



GALLERIA DELLO SCUDO
ARTE MODERNA E CONTEMPORANEA

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PRESS RELEASE

NUNZIO ANNI OTTANTA DALLA COLLEZIONE FABIO SARGENTINI

Verona, Galleria dello Scudo
December 14, 2024 - March 29, 2025

vernissage: Saturday, December 14, 2024, 7pm

opening hours: Monday - Saturday 10am - 1pm / 3.30pm - 7.30pm



Nunzio in a photo from 1988.

First exhibition at Galleria Spatia in Bolzano in 1981, presented by Gabriella Drudi; then the group show at Galleria La Salita of Gian Tomaso Liverani, in Rome, in 1982; then the solo show *Undici sculture* all'Attico of Fabio Sargentini in Rome, in January 1984. Interpreter of a research on the space which was open to contaminations with painting in the immersions amongst grays, blacks, reds and blues, Nunzio reveals an identity open to multiple relationships between materials and memory.

With Nunzio's exhibition, Sargentini reopened the exhibition space in via del Paradiso 41, after its closing in 1978. L'Attico, a gallery that has fully entered into the history of the avant-garde for initiatives linked to the world of conceptual art and performance, repropose itself as a point of reference for more current trends, welcoming leading exponents of the artists' latest generation.

The exhibition at Galleria dello Scudo in Verona from December 14, 2024 to March 29, 2025 focuses on the first decade of the artist's work with a selection of fifteen works from the 1980s coming from Fabio Sargentini collection. On the one hand, the sculptor who was considered among the most promising young artists; on the other, the gallery owner who dedicated him three solo exhibitions in 1984, 1986 and 1988.

The works document a creative phase of great ferment, appreciated not only nationally: *Ateliers* in 1984, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva, with the open studios of the artists active in the former Pastificio Cerere, in the San Lorenzo district in Rome; the solo exhibitions at Annina Nosei in New York in 1985 and 1987; the invitation in 1986 to the VI Sydney Biennale and to the XLII Venice Biennale in the *Aperto '86* section, where he won the 2000 Prize as best young artist; his presence in exhibitions held in Paris, Chicago, Berlin, Sao Paulo, Istanbul, just to name a few. All this bears witness to an exhibition path that confirms him among the most original personalities in the Italian artistic panorama over the decade.



Conca, 1982
plaster and tempera
292 x 98 x 35 cm



Granito, 1983
plaster and tempera
173 x 235 x 22 cm

Spleen (1980), *Conca* (1982) and *Granito* (1983) are some of the works in painted plaster exhibited in 1984 in the solo exhibition at the Attico, now in Verona at Galleria dello Scudo.

"They looked like bark of giant trees; shells of large sea turtles found on a deserted beach, corroded by wind and salt; shields of primitive peoples made from a concave trunk; cigars of a colossus, reliefs and models of unknown islands or, much more simply, fragments of some old destroyed construction," so Giuliano Briganti. He also underlined other aspects of Nunzio's works, which "deny the force of gravity without hiding the physical substance of the sculpture" and "deny the two-dimensionality of painting itself in their illusion of an overlapping of layers of transparent color over time."



Angelo, 1985
plaster and tempera
180 x 128 x 20 cm

According to Gabriella Drudi, already on the occasion of his first solo exhibition in 1981 from his sculpture "water emerges from underground, humoral, organic, exudation denser than stone and more opaque, contained and licking spread of gray bile, not specular, nocturnal, from which the suspended figure of the place emerges."

Between 1985 and 1986 the language changes according to the new materials: lampblack, pitch, wax with light and sudden colored signs on trunks, beams and wooden planks transformed by saw and chisel; lead sheets shaped into essential geometries.

Talisman (1985): a wooden support marked with charcoal, on which a lead cuneiform element is fixed. The wood becomes a backdrop, ready to welcome a luminous form that modifies the composition. The lead refers "to alchemical processes that also establish a further distance of the work, some sort of remoteness assimilated to the stratified archaism of the wooden material", so Bonito Oliva in the catalogue of the exhibition at Sargentini between February and March 1986, when the sculpture was presented to the public for the first time.



Talismano, 1985
lead and charcoal on wood
208 x 84 x 22 cm

The 1986 solo show also features *Meteora*: the double nature of a form with a verticality suggested by the cut and, at the same time, by the sense of a fall towards a horizontal element, to give stability and depth to the sculpture. Everything merges in the transfigured exaltation of the wood, in the chromatic interventions of the black pitch and the red pigment.



Meteora, 1986
pitch and pigments on wood
190 x 174 x 20 cm

In the works from 1987 onwards, Nunzio introduces a play of symmetries, proportions and harmonies in simple and linear forms. The wood, now, is as if "denaturalized", stripped of its original reference to the tree, brought back to a rigorous mental measure. *L'Aperto*, among the most important works conceived for the solo exhibition in the winter of 1987 at Galleria Civica in Modena, "with a title perhaps recalling Rilke", is among the best expressed examples of that strongly rhythmic figurative adventure, with "scraps of shadow, paths in the direction of a precipice" as Gabriella Drudi observed, destined to characterize the artist's language from then on.

Burnt by the flame, the texture of the oak wood and its grain merge into a single translucent entity. Large sculptures are born that create an impact of strong visual sensitivity. Two works from 1988 are worth mentioning in this Verona exhibition: *Ferro nero blu* and *Canna*, the latter characterized by lead, a material to which Nunzio knows how to give a luminous consistency and a rigorous definition of contours. The exhibition ends with *Tentazione* (1989), an enveloping presence in which the elements undergoing wood combustion create peculiar effects of transparency due to the alternation with the spaces crossed by light.

As the artist states in two interviews of those years, "as I see it, sculpture starts from emotion and always filters the natural data. Emotion comes from the air, from the mountain, from the sea, from the rock. An incomparable feeling. What remains, however, can be visualized, transformed into form." "I am a sculptor who lives of space. I do not consider it as an abstract idea, but as an element in which objects move and arrange themselves. My desire has always been to make space move, that is, to modify the perception we can have of it. Hence my desire to give prominence to the form, to make it advance, so that a physical relationship is established with it. A relationship that is all the more complex because, strictly speaking, I do neither painting nor sculpture, in fact it is often impossible to walk around my works. They are suspended on the wall, between the ceiling and the floor, between the vertical wall and the viewer. As if the works were imposing themselves on the space. In this way the spectator is disoriented in his vision".

For the occasion, Galleria dello Scudo publishes a catalogue in Italian and English with texts by Elena Abbiatici and Claudio Spadoni, and an interview with Fabio Sargentini. The photographs by Agostino Osio - Alto Piano document the works on display.



L'Aperto, 1987
combustion on wood
275 x 300 x 8 cm

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