

Press Release

Nunzio. Drawings

London, 8 June – 17 September 2023

Private View: Thursday 8 June, 6 – 8pm

The sign invents space, describes it, engraves it, defines and explains it. The sign as a trace, as a creator of space. (Nunzio 2023)

Following the great success of Nunzio's first solo exhibition in London *The Shock of Objectivity* in 2019, Mazzoleni is delighted to present ***Nunzio. Drawings***, a selection of **new and unseen works** on paper by the artist, which will be on view for the first time at the London gallery from **Thursday, 8 June to Sunday, 17 September 2023**.

In his research, Nunzio establishes a dialectical and profound relationship with materials, where the **sign** is the initial manifestation of form and reveals the process, the **origin of vision**. It is as if this original and structural presence were the first indication of an encounter between being and imagination, the trace of the imperceptible border between shadow and appearance, the thickening of the space around the existence of the artwork.

In the artworks on display the **dualisms and dialogues** that recur in Nunzio's research are evoked through the use of **black and white** – soft pastel - on Japanese paper: fibrous and with a consistency of matter (i.e. presence), the shadow defines as much as the light, the **black line** is a tension that seeks to break out of the physical limits of the sheet that holds the generative forces of **space**. Just as in his combusted wooden sculptures and lead works, Nunzio's drawings reveal an almost **alchemical process** that triggers an unexpected metamorphosis of the matter.

The work does not pursue pictoriality or the modification of the surface, but instead it searches for unusual aspects, often opposed to each other, that produce a different perception of surface, time, space and of our being: both that of one's own and of others'.

A leading exponent and founder of the **Pastificio Cerere** (a former pasta factory) in the San Lorenzo neighbourhood, in Rome, Nunzio is a multi-faceted artist who draws from a variety of disciplines to develop his approach to artistic form beyond the visible.

“I believe that creating space, not occupying it, has always been the aspiration of every artist” (Nunzio in Jutta Mattern, *A conversation with Nunzio*, 2019).

Like sculpture, works on paper also create a **new space** in the gallery: *“Nunzio is one of the artists with whom we have been working with for many years and with whom we are delighted to be collaborating once again for this exhibition.*

Unlike the two previous exhibitions, this show presents works on paper, which have an intrinsic value that induces constant reflection on the meaning of space, its physical dimension and its very existence” as Luigi Mazzoleni explains.

The artist will be at the gallery for the exhibition opening on **Thursday 8 June, from 6pm to 8pm**.

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NUNZIO

Nunzio Di Stefano is born in 1954 at Cagnano Amiterno in the province of L'Aquila. He studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, graduating in the course held by Toti Scialoja.

In 1973 he sets up a studio at the former Cerere Pasta Factory, in the Roman quarter of San Lorenzo, where Bruno Ceccobelli, Gianni Dessì, Giuseppe Gallo, Piero Pizzi Cannella, and Marco Tirelli also work.

After his first solo show in 1981 at the Galleria Spatia in Bolzano, in 1984 he exhibits large sculptures in plaster at L'Attico gallery in Rome at an important solo exhibition curated by Giuliano Briganti. In the same year, Achille Bonito Oliva organises the collective exhibition *Ateliers*, centred on the artists based in San Lorenzo.

In 1985 his first American exhibition takes place at the Annina Nosei gallery in New York, a turning point which opens the doors to collectors and the market and contributes to the international diffusion of his expressive language.

In 1986 L'Attico is the place where the artist presents his first works in wood and lead. Some of these will be featured at the 62nd Venice Biennale where Nunzio wins the 2000 Prize as best young artist.

Works in plaster and burnt wood are brought together in 1987 for a solo exhibition held at the Galleria Civica in Modena. Between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, his solo and collective exhibitions increase in number both in Italy and abroad: in 1985, the Nouvelle Biennale de Paris, *L'Italie aujourd'hui* at the Centre National d'Art Contemporain in Nice, *Nuove trame dell'arte* at the Castello Colonna in Genazzano, and *Anni Ottanta* at the Galleria Comunale in Bologna; in 1986, *Aspekte der Italienischen Kunst*, a travelling exhibition held in various cities in Germany; the 11th Quadrennial in Rome (returning also in 1996) and the 6th Sydney Biennial; in 1989, *Los Nuevos Romanos* in Santiago de Compostela and Madrid, and *Prospekt '89* in Frankfurt; *Roma interna* at the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig in Vienna (1991), and the 3rd Istanbul Biennial the following year. In 1995 Nunzio receives an Honourable Mention for his personal space at the Venice Biennale. His first solo exhibition in Japan takes place in 1994 at the Kodama Gallery in Osaka, followed by a participation in the 1995 Fujisankei Biennial where his sculpture *Ombre* ("Shadows") – set in the spaces of the Hakone Open-Air Museum – wins the Prize for Excellence. In the same year, at Villa delle Rose – one of the Bologna Modern Art Gallery venues – he has his first retrospective exhibition, which encompasses his work of the previous decade.

In 1997 he presents his first works in bronze at the Galerie Alice Pauli in Lausanne where he will return to exhibit in 2001 and 2010.

The year 2000 begins with a solo exhibition at the Galleria Fumagalli in Bergamo. On this occasion a monograph is published. Since 2004 he has been collaborating with the Giorgio Persano Gallery in Turin, where a successful series of solo exhibitions are hosted. In 2005 he has a solo exhibition, curated by Lea Vergine, at the Galleria dello Scudo in Verona, where he exhibits a series of installations in burnt wood, which create new and estranging inhabitable spaces.

In 2005 and 2006, two anthological exhibitions are held at MACRO in Rome, curated by Danilo Eccher, and at the Belgrade Museum of Contemporary Art, curated by Bruno Corà. In 2012 at the Museum Biedermann in Donaueschingen, Germany, Norbert Nobis presents another solo show by the artist. In 2017, Nunzio is invited to exhibit his sculptures in an important group show, *Italia*, at the Forte di Belvedere and Palazzo Marino Marini in Florence. In 2018 Galleria Casamadre in Naples presents the solo show *Nunzio – Giallo di Napoli Nero pece Blu cobalto*.

In February 2019, upon invitation from Anna-Maria Ehrmann- Schindlbeck, he inaugurates the show *Skia* at the Galerie der Stadt in Tuttingen, Germany.

Nunzio currently lives and works between Rome and Turin.

MAZZOLENI

Mazzoleni is a leading Post-War Italian and contemporary art gallery based in London and Turin. With over 35 years of activity, Mazzoleni focuses on a museum-calibre exhibition programme and participates in the main international art fairs, including Art Basel, Frieze, and TEFAF, as well as Artissima, Artefiera and Miart. Most recently, the gallery has expanded its reach towards new art scenes with its participation in Frieze Seoul, Art Abu Dhabi and Art Dubai. The Mazzoleni collection is exhibited in museums and institutions worldwide, such as: the Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo in Paris; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York; the Smithsonian Institution in Washington; The State Ermitage Museum in St. Petersburg; Tate and the Estorick Collection in London, as well as Museo del Novecento in Florence, the GNAM in Rome, MADRE Museum in Naples, Triennale Milano and Palazzo Reale in Milan, and the Venice Biennale. Mazzoleni represents the Estate of Agostino Bonalumi.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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