

## PINELLI'S DOUBT

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During the 1980s, and precisely at the dawn of the century, the painting of Pino Pinelli (who rightly, and promptly, belonged to the great stream of the European proactive movement during the 1970s, especially in Italy and France; which, with many successful and well-known names, fostered the analysis of its own instruments, enunciating and exhibiting self-reflections born in a subtly controversial dialectic with conceptual art) conquered its own definite dimension, which this art would remain bound to over the course of time. Hence the long-standing tradition of the rectangle as conventional site of painting was shattered (as already announced by Pinelli in 1976 in his four-element composition entitled *Pittura GR*, that took off precisely from the geometrical figure handed down by tradition to the image of "picture"; however, not without that very first fragmentation preserving as an ideal counterpart, by simply shattering it, the window-over-the-world painting concept). That closed "figure" is now shattered into fragments. Into tiny shards, which, according to Giovanni Accame, "are no longer an airy cloud [...] arranged on the wall, but a fixed presence, a chromatically magnetic and plastically disturbing one"<sup>1</sup>.

So began the "dissemination" of those signs that become turgid and creased, where matter regains its full rights of citizenship; scattered over the wall, where they (soon depositing their humility and reticence) design paths of energy, flows, mobile and ever-changing rhythms: in a way permanently intrinsic to the painter, without contradictions of meaning, over the following decades.

With the dissemination of elementary signs over the surface, there is also the onset of Pinelli's freedom from the bitter mental coldness of the implicit axiom in the "painting/picture concept"; opening up a countless and potentially infinite space, as he said himself, of "issues and questions that have never been exhausted, containing the infinite key of perception, its mobility [...] its ambiguity"<sup>2</sup>.

Mobility and ambiguity are confirmed and rapidly grow with the elapsing of months, with the elapsing of years. *Pittura GR* bears the date 1980, where the elements are arranged in a corner of the wall, in a series of seven, hence unbalanced from their axial position. Then in 1982 came *Pittura G/VR/VL/AR* where the single canvases that make it up, multiplied by number or by colour, make up a sort of circular figure on the wall. From then on the compositions, often disseminated over the

space of an entire wall, dare to mimic unprecedented celestial figures thanks to many plastic elements of different shapes. Up until the end of the approaching ninth decade, therefore during a crucial stage of the painter's research, when he began to use colour in giving a form to that glittering matter, full of wrinkles, roughness and incidents, which would enduringly linger in Pinelli's works. Beginning in 1985, acrylic paint was ultimately replaced with a more flexible and absorbent mixed media, while its backing had ultimately abandoned strictly geometrical standards. Hence there remained, instead of the rigid perimeter of the old "picture", only free plastic concretions scattered over the field of the pictorial page. A new form of painting was born.

Issues; questions; doubts. It has always seemed to me that Pinelli's work, as usual enveloped in the indeterminacy of a mooring, slips away from any risk of easy identification, from any tautological temptation; and proceeding beyond the axiom, armed with its own vocation towards searching rather than asserting; assuming a possible space for himself, rather than occupying the same concretely, encumbering it and ultimately paralyzing it with certainties. This space, which welcomes without determining, has been recognized by all the careful exegesis exercised on Pinelli as the founding element of his painting. Moreover, similarly to what happens to every true artist of modern tradition: one who delegates, in the first instance, the specificity of his contribution towards the evolution of forms to the spatial concept innervating and supporting his work. In his own concept of disseminated and shattered space, capable of accommodating irresolute and expanded "figures" (at times also allusive to the visible world; but never, at least following his entrance to maturity with the 1976 above-mentioned work entitled *Pittura GR*, imbued with any sort of symbolism that would have weighted down its significance, reducing its very pure plastic vocation to a message), Pinelli then soon allowed colour and texture to play a very important role (once again one can say a dubious one) in the substance accommodating that very pure colour. The Sicilian artist was especially fond of Fontana and of his *Quanta*, the contoured canvases conceived between the close of the 1950s and the dawn of the 1960s, which represented in Pinelli's imagination an authentic and beneficial suggestion for diverting him from the constraints of the rectangular perimeter of traditional painting. But *Quanta*, marked by the cuts that were (and continue to be) intrinsic to *Attese*, seeped in an anodyne acid colour, predominantly "cold" and unemotional, is ultimately an exclusively mental place. In other words, it is still the infinite passing by and that is precisely what they want to mean. Fontana deposits all material temptation within and through it (over the years the same is rather dominant in *Nature*), soothing all inclinations towards

adventure and the unexpected. “Pinelli’s plastic reliefs- as Alberto Zanchetta<sup>3</sup> recently described very well – are instead distinguished by their irregular perimeters, their thickness and density, surfaces that are at times smooth and at others wrinkled, but especially for their primary colours, at the peak of their emotional intensity and of their evocative power”. And, again, they are distinguished by Pinelli’s ever-returning doubt: his doubt that the universe investigated by his trajectories of energy may solely be determined tautology, in the axiom, in the certainty of geometry.

1. G.M. Accame, *Pino Pinelli. Continuità e disseminazione*, Lubrina Editore, Bergamo 1991, p. 28.

2. P. Pinelli in L.M. Barbero, *L'ombra della percezione*, exh. cat., Studio Invernizzi, Milan 2003, p. 6.

3. A. Zanchetta, *Il plurale della pittura*, in *Pino Pinelli. Antologia Rossa*, exh. cat. (21 March - 30 May 2015), Edizioni Galleria Dep Art, Milan 2015, p. 11.