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The New Tendency: visual, kinetic and programmed works of art  
through exhibitions and the art critique between Italy and Croatia  
from 1963 to 1967.

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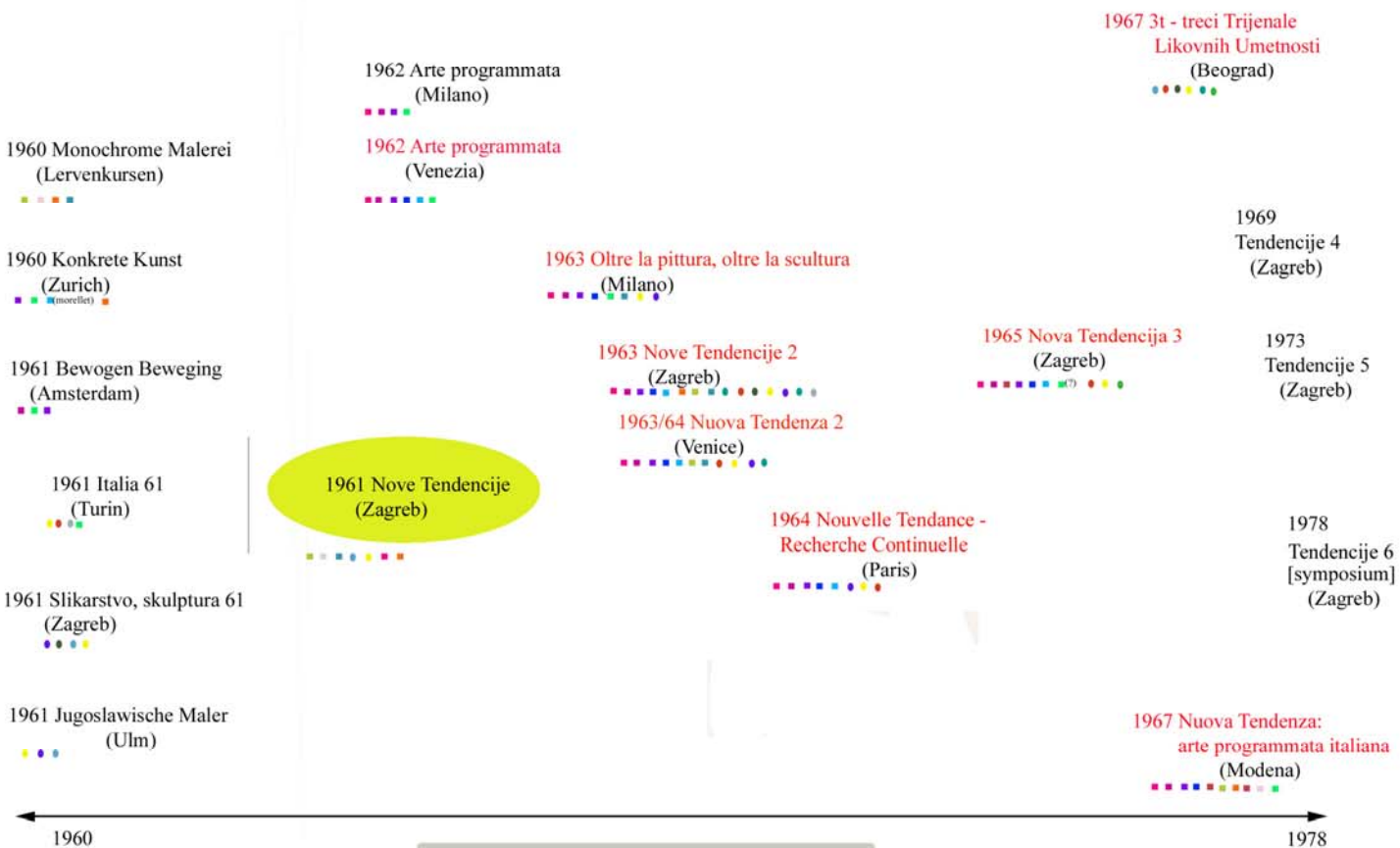
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- T Group ■
- Enzo Mari ■
- Getulio Alviani ■
- GRAV ■
- MID Group ■
- Dorazio ■
- Bruno Munari ■
- Enrico Castellani ■
- Piero Manzoni ■
- Almir Mavignier ■
- Julie Knifer ■
- Vjenceslav Richter ■
- Vojin Bakic ■
- Ivan Picelj ■
- Vlado Kristl ■
- Miroslav Sutej ■
- Alexander Srnec ■
- Jurai Dobrovic ■



**Exhibitions scheme from 1960 to 1973**

■ New Tendency development

## Introduction.

From 1960 to 1967, in Italy and in Croatia - considered within boundaries of the former Yugoslavia - a generation of artists, born in the Thirties, created electro-mechanical moving objects, manual and virtual, aimed to the research on visual perception. To built these works, they used oil and canvas, aluminum, plastics and glass, and they often formalized rational geometries, while in other cases they obtained less stringent results (figs. 1-14). From time to time, international art critics defined works as: kinetic art, programmed art, optical and Gestalt art. The works had a common public and international showcase, by several exhibitions held in Zagreb and entitled *Nove tendencije* or in a few of cases with the unusual *Nova Tendencija*, in Venice called *Nuova Tendenza* and in Paris called *Nouvelle Tendence*.

The variation corresponded, however, to a substantial difference in their meanings and purposes. The “new tendencies” – a provisional definition covering the different artistic research of the period - and their theory, in fact, were not a isomorphic phenomenon with *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions. For historical reasons, it was also necessary to consider Croatia not only as a single nation, but within the system of the Confederation of Socialist Republics of Yugoslavia.

