

Cesare Tacchi

Rome, 1940-2014.

Cesare Tacchi made his debut in 1959 at a three-person show with Mario Schifano and Renato Mambor at Appia Antica Gallery in Rome. In February 1963, he participated in the group shows 13 Painters in Rome and Lombardo, Mambor, Tacchi organized by La Tartaruga Gallery owned by Plinio De Martiis, with whom the artist later established a fruitful relationship of collaboration and friendship. The critic/poet Cesare Vivaldi praised the existential value of Tacchi's work at the time and his artistic mediation of striking symbols of urban life he brought (ironically?) to enamelled canvases in lively, eye-catching colours.

Tacchi's held his first solo exhibition also at La Tartaruga in 1965, featuring padded works that protruded from the walls, relief paintings on printed fabric painted with silhouettes of different people, actors taken from ads, friends, public figures. Together with Mario Schifano, Tano Festa, Franco Angeli, Giosetta Fioroni, Pino Pascali, Sergio Lombardo, Renato Mambor, Mario Ceroli and others, Tacchi was a member of the so-called Roman School of Piazza del Popolo.

In the years immediately following the success of his so-called "upholsteries," Tacchi pushed the concept of painting-as-object to the extreme of object-as-painting, investigating the object of daily use and its meanings, its form, function, and adequacy to its time. This resulted in his series of impossible furniture: the Poltrona inutile proposed at the Arte Povera Im/Spazio exhibition at La Bertesca in Genoa curated by Germano Celant in 1967 and the frames without painting presented at La Tartaruga in 1968.

1968 was a crucial year for Cesare Tacchi, who as part of the Il Teatro delle Mostre exhibition—once again at La Tartaruga—starred in a disruptive action: cancelling himself by painting a glass that separated him from the onlookers. La Cancellazione d'artista marked a trauma in the artist's artistic and human path that turned him in a new direction, a tabula rasa on which to found new artistic language through painting, starting from the tools of representation and perception, the sacralization of gallery space, and the various possibilities of communication between subjects with distinct roles: the artist and the spectator. The artist's "reappearance" (Painting, 1972) took place in 1972 at Elisabetta Catalano's studio, where Tacchi staged a performance in which he put himself on display cleaning a surface covered in white.

The refoundation of painting and language began at a solo exhibition at La Tartaruga in 1975 titled (quoting Picasso) Feeling... If you paint, close your eyes and sing. Slightly to the side, he exhibited the large painting Feeling (1974): a surface painted green with a real-size drawing of an ear at the center. Painting's new journey had begun.

Throughout the Seventies, he took part in important exhibitions in Rome at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, the National Gallery of Modern Art, and the Quadriennale, where he continued focusing on the material elements comprising the work: its frame, its

support, laying the foundations for the future affirmation of painting.

From the early 1980s on, Cesare Tacchi painted by mathematical logic and a search for language that allowed him to find new forms and new balances, abstracts or presumed such. Floral motifs occasionally re-emerged in these new paintings, which, based on purely formal satisfaction, reconnected to the stuff of his beginnings. Complex and mysterious, both figurative and symbolic, the custodian of the secret of painting, his original work *Sécrétaire* done in 1980 continues to arouse multiple interpretations by scholars also of other disciplines than art.

Personal shows following collaborations with Gian Tomaso Liverani, Alessandro Masi, Anna D'Ascanio, and others were held between from the 1980s to the 2000s. His works continue to be featured in various historical expositions, including Rome in the 1960s, *Beyond painting*, curated by Maurizio Calvesi in 1990, and *The 1970s. Art in Rome*, curated by Daniela Lancioni in 2013, both at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome.

The anthology exhibition *Cesare Tacchi. A retrospective* held at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome curated by Daniela Lancioni and Ilaria Bernardi in 2018 after his death in 2014 presented an impressive compendium of the artist's works and his place in history, thanks particularly to its substantial catalog and the scrupulosity of the curators working with the Cesare Tacchi Archive.

Maurizio Calvesi, Vittorio Rubiu, Cesare Vivaldi, Maurizio Fagiolo, Filiberto Menna, Mario Diacono, Alessandro Masi, Simonetta Lux, Giacomo Marramao, Ricardo De Mambro Santos, and many others chose to write about Cesare Tacchi during his more than fifty years of activity.