

Gruppo Credito Valtellinese

Refettorio delle Stelline

Milan, Italy

Credito Valtellinese Gallery

COLLEZIONE CALDERARA / CALDERARA COLLECTION

25 March 1999 - 25 April 1999

The Gruppo Credito Valtellinese Gallery is happy to present in its rooms at the Refettorio delle Stelline this exhibition dedicated to the Calderara Collection. The Calderara Collection, originally set up by the painter Antonio Calderara (Abbiategrosso 1903 - Vacciago di Ameno 1978) in his own 18th Century home studio in Vacciago (Lake Orta), is made up of 327 contemporary paintings and sculptures of which 56 are by Antonio himself and 271 by more than a hundred European and non-European artists.

The selection hosted by the Gallery offers a wide record of the international avantgardes of the '50s and '60s with particular attention to geometric abstraction, kinetic art, optical art and visual poetry. Many of the paintings and sculptures show a clear "affinity" with the works of their owner: a choice due to the constant and affectionate relationship between Calderara and a lot of artists who arrived at his retreat in Vacciago and who often exchanged their own works with the ones by their friend and colleague.

Once he abandoned the artistic path of his imagery phase (of which there are here some meaningful records: portraits, lake landscapes, still lifes), Calderara had enthusiastically and with unconditional devotion taken the path towards a strict geometrization. Then it is easy to understand how many works here on display can unite with Calderara's painting; for example those by Leinardi, Graevenitz, Gappmayr, Girke, Reimer, Jochims, Albers, Oehm, Jan Schoonhoven etc., which are all very close to geometric abstraction, even though very dissimilar if compared.

However in addition to this basic current all the main artists of the more strongly timbric geometricism are well represented, those who especially support the Swiss-Dutch Konkrete Kunst/Concrete Art. So with works of great impact we have artists like Max Bill, Lohse, Camille Graeser, Vordemberge-Gildewart, Vantongerlo, as well as some representatives of the post-geometric constructivism like Uecker, Otto Piene and Tornquist.

Here it is not possible to mention all the artists on show (about a hundred); however it is fair to highlight how the peculiar "taste" of Calderara allowed the painting of many works by artists who often weren't appreciated enough or who were more famous for other phases of their productions. This is the case of some artistic groups like Forma I (Piero Dorazio, Carla Accardi); Gruppo T (belonging to the optic-kinetic trend) with Gianni Colombo, Grazia Varisco, etc.; and so on for many other abstract artists from different countries who can be included in the post-constructivism like Soto, De Camargo, Dekkers, Leppien, as well as some Italian artists like Maria Luisa de Romans, Turi Simeti, Arlandi, Cesi Amoretti, Carrino, Olivieri, Griffa, Aricò, Alviani and Dadamaino; it is well represented also the Movimento per l'Arte Concreta (MAC)/Movement for Concrete Art, with Galliano Mazzon, Mario Nigro and Radice.

However the collection is not completed with only geometrical art works but has also some artists who somehow are more independent from this artistic area, among the most meaningful representatives of the mid-Century art scene: some are leading artists like Licini, Tilson, Sonia Delaunay, Larionov, Hans Richter and Vasarely. Also present is Lucio Fontana, real *trait d'union* between figuration and abstraction, but also other great characters like Manzoni, Aricò and Castellani.

Next to the painting side, it must not be forgotten the sculpture side. Among these artists we must at least mention Cassani, Balderi, Distel, Dekkers, Spagnulo, Cascella, Azuma, De Camargo, Remotti, Frascà, Prantl, Uncini and Arnaldo Pomodoro.

The Calderara Collection is, after all, an example of dedication to a particular artistic view identified by its owner and founder only in a rather late period of his working career, but which was also pursued without hesitation or wavering and which found in many contemporaneous artists an almost absolute consanguinity.

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