Unfortunately, Croatian historiography today – in regard to that we could assume also an European and Italian interest in - has limited the contribution of Zagreb cultural ferment only to Croatian national culture. Between the Fifties and Sixties, however, Croatian artists belonged to a cultural system that, in addition to Zagreb, it enumerated also Ljubljana and Beograd.

Consequently, Italian and European artists and critics interacted with that the artistic system, whose history has recently been considered between 1918 and 1991, by art historians Dubravka Djurić and Misko Šuvaković<sup>1</sup>.

With the aim of an historical analysis, therefore, Italian historiography was compared to Yugoslav one. Giving as examples *Les Avant-Gardes de L'Europe Central* of Krisztina Passuth<sup>2</sup> and *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* by Steven A. Mansbach<sup>3</sup> - two fundamental essays necessary to understand the history of the early Twentieth century avant-garde in Eastern Europe –, through cross-analysis of administrative documents, correspondence, and direct evidences between the critic literature and art of the period, we had reached the following statement: from the *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions emerged a 'New Tendency' which was briefly the critic strategy, supported by some Italian, Croatian, French and German artists and art scholars, and that in the Sixties defined special groups of works.

Among the protagonists of the movement, whom really helped to define the artistic landscape of the New Tendency, were artists Enzo Mari, N and T Groups, and Getulio Alviani or scholars as

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<sup>1</sup> D. Djurić, M. Šuvaković (edited by), *Impossible Histories. Historical Avant-Gards, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991*, MIT Press, London, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> K. Passuth, *Les avant-gardes de l'Europe Centrale, 1907-1927*, Flammarion, Paris, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> S.A. Mansbach, *Modern art in Eastern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

Giulio Carlo Argan, Umbro Apollonio and Germano Celant. Among Croatian were artists Ivan Picelj, Vlado Kristl and Vjenceslav Richter or art critics and historians Matko Meštrović, Radoslav Putar and Vera Horvat-Pintarić.

Obviously, due to their importance in the history of New Tendency, we had considered very important all contributions came from Paris (where the Groupe de Recherches d'art visuelle (GRAV) had a central role) and from New York that, considered as the center of the art world, in the Sixties encouraged the international spread of new tendencies in their commercial aim, which was called Optical art.

The above-mentioned events were studied by means of the archive research that investigated mainly Zagreb archives as the Nove Tendencije Found - NT - kept in the Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti - MSU - (Museum of Contemporary Art), the Vjenceslav Richter Archive and Arhiv za Likovne Umjetnosti HAZU ( Hrvatske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti ) – ALUH (Fine Arts HAZU Archive).

In Italy the research was conducted in the Archivio storico per l'arte contemporanea - ASAC (Contemporary Art Historical Archive) in Venice, in which the private found of the curator Umbro Apollonio and folders of Venice Biennial from 1950 to 1966, have been crucial to understand relationships with Croatia.

In addition, documents preserved in the Adriano Olivetti Foundation Archive in Ivrea, in the Querini Stampalia Foundation Archive in Venice, in the Soroptimist Association of Trieste found, in the State Archives of Trieste, in the Albe Steiner Archive at the Milan Polytechnic and in the Historical Archive of the Municipality of Modena - ASCMO – have helped to complete the picture of the programmed art and *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions.

About the conservation of new tendencies art works, the Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti in Zagreb has a rich collection of works dated between 1960 and 1971 which is one of the largest collection in Eastern Europe. Also, afoot to increase new tendencies studies, is been the comparison with three important collections: the collection of works owned by the National Gallery of Modern Art - GNAM - of Rome, the collection Volker Feierabend kept at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Trento and Rovereto (MART) and the more recent but no less important, the collection of the 900 Museum in Milan.

## **Chapter 1<sup>st</sup>. Historiographical fortune of the *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions from 1978 to 2010.**

### *1. Critic statements and historical analysis from 1978 to 1984 to reevaluate the *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions.*

At the beginning, new tendencies, such as autonomous phenomena, developed in Italian cities, like Milan, Padua and, a little less, in Venice and Rome. Then they founded in Zagreb an ideal meeting center, comparison and than of Europe-wide disclosure. In Zagreb at *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions by the first two editions, respectively in 1961 and in 1963, and by the third *Nova Tendencija 3* in 1965, converged a lot of Italian artists and art critics in close dialogue with Croatian counterparts. In 1969 followed a fourth edition *Tendencije 4*, an exhibition in part retrospective, in other part proposals to computer works. In 1973, finally, held *Tendencije 5* dedicated to computer visual art and to conceptual trend. Later there was an interregnum of the art criticism, moving with the times, exiled new tendencies.

At the end of the Seventies, the art critique faced an important aspect concerning how to isolate the phenomenon of new tendencies to see it in its autonomy, and to provide what kind of relationship new tendencies had with contemporary or slightly later researches. These, in fact, seemed to be linked with works – for geometry, design and environmental dimension – and theories – that in particularly always behaved by teamwork.

The choice to evaluate since 1978 the critic fortune of new tendencies, was suggested by two main considerations. The first concerns the fact that this date is about at the end of the decade started with retrospective exhibition of Zagreb in 1969, so it represents a correct laps of time between facts occurred and the following historiographical revision.

The second, between Italy and Croatia took place two contemporaneous critic reviews, by which we have begun to observe a New Tendency movement in contrast with general new tendencies, specifically for their theory and heritage. In Italy, in 1979, Umbro Apollonio<sup>4</sup> gave a critical view of New Tendency phenomenon by his own essays written in the Sixties and collected in the anthology *Le occasioni del tempo* (The opportunities of the time).

