

Maurizio Donzelli

The empty set

Curated by Gabriele Salvaterra

From April 9th to July 23rd, 2022

Opening on Saturday, April 9th at 6 pm

Galleria Marignana Arte
Dorsoduro, 141, Rio Terà dei Catecumeni, Venice

The empty set refers to the concept developed by philosopher and art critic Federico Ferrari to define the status of a certain type of image, poised between presence and absence, finite and infinite, immanence and transcendence, nothing and everything. "The empty set refers to a paradoxical concept. It is, in fact, a whole that has no elements and is therefore composed of nothing, but which, as a whole, is something".

In a contrasting dynamic, where the artistic object is located in an indefinite space between the poles of clarity and evanescence, Maurizio Donzelli carries on his autonomous research in this personal exhibition, aimed primarily at awakening the observer's gaze. The latter is thus invited to question the mystery of the works on display, in spite of the evidence of their presence, in an attempt to reach that persistently elusive *beyond* on which the reasons for a deeper aesthetic experience are based.

According to Ferrari, "the gaze must be thought of as the empty set of the vision, like that horizon, open and closed at the same time, which is the basis of every possible vision". This perspective, despite the independence of Donzelli's research, becomes essential in clarifying the reasons behind the practice of an artist who has constantly privileged the relational element of the work with the user, rather than its formal autonomy.

In the exhibition - Donzelli's second solo show at Marignana Arte, accompanied by an intense collaboration in collective projects - the opportunity for an aesthetic encounter is offered by an unprecedented series of works entitled *Reds*, where seductive curvilinear layouts can be chased by the eye, between overlapping and hiding, focusing on the expressive shades of yellow, red, blue, white and black. Shapes that recall blood vessels, roots, spiritual auras, trajectories, or underground paths, but that favour a condition suspended between reference and abstraction. Beside them, the exhibition's tapestries testify to the artist's interest in the contamination between visual and applied arts, together with the ability to keep his poetics intense and present regardless of the specific medium through which it is conveyed.

Among the exhibited works, a sculptural piece from the *Aleph* series revives, through the expedient of *mirrors*, the paradoxical concomitance of emptiness and fullness that has always played a pivotal role in Donzelli's research and that is consistently proposed to the viewer.

According to the homonymous story by Jorge Luis Borges, the Aleph is, in fact, that "point in space that contains all other points. Anyone who gazes into it can see everything in the universe from every angle simultaneously, without distortion, overlapping, or confusion". Likewise, the intent of the exhibition is to become an empty set: a space of possibility that is absent to some extent but that is also able to evoke an experiential fullness.

Marignana Arte

Maurizio Donzelli was born in 1958 in Brescia, where he lives and works. The artist translated his thoughts also through teaching Theory of Perception and Psychology of Color for seven years at the NABA Academy in Brescia.

As an intellectual artist with a background that ranges from philosophy to anthropology, he developed extensive research focusing on the problem of the image, seen as a potential meeting point for concentration, migration, and alteration of visual memory. Such investigation has been translated into works developing in distinct cycles and experimenting with different materials and techniques with the aim of continuing to deepen and return to the audience an infinite potential of suggestions and iconic references that take root into the dynamics of time and history and range over a wide variety of geographies. In this composite atlas of images, the works *Disegni Del Quasi*, *Arazzi*, *Mirrors*, *Monocromi Oro*, *Notturni* and *Lux-Drawings*, highlight the crucial role of the thought behind the creative process, fixing attention on the principle of doing, the creative act that does not end with the return of the work to the world but continues in its reciprocity with the viewer, in a doing-undoing of the image that is not a labyrinthine game, but a conscious call to see.

These aspects have prompted many scholars, intellectuals and critics to deal with Donzelli's work over the years, in international exhibitions and museums, including personal exhibitions: *Immaginale*, at Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia, 2022; *In Nuce*, at Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna, for ARTCITY 2021 and *Metamorphosis*, at Villa Olmo, Como, 2021; *Thresholds*, at MAC- Museo di Arte Contemporanea, Lissone, 2020; *Diorama*, at Open Source First Shenzhen Biennale, Luohu Art Museum, Shenzhen, China, 2018; *Giardini Cosmici*, with Aldo Grazi, at Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, *Ad Altemps*, at Museo Nazionale Romano - Palazzo Altemps, Rome, 2015; *Metamorphosis*, at Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, 2012.

The group exhibitions: *GestoZero*, a traveling project he conceived and with the presence of his works, exhibited at Museo di Santa Giulia, Brescia, at Museo del Violino, Cremona, and at the Former Church of Santa Maria Maddalena, Bergamo, 2020-2021; *Intuition*, at Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, 2017 and *Proportio*, at Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, 2015; *TRA Edge Of Becoming*, at Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, 2015.

His theoretical reflection has been the subject of various publications over the years, including *La Linea Del Tutto* curated by Luca Cerizza, Mousse publishing 2016, for his bi-personal exhibition at Cortesi Gallery in London and Lugano; *Diramante*, Bandecchi e Vitali Firenze 2015; *Metamorfosi*, Mousse publishing 2012; *Spettacolo di Niente*, 2003, Mazzotta, on the occasion of the exhibition curated by Luigi Ficacci at the Calcografia Nazionale in Rome; *Lo Sguardo Del Disegnatore*, edizioni l'Obliquo 2002.

Maurizio Donzelli's works appear in many public and private collections in Italy and abroad.

Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 7pm

Sunday and Monday open by appointment only

Vaporetto stops: Salute - Line 1, Spirito Santo - Lines 5.1 / 5.2 / 6 Tel.: +39 041 5227360