoBrA group, which, in reaction to European rationalism and formalism, proposed a return to the primordial creative impulse and the free deformation of the figure.

In 1950, he moved to Paris—where he became acquainted with the critic Michel Tapié, one of the leading promoters of Art Informal—and began traveling between Europe and the United States,

developing a gestural and free experimentation that oscillated between Abstract Expressionism and Informal Art. Composition shows the mature outcome of his research: vibrant marks, thick matter, and explosive colors that fuse figurative and abstract elements. Primordial forms emerge and invade space, creating an organic and pulsating rhythm. As Renato Barilli observes, the surfaces resemble “a grand existence in an aquarium or within oceanic depths,” where gesture, color, and matter construct a living and dynamic world.

128. Ben Nicholson

Poisonous Yellow, December 5, 1949

129. Roberto Sebastián Antonio Matta Echaurren

Untitled, 1957

130. Roberto Sebastián Antonio Matta Echaurren

Dawn on Earth, 1952

Trained in architecture in Chile, in 1934 Roberto Sebastián Matta moved to Paris, where he worked as an apprentice to Le Corbusier and engaged with leading figures of Surrealism, which he embraced from the start through a personal and radical interpretation. In 1939, in New York, he met young artists who were giving rise to Abstract Expressionism, absorbing its dynamism and gestural energy.

Dawn on Earth and *Untitled*—also exhibited at the 1964 Biennale—belong to Matta's inscapes, landscapes in which objects and figures of different natures are decontextualized in absurd and contradictory spaces. These works are closely related to Tanguy's landscapes but also recall the machinery of Duchamp's *Grand Verre*, making explicit the artist's reflections on the most imaginative and narrative aspects of Surrealism.

KANDINSKY E L'ITALIA

The exhibition stems from the desire to highlight the works and collections of the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna Ca' Pesaro in Venice and the MA*GA Museum in Gallarate, underscoring the central role of the Russian master's work and thought within the European art scene, as well as his decisive influence on the emergence of Italian Abstractism between the 1930s and the 1950s.

With 130 works from Ca' Pesaro, MA*GA, and major public and private collections, the exhibition reconstructs the genealogy of abstract art—from the historical avant-gardes to the full maturity of non-figurative language—offering a critical perspective on the relevance today of that spiritual quest which Kandinsky had placed at the core of artistic modernity.

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