In that work, Apollonio tied together texts that from 1961 to 1967 have told about the relationship between Italian and Croatian new tendencies. Further, according to Apollonio, the legacy of Eastern European avant-garde influenced the New Tendency, because of its origin from Zagreb exhibitions. Apollonio, whom was one of the most important critic link between Italy and former-Yugoslavia, made a critic review that at the moment passed unnoticed with respect to the

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<sup>4</sup> U. Apollonio, *Nuova Tendenza*, in *Le occasioni del tempo*, Studio Forma, Torino, 1979, pp.119-253.



generalized phenomenon so called new tendencies. Representing an isolated case, which had any development in the following historiography.

Also in Croatia the term “Nove Tendencije” was used, and its still is used, in the plural; because that artistic movement is identified with exhibitions. Art critics Marijan Suvoski and Jerko Denegri<sup>5</sup>, in 1978, wrote the essay *Nova umjetnička praksa* (New artistic experiences), which analyzed artistic movements in Yugoslavia between 1966 and 1978. That decade was based on new tendencies achieves, which were considered as the first example of Yugoslav modernism according to two fundamental ideals: the socialist politic-ideological engagement and the attraction for technologic culture.

Their legacy, according to Suvoski and Denegri, would express itself on the one hand in research inspired by American and European Minimalism, on the other hand toward new conceptual and performing activities, which widely spread in the Seventies. In addition, they agreed with Germano Celat, considering the year 1966 as the ideal date of the beginning, or separation, between precedent new tendencies and new artistic activities.

However, critics paid attention to revalue Minimalist and Conceptual research, because just in 1968 were considered as typical phenomenon of Yugoslav culture – much more then new tendencies, which were quite internationalist. The matter about connections with Minimal research, few years later, was solved by Suvoski<sup>6</sup> in 1983 with the exhibition *Minimalizam u Jugoslavija*, which has become famous in following national historiography. According to Suvoski, new tendencies in Zagreb were a parallel phenomenon to Julie Knifer’s and Gorgona Group’s artistic research – exponents of a anti-programmed and New Dadaist line. They anticipated visual solutions of Yugoslav Minimalism. In that way, the mix-up with both researches was cleared up, but still missed a historiographical revision of the phenomenon called new tendencies as an independent artistic research.

A first attempt in that direction occurred in Italy, by the exhibition *L’ultima avanguardia: arte cinetica e programmata* (The latest avant-gard: kinetic and programmed art), made by Lea Vergine<sup>7</sup> and the critic task of Enrico Francalanci up. The exhibition, opened in Milan in November 1983, was a partial attempt between historiographical investigation and critical assessment, in order to restore vitality to new tendencies history. First intentions, as confessed by Vergine<sup>8</sup> in an interview in 1983, were to highlight above-mentioned artistic researches to Italian and European public.

However, because of various and unknown reasons, it was decided to choose a general idea of programmed art, chronologically included between 1953 and 1963. According to the author, 1953

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<sup>5</sup> M. Suvoski, *Nova umjetnička praksa*, Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, GSU, Zagreb, 1978.

<sup>6</sup> *Minimalizam u Jugoslaviji*, catalogue, October 3<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> 1983, Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, GSU, Zagreb, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> *L’ultima avanguardia: arte cinetica e programmata*, catalogue, November 4<sup>th</sup> 1983 – February 27<sup>th</sup> 1984, Palazzo Reale, Milano, Mazzotta, Milano, 1984.

<sup>8</sup> G. Segato, *L’ultima avanguardia: romantica è la geometria*, «ArteTriveneta», no. 40, December, Padova, 1983, pp. 10-11.

referred to first kinetic and programmed works created of Yacob Agam, Bruno Munari and Enzo Mari; the second date referred to the year of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Biennial Exhibition of Art in San Marino, entitled *Oltre l'Informale* (Beyond Informal). N and Zero Groups they were equal first for the prize, declaring the success of new tendencies researches.

The exhibition in Milan was divided in three sections: the first was represented by historic Futurist, Constructivist and Abstract painting avant-garde. In the second one, artists as Munari, Mari, Alviani, N and T Groups, Ivan Picelj, were protagonists of new tendencies. In the last one, the exhibition collected all artists, whose research had been similar but less important, such as Italian Dada Maino and Enrico Castellani, and Croatian Vjenceslav Richter, Julie Knifer and Vlado Kristl.

However, artists as Castellani and Richter, defined as “parallel presences” by Vergine, had an important role in new tendencies research. Castellani put Mondrian’s painting and Neoplasticism first as a way to overcome the Informel painting *impasse*, while Richter influenced, from his ideological point of view, new tendencies bringing them to the identification with the industrial design and the architecture.

Vergine referred specifically to *Nove Tendencije* of Zagreb as the main exhibition in the history of programmed hypothesis. However, she confirmed that programmed art and new tendencies failed after 1963, because of a lack of agreement among exponents. In addition, artists in their research – as she has told in 1973<sup>9</sup> - were not reflecting an industrial society. These two assertions were in contrast with the ideological commitment, which supported research made by Mari, N Group, Richter and Knifer, and at the same time it could not understand the main characteristic of new tendencies: to be one of the last moments of contemporary artistic research determined by technological changing moved with the times.

