

PAULA SEEGY

GALLERY

Via San Maurizio, 14 – Milan

SANDRO MARTINI. SIGN AND COLOR BEYOND THE FRAME

Curated by Luigi Sansone

December 3, 2024 – January 25, 2025
Opening: Tuesday, December 3, 6:00 PM

Press Release, December 2, 2024

The exhibition “**Sandro Martini: Sign and Color Beyond the Frame,**” curated by **Luigi Sansone** and hosted at the Paula Seegy Gallery **from December 3, 2024, to January 25, 2025**, is a retrospective celebrating the artist, a cornerstone of abstract art in Italy.

On display is a curated selection of works spanning various phases of Martini’s career, including **watercolors, collages, frescoes, and sculptures**. These pieces are emblematic of his artistic evolution, where color takes center stage as the driving force of his expression.

The works highlight Martini’s **journey from traditional two-dimensional painting** to creations where color becomes dynamic, almost alive—transforming into movement and crafting an immersive environment where painting and architecture seamlessly merge in perfect harmony.

Sandro Martini challenges the **boundaries between art and architecture**, between the artwork and the space it inhabits, developing an artistic language that progressively extends the traditional canvas into the surrounding environment—a dynamic art, an art that goes “beyond the frame.”

His visual poetics reveal an intense interplay between color, light, and structure—elements he has continuously explored and refined throughout his career, marked by tireless experimentation and profound technical mastery.

The artist has always engaged deeply with materials, influenced by his early exposure to the shipyard where his father worked as a naval engineer. This formative period is reflected in works like the olive wood and welded iron assemblage *Porcospino* (1959), which is featured in the exhibition.

The exhibition also highlights pieces such as *Trascrizione Misia* (2003) and *Quantità Achè* (2003), which emphasize **the power of color**. These works showcase not only the intensity but also the evocative potential of chromatic choices, which Martini skillfully employs to construct spaces that transcend the conventional boundaries of the canvas.

In his more recent works, such as *Quantità Marmelitino* (2021), Martini’s stylistic evolution becomes evident. Curator Luigi Sansone notes Martini’s increasing focus on a single, seemingly neutral color: white. Sansone explains, “*We see a reduction of the colored area*

in favor of the white of the canvas, which assumes the role of a meditative, reflective space—a tranquil oasis that makes the brilliance of the colors stand out even more.” This decision recalls Kandinsky’s words in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911): “*White, often seen as a non-color, is almost the symbol of a world from which all colors, as physical principles and substances, have disappeared. [...] White strikes us as a great silence that seems absolute.*” It is precisely this powerful interplay between color and silence that defines the impact of Sandro Martini’s work.

Bio

Sandro Martini (Livorno, 1941 – Milan, 2022) was a multifaceted artist and a prominent figure in Italian abstract art. Over the course of his career, he mastered a wide range of techniques and media, including painting, sculpture, fresco, installation, and graphic arts. His artistic journey began in 1959 with his debut at the Galleria Le Ore, and his career took off in the 1960s when he started collaborating with renowned Italian galleries such as Il Milione and Galleria Blu.

From 1978, Martini expanded his presence to the United States, exhibiting in cities like New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. For 25 years, he taught printmaking and fresco techniques at the Kala Institute in Berkeley. He maintained a dual presence in Italy and abroad, participating in numerous exhibitions and creating large-scale installations. In Italy, notable exhibitions included Palazzo Citterio (1981) and the Sala delle Grida at the Borsa Valori (1983) in Milan, Piazzale Michelangelo in Florence (1989), and the Centro Asteria in Milan, where he showcased a series of large frescoes. In 1993, he held a retrospective at the Padiglione di Arte Contemporanea in Milan, and in 2004, he created a monumental permanent installation of canvases and glass panels at the Casa di Carità. In 2005, the city of Livorno acquired one of his major works for its Museum of Contemporary Art, coinciding with a retrospective at the Museo Bottini dell’Olio.

In the United States, his work became part of the permanent collection of the Djerassi Foundation in Stanford, and many of his pieces were installed in public and private spaces, including Bryant Park, 42nd Street, and CityCorp in New York. In 2012, he collaborated with the Canadian firm Architects Alliance to create Glass Memory (engraved glass panels and a frescoed wall), a permanent installation commissioned by the City of Toronto.

In Italy, his later works included a 2015 exhibition at the Casa del Mantegna in Mantua. In 2017, the Sormani Library in Milan hosted the presentation of Martini’s Catalogue Raisonné, curated by Luigi Sansone and Matteo Zarbo. That same year, a solo exhibition of his work was held at Villa Visconti Borromeo Litta in Lainate, near Milan.

Martini’s final exhibition, “Come la vita” (Guastalla Centro Arte, Livorno), concluded in 2023.

Exhibition Details

Title Sandro Martini. Sign and Color Beyond the Frame

Curated by Luigi Sansone

Venue Paula Seegy Gallery, Via San Maurilio 14, Milan

Dates December 3, 2024 – January 25, 2025

Opening Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at 6 PM

Hours Tuesday to Saturday, 12 PM – 7 PM

Admission Free

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