Ernesto Francalanci, moreover, proposed a critic historical *excursus* on the relationship between the historical avant-garde and researches in the Sixties. His critic investigation retraced roughly a genealogy of new tendencies following the model established, about in 1967, during an European critical discussion, thanks to the art critic Frank Popper<sup>10</sup> and his essay *Naissance de l’art cinétique*.

However, in the history of new tendencies, that interpretation kept with the times, but by Popper it had been misrepresented. To artists as N Group, Mari or Richter, historical avant-gardes were not a visual source or a reserve of theories on kinetic art to plunder, much less, a quotation. Historical avant-garde, on the contrary, were considered as the beginning of artistic research, which new tendencies in the Sixties were seeking to continue and improve the same way as a scientific paradigm.

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<sup>9</sup> L. Vergine, *L’arte cinetica in Italia, Conferenza tenuta l’11 marzo 1973*, Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna, Roma, Soprintendenza alle Gallerie Roma II Arte Contemporanea, Arte e società, Roma, 1973.

<sup>10</sup> F. Popper, *Naissance de l’art cinétique. L’image du mouvement dans les arts plastique depuis 1860*, Gauthier-Villars, Paris, 1967.

The followers, of course, did not fail but it was also a secondary phenomenon actually occurred after 1963. Finally, the year 1953 considered as the beginning of new tendencies, nowadays cannot be considered like that because all matters dealt by artists were completely different. In the early Fifties, someone of them moved on the occasion of the European Concrete Art, but it was not considered as opposed to Informel poetics and was related to the tradition of abstract painting in the Thirties - also in a technical sense. An important role of Concrete Art poetics, on the contrary, must be related to a renewed attention on industrial design, promoted by artists like Munari, Mari and Richter.

Consequently, in Croatia, Vergine's exhibition was not kindly received and Vera-Horvat-Pintarić<sup>11</sup> published an article titled *Requiem za Nove Tendencije*, where she expressed her total disagreement. She discussed with Vergine because artists as Castellani and Knifer were crucial in the evolution of new tendencies. Horvat-Pintarić, in addition, thought that their relationship with industrial society had been real and positive, because it gave the hope for an alternative lifestyle. The aspect just mentioned, according to the author, was completely absent for example in last research as the "Transavanguardia" - according to Lara Vinca Masini's<sup>12</sup> interpretation.

An episode that has not a directed relation with the exhibition in Milan, but happened few months later, was the exhibition held in Zagreb at the Galerija Lotrščak, in March 1984. It was named *Konstruktivizam*, and presented works by Croatian artist Richter, Kristl, Srnec, Picelj, Šutej and Knifer, whom belonged to the collection of Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti. The exhibition, even if closed only to Croatian artists, showed the renewed interest to the research of new tendencies, which were reconnected to their Constructivist origin. It was a very important aspect, because in that way it was related also to the ideal of Central European Constructivism, considered as the specific attitude of Croatian artists.

## 2. *Between the Eighties and Nineties. A comparison between Italian and Croatian historiography. From painting of the 80's to the art of the new technology.*

The relationship, of course, has not established at the technique level, but at the "image" one in which artists created figurative works using, sometimes, same principles of the Gestalt, investigated by new tendencies. For example, in the great exhibition *Aktuell '83*, Thomas Lehnerer<sup>13</sup> (1955), presented *Doppelnatur*, a work that insisted on mirrored relations in order to demonstrate conceptually the divine "double nature" (figs. 15,16). Following years the exhibition in Milan were low in studies on new tendencies.

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<sup>11</sup> V. Horvat-Pintaric, *Requiem za Nove Tendencije*, «Star», no. 383, February, Zagreb, 1984, pp.36-38.

<sup>12</sup> L. Vinca Masini, *Dialogo nello spazio*, «Domus», no.647, February, Milano, 1984.

<sup>13</sup> *Aktuell '83. Kunst aus Mailand, München, Wien und Zürich*, catalogue, September 21<sup>st</sup> – November 20<sup>th</sup> 1983, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, München, Lenbachhaus, München, 1983, pp. 140-143.

However, in Italy and in Croatia spread a return to the painting - identified with the Transavanguardia by Achille Bonito Oliva – and new electronic media influenced artists and art critics. A second question derives from the historiographical review of new tendencies: how to look at relations with the abstract painting revival that comeback, by significant variations in the Eighties. As a consequence misunderstanding, on both sides, were not lacking but that little-known story led to consider of new tendencies history within a discussion that one side supported to go back to the tradition of painting, the other looked to new media and its artistic use.

In 1985 Jerko Denegri<sup>14</sup> published the essay *Apstrakta Umjetnost u Hrvasko* (abstract art in Croatia), whose second volume was devoted to geometric research – the first concerned the non-functional abstract and Informel Art.

Denegri draw a continuous line between EXAT51 Group (Experimental Workshop 1951) and Croatian new tendencies, between 1953 – the date was just shown by Lea Vergine, whose the author has considered critic approach by mentioning the Milan exhibition in 1983 – and 1973. In 1953 there was the first official exhibition of Ivan Picelj, Alexander Srnec and other Croatian artists still attached to the Concrete painting and in 1973 was held the exhibition *Tendencije 5*, dedicated to visual art produced by computer. In that period, after the 1961 first edition and the parallel activities of Gorgona Group, 1963 marked, according to Denegri, an important period of transition from the pluralistic direction of new tendencies to the unilateral one of New Tendency.

In addition it examined the ideology of *Nova Tendencija 3* of 1965 in the light of the three foreign authors, who were the first that worked on it. The American Donald D. Egbert<sup>15</sup> in the essay *Social radicalism and the arts* in 1970, Frank Popper with *Naissance de l'art cinétique* in 1967 - the author cites the Italian edition of Popper published in 1970 - and finally Filiberto Menna<sup>16</sup> in the volume *Kinetic and Visual Art* in 1969. The three authors identified in the Yugoslav socialist matrix, the French influence of GRAV, the interaction with industrial design and technology, fundamental ideological ways in New Tendency theory.

After 1965, continued Denegri, for Croatia and Yugoslavia the third edition of *Trijenale Likovnih Umetnosti* (triennial of fine arts) in Belgrade had been important in 1967, where were outlined two situations. The first related to Croatian New Tendency considered as a mix of a patchy style under which were researches of different artists– that Denegri recovered from *Konstruktivizam* exhibition in 1984.

The second situation, on the contrary, was connected with the emergence of Minimalist abstraction – close to *Primary Structures* of 1966 - which influenced young artists. In later years

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<sup>14</sup> J. Denegri, *Apstrakta Umjetnosti u Hrvaskoj 2*, Split, 1985.

<sup>15</sup> D.D. Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the arts*, Albert A. Knopf publisher, New York, 1970, pp.688-711.

<sup>16</sup> F. Menna, *Arte Cinetica e Visuale*, in *L'arte moderna*, Fabbri Editori, Milano, 1969.

the line tied to technological aspects of new tendencies, according to Abraham Moles, was renewed by experimental research that used computers such as merged with *Tendencije 5* in 1973. In contrast, between 1968 and mid-Seventies, Yugoslav and Croatian art was imbued with the 'Minimal' line - which Denegri considered on the basis of exposure *Minimalizam* in 1983 - and conceptual, both aimed at the installation of environmental structures. That Denegri's reading had the merit of preserving the autonomy of the new tendencies and treat them as a well defined historical phenomenon.

Indeed it was still absent an effective historiographical analysis that retrieved the real contribution of new tendencies in opposition to a general line of European painting abstraction. For example, in 1980, an art studios Dora Vellier<sup>17</sup> published a revised and correct edition of his essay *L'Art abstrait* - published in Italy in 1984 – that held the primal setting of her analysis on, dated 1967.

Vellier gave an important contribution with the visual comparison between abstraction and scientific discoveries of the Twentieth century. He narrowed the field of abstract painting, and such identified in American Minimalism - favored by the exhibitions *The Responsive Eye* in 1965 and *Primary Structures* in 1966 - the last result, in order of time, achieved by abstract artists. Vellier quoted the 1964 Paris *Nouvelle Tendence* exhibition, without attributing to that any special significance. Since the kinetic and programmed art was considered as a resumption of Constructivism without any significant innovations in painting. It is evident that the fortune of Minimalism - critic and commercial fortune a - partly contributed to obscuring or deforming new tendencies achieves.

The critic intention to build an national line inner abstraction painting, geometric and not, it was also in Italy. Art scholars George Cortenova and Filiberto Menna<sup>18</sup> in the exhibition held in Verona in February 1988 and titled *Astratta. Secessioni astratte in Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi* (Abstract. Secessions abstract in Italy since the postwar), they considered events of programmed and kinetics works in continuity with different aspects of Italian abstract art from 1945 to 1988.

Paradoxically, that exhibition bound together, on a model of absolute idea of abstract art (such as that expressed by Doris Vellier in 1984) programmed works and Concrete painting, the analytic one of the Seventies and the one of the Eighties, read in opposition to the Transavanguardia.

Although the programmed art has removed, at the form and technique level, from traditional abstract painting, was forced to become the ahead of next two decades researches, whose

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<sup>17</sup> D. Vellier, *L'Arte Astratta*, Garzanti, Milano, 1984.

<sup>18</sup> *Astratta. Secessioni astratte in Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi*, catalogue, January 23<sup>rd</sup> – March 15<sup>th</sup> 1988, Palazzo Forti, Verona, Mazzotta, Milano, 1988.

abstraction were recovered by canvas, paints and brushes. Such a misunderstanding was perhaps due to the previous 1986 Venice Biennial<sup>19</sup>, where under the general topic “Art and Science”, in the section entitled *Colore*, merged all the research that from the historical avant-garde to the kinetic, programmed and optical art of the Sixties took turns on the horizon of international art - among exhibitors were remember Alviani, Biasi, Colombo, Devecchi, Munari, Varisco, Mavignier, Morellet and LeParc.

The general topic of 1986 Biennale, showed us the second level of the matter - the new electronic media – because it concerned the relationship between art and science in a way diametrically opposite to the one discussed during the Sixties.

According to Maurizio Calvesi, general commissioner of the edition, the value of art was the possibility to be considered as alchemical act and in that way had a pre-scientific relationship with science. Instead, in the Sixties, programmed works were intended as a recovery of a scientific objectivity that involved an experimental method at the base of their research. At the time, a limit for artists was, on the contrary, the difficulty in obtaining technical means to carry out works, in order to overcome their artisan attitude.

Indeed, a missed opportunity was the collaboration with Olivetti Company from Ivrea after the exhibition *Arte programmata*, which did not led to the expected technical assistance needed by Italian groups. Even in Zagreb, in fact, when *Tendencije 5* held, the section dedicated to the computerized art, was possible thanks to companies like IBM or Siemens. In that means, the relationship between art and technology in the Biennale was identified with the electronic image<sup>20</sup>. Its fortune fell in an economic and cultural period in which - as also mentioned by Vera Horvat-Pintarić<sup>21</sup> in 1984 – increased the spread and movement of hi-tech technology, relatively low cost.

Worldwide, new electronic media began to be easily available to artists - an Italian example in the early Eighties was Fabrizio Plessi (figs. 17,18) whose project of electronic installation acquired an autonomous pictorial value- which upgraded their installations with monitor, projections, closed-circuit video recordings and computer programming.

Although painting, sculpture and architectural space were again confused, the temporal dimension of perception returned to be the protagonist in many artistic pursuits. According to that perspective, Frank Popper<sup>22</sup> in 1993 published the essay *Art of Electronic Age*, in which the first

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<sup>19</sup> *XLII Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte. La Biennale di Venezia*, catalogue, June – October 1986, Venezia, Edizioni La Biennale/Electa editrice, 1986, pp. 147-183.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 185-204.

<sup>21</sup> V. Horvat-Pintarić, *op.cit.*, 1984, pp.36-38.

<sup>22</sup> F. Popper, *The Art of Electronic Age*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1993.

part was dedicated to roots of the new electronic art. Popper, whom in 1967 contextualized, through post-Impressionist French research of the late Nineteenth century, the origin of kinetic art, identified origins of electronic work in research of programmed and kinetics works of the Sixties. The fortune and the gradual discovery of new tendencies began, secondly to a reading that considered them the precursors of a new artistic technological universe.

### 3. *From the Nineties to 2000. Towards a shared memory of Nove Tendencije exhibitions.*

On the rediscovery of the Italian dimension of new tendencies, in the magazine «Flash Art», in 1992, the article of the art scholar Alessandra Quattordio<sup>23</sup> revived what just had said by Lea Vergine in 1983. However, referring to the idea of 'instability' - psychophysical perceptive- which had been essential in the GRAV exhibitions in Italy and France between 1962 and 1963, she made a parallel with the artistic situation of the Nineties.

In both cases, according to Quattordio, the 'instability' was still a significant feature in contemporary art. In addition, the magazine «Flash Art», even within the limits of journalistic chronicle and sponsorship of Italian and foreign galleries, between 1989 and 1999 had the merit of keeping alive the interest in features of new tendencies.

That was due to a direct witness and artist very important in relationship between Italy and Yugoslavia in the Sixties: Getulio Alviani, thanks to his association with the Director Giancarlo Politi, for ten years about he held a personal column entitled *Taccuino di un vecchio cinetico* (Pocketbook of an old kinetic-artist).

On the pages of «Flash Art», Alviani told on the life of the galleries, especially in Milan, where performed artists like Colombo, Biasi, Castellani. Obviously Alviani told about artists and works in the Nineties and allowed to observe the way in which certain authors continued to relate to galleries and collectors, and how the memory of their glorious past was still spendable on the market.

The memory of the past, from the mid- Nineties, in historiographical works on new tendencies consisted on the recovery of documents related to the birth and evolution of every artistic research of the Sixties. It concentrated in affirming the value of relationships between groups and individual artists in order to highlight the value of the European new tendencies, in an area between Italy, France, Germany and Croatia.

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<sup>23</sup> A. Quattordio, *Arte programmata anni '50 – '60*, «Flash Art», no. 170, October -November, Milan, 1992, pp. 80-86.

In Croatia, after the Civil War of 1991-1995, the rapid resumption of normal conditions of life allowed in Zagreb – had become the capital of the new Republic of Croatia - the exhibition *Konstruktivizam kinetička umjetnost* (constructivist and kinetic art) made by Mirijan Susovski<sup>24</sup>. The exhibition was inaugurated in April 1995 and presented the collection of constructivist and kinetic art works from the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti (GSU) in Zagreb.

Again a first section was dedicated to the EXAT51 Group and the second to new tendencies, including not only the Croatian artists, but for the first time, European ones. The major impact of that exhibition, compared to the formers, was to bring new tendencies within the international scene, joined masters of geometric abstraction in the Twentieth century such as Max Bill, Jean Arp, Avgust Černigoj, Alberto Magnelli, Victor Vasarely and Andrè Block, to younger like Getulio Alviani, Antonio Costa, Marc Adrian, Alberto Biasi, Gianni Colombo, Dada Maino, Piero Dorazio, Edoardo Landi, Heinz Mack, Manfredo Massironi, Almir Mavignier, François Morellet, Bruno Munari, Otto Piene, Nanda Vigo, Scheggi Paul, Jesus Raphael Soto and Yvaral.

Another new factor was that the catalog was compiled bilingual Croatian-English, for international distribution and then to mark of the GSU the gradual ascent to the circle of contemporary art museums in Europe. Moreover, that operation had the aim to tie the Galerija birth - in 1956 – to the Concrete and Constructivist art, and its growth to *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions.

Even in Italy, only in the second half of the '90s and thanks to the careful critical and historiographical operation carried out by Marco Meneguzzo, began a similar process of historical revision.

In March 1996, Meneguzzo<sup>25</sup> edited the exhibition *Enne & Zero, etc. Motus.*, held at the Museion (Museum of Modern Art of Bolzano) and first moved to Padua and then in the Republic of San Marino. The credit of the exposure was to bring back to a critical attention activities of the N Group - whose most recent volume was written by Italo Mussa<sup>26</sup> in 1976 - and its relations with the Zero Group in Düsseldorf and the MOTUS (then GRAV) of Paris.

Finally Italian programmed works were read within the context of French and German new tendencies and were reviewed main issues that marked their destiny in the Sixties. The relationship with the precedents of the European Concrete Art, with artists like Pol Bury and the controversy over the work of the group that occupied in 1963, after the Fourth Biennial of San Marino, were

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<sup>24</sup> *Konstruktivizam i kinetička umjetnost*, catalogue, May-June 1995, Dom Hrvatskih likovnih umjetnika, Zagreb, GSU, Zagreb, 1995.

<sup>25</sup> *Enne & Zero, Motus etc.*, catalogue, March 1<sup>st</sup> – May 19<sup>th</sup> 1996, Museo d'Are Moderna, Bolzano/Museum für Moderne Kunst, Bozen, Folio Verlag, Wien/Bozen-Bolzano, 1996.

<sup>26</sup> I. Mussa, *Il gruppo Enne e la situazione dei gruppi in Europa*, Bulzoni, Milano, 1976.



contextualized in relation to other contemporary studies, such as the one of Achille Perilli and Tancredi. In this way the artistic research gained from the Informel and Italian new tendencies - and a small part European ones - were analyzed through their original qualities, in order to be considered within an independent framework of what had happened previously.

Among providers, appeared the Gallery of Modern Art of San Marino<sup>27</sup>, whose collection had been formed during the Sixties, by the Conference of Artists and Scholars of art Critics, and Niccoli Gallery of Parma, that in the Nineties became a driving force for the fortune of programmed and kinetics works. However, it was with the beginning of the new millennium that in Italy and in Europe fortunes of new tendencies had a serious increase - not only in marketing - of attention by scholars and museums.

In May 2000 Meneguzzo<sup>28</sup> set an exhibition up dedicated to 1962 *Arte Programmata*, thanks to the Municipality of Galliate (No) patronage and the local Angelo Bozzola Museum. A second aim of the event was, in fact, to include the artist Angelo Bozzola in the art scene of the programmed research, but him did not involve in that art trend ever. For the occasion was made a facsimile copy of the first *Arte Programmata* catalogue.

Meneguzzo reconstructed the Milan art world of the early Sixties and, in presenting innovation at the time of programmed works, he carried a liaison with the electronic art of the Eighties and Nineties. The historical framework went beyond the historic date of 1962 and arrived at the end of the decade of the Sixties, including Zagreb exhibitions. That latter aspect was also highlighted in the section dedicated to direct marks of such artists as Alviani, Boriani Devecchi, Enzo Mari and Bruno Munari. The exhibition and its critical operation would be the anticipation of a second exhibition, always made by Meneguzzo, a few months later.

In December 2000, at the Gallery Niccoli of Parma was held the exposure *Arte cinetica e programmata 1958-1968* (Kinetic and Programmed Art 1958-1968), which is important from the point of view of the new timeline proposed by Meneguzzo<sup>29</sup>, to frame the phenomenon of the programmed and kinetic research. He believed that the phenomenon had begun around 1958, whereas, at that time, the Informel in Italy had reached the maximum spread, with the consequent decline in weary and rhetoric repetitions - a condition that was just registered in 1963 by Maurizio

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<sup>27</sup> *Da Fontana a Yvaral. Arte Gestaltica nella collezione della Pinacoteca di Verucchio*, catalogue, July 27<sup>th</sup> – September 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, Pinacoteca di Verucchio, Pazzini Editore, Rimini, 2008.

<sup>28</sup> *Arte programmata 1962*, catalogue, May 26<sup>th</sup> – July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2000, Museo Angelo Bozzola-Castello visconteo-sforzesco, Comune di Galliate, Edizioni Stefano Fumagalli, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> *Arte programmata e cinetica in Italia 1958-1968*, catalogue, December 16<sup>th</sup> 2000 – March 19<sup>th</sup> 2001, Galleria Niccoli, Parma, 2000.

Calvesi in the Livorno exhibition *La pittura informale in Italia fino al 1957* (the informal painting in Italy until 1957).

The date *ad quem* 1968, however, was chosen to enhance the moment, not only Italian, of the so-called 'cultural revolution', which marked a significant turning point also for events of new tendencies. In fact, a second reason because that show had some relevance, related to the space dedicated to analyze the connection between works and industrial design, as an escape from rhetoric approach in which ended their theory and to implement the instance of aesthetic democratization of society. Even in this case the reference point remained the exhibition that Lea Vergine made in 1983 up, confirming the role she played as a watershed between two distinct periods.

In the late Nineties and the first decade of 2000, fortunes of new tendencies has been fraught with a myriad of small and large exhibitions, Italian and foreign, that often observed phenomena in their singularity - when in fact in some cases proved a mere commercial transaction - rather than to study their common affairs in the light of historical and critic reflection overall<sup>30</sup>. As a result, studies had not contributed enough to a new view of the matter, herein will not be taken any notice of.

That still evident between 1990 and 2000 was linked, in fact, to historical and artistic studies. A lack has been partially filled, once again, by Jerko Denegri<sup>31</sup> in 2000 - with the essay *Umjetnost Konstruktivnog pristupa: EXAT51 i Nove Tendencije* (A constructive approach to art: New Tendencies and Exat51), published in Zagreb and translated into English in 2004. Denegri, instead of analyzing individual situations of Croatian and European art, chose to reason about a common construction - and not constructivist, as the author explained.

From previous constructivist of the Thirties, quoting magazines «Zenith» in Beograd and «Tank» in Ljubljana, it reached the reworking in a Concrete Art view of the Fifties thanks to the

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<sup>30</sup> *Stratégies de participation. GRAV – groupe del recherche d'ari visuel, 1960/1968*, catalogue, June 7<sup>th</sup> – September 6<sup>th</sup> 1998, Le Magasin, Centre d'art contemporain de Grenoble, 1998; A. Pierre, *Julie Knifer. Meandres*, Adam Biro, Paris, 2001; M. Susovski, *Zbirka Richter: Donacija Vjenceslava Richtera i Nade Kareš-Richter Gradu Zagrebu / Richter collection: the Vjenceslav Richter and Nada Kareš-Richter donation to the city of Zagreb*, MSU, Zagreb, 2003; *Getulio Alviani*, catalogue, October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004 – February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005, Galleria d'arte moderna e contemporanea, Bergamo, Skira, Milano, 2004; *Dipingendo l'Europa. Dal Po alla Senna, in viaggio fra costruttivismo ed arte cinetica*, catalogue, December 16<sup>th</sup> 2004 – January 16<sup>th</sup> 2005, Genova, Vero l'arte Edizioni, Roma, 2004; L. Meloni, *Gli ambienti del Gruppo T*, VAF-Fondazione, Silvana Editoriale, Milano, 2004; *Ivan Picelj. Kristal i ploha/1951-2005*, catalogue, April 3<sup>rd</sup> – May 15<sup>th</sup> 2005, Galerija Klovičevi dvori, Zagreb, 2005; A. Barrese, A. Marangoni, L. Meloni, *MID. Alle origini della multimedialità. Dall'arte programmata all'arte interattiva*, VAF- Foundation, SilvanaEditoriale, 2007; *Enzo Mari. L'arte del design*, catalogue, October 29<sup>th</sup> 2008 – January 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, Galleria Civica d'arte moderna e contemporanea, Torino, Federico Motta Editore, Milano, 2008; *Manfredo Massironi. La dinamica dell'oggetto visivo*, catalogue, December 20<sup>th</sup> 2008 – March 8<sup>th</sup> 2009, Galleria Civica Cavour, Padova, Umberto Allemandi, Torino, 2008; V. Feierabend, L. Meloni, *Gruppo N. Oltre la pittura, oltre la scultura, l'arte programmata*, VAF- Foundation, SilvanaEditoriale, 2009; *Gianni Colombo*, catalogue, September 16<sup>th</sup> 2009 – January 10<sup>th</sup> 2010, Castello di Rivoli- Museo d'arte contemporanea, Skira, Milano, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> J. Denegri, *Constructive approach art. Exat 51 and New Tendencies*, Horetzky, Zagreb, 2004.

EXAT51 Group, and by means of the Informel and the return to the New-Constructivism order, it moved to *Nove Tendencije* manifestations. However, Denegri expanded his field of inquiry, not merely to study the individual exhibited cases and consequently, *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions have been read in a complex exchanging system, in which Italy played a mediating role between European and Croatian artists.

The essay may be considered as one of the examples of academic historiography for the first time defined new tendencies limits. Denegri faced several orders of questions, especially the relationship between new tendencies and the idea of the avant-garde, entering into controversy with the 1983 critical operation by Lea Vergine. According to Denegri, new tendencies cannot be considered an avant-garde, and much less the 'ultimate avant-garde', as the vanguard of the Twentieth century was a limited phenomenon and defined by the historical society that produced it. In contrast, new tendencies, while promoting a new artistic language, a new role of the artist and using manifestos based on instances of social reform, did not reject the society of the Sixties, but they wanted to integrate with it, to improve it from inside.

A second point addressed by Denegri, concerns the relationship between new tendencies and Informel Art, that cannot be brand, as a simple opposition, formal and ideological, between an art subjected to technology and an other one subjected to human nature. Denegri proposes to consider new tendencies as a direct result of an anthropological change occurred in those years in which human nature was united to the new industrial landscape nature.

The third area addressed by Croatian critic, concerns the role of groups and individual artists whom moved the center of their attention from the artistic operation, understood as a subversion of traditional art values, towards extra artistic values.

Indeed, according to Denegri, the conceptual operation was essential to replace the equation "art equals art" with the other "art equal work". Consequently, and by entering into the fourth order of the matter discussed in the essay, artists as workers politicized their activities by placing it on the same level of worker's struggles.

However, the '68 movement changed the conception of ideology thanks to artists much younger than new tendencies ones, while the latter were limited to a moral participation in student struggles, but without acting in the real mean.

Finally, the last important statement is about the relationship between new tendencies and science, especially the theory of perception, which according to Denegri has been misrepresented by many members of new tendencies. In fact, that matter had its fallout in the exhibition of 1965 *The Responsive Eye*, where many of works were a direct resumption of *Gestaltpsychologie*

manuals, and thus confirmed the suspicion of Giulio Carlo Argan, shared by Jerko Denegri, that works could be reduced to a continuous designing. There is no doubt that the value of the rate of Denegri was to reach an historical memory shared between Italy and Croatia.

#### 4. *The last decade: between marketing, collecting and electronic art myth.*

Denegri's essay represents the current state of studies in Croatia, it is necessary therefore a short digression on certain collectable aspects that fostered the fortune of kinetic and programmed Italian works, not in Italy but in Germany. Kinetics and programmed Italian works had a collecting tied not only to individual enthusiasts, but also to financial groups such as the Italian Commercial Bank, for example, in 1992 published the book *Arte italiana - esperienze degli anni '60/'80 - arte concettuale, arte povera, costruttività, arte cinetica nella collezione della Banca Commerciale Italiana a Francoforte* (Italian Art - experiences of the '60s / '80s - Conceptual Art, Poor Art, Constructiveness, kinetic art in the collection of the Italian Commercial Bank in Frankfurt), whose critic notes were edited by Flaminio Gualdoni<sup>32</sup>. In 1994 the Commercial Bank presented its collection at the Rotonda della Besana in Milan in an exhibition entitled *Arte Italiana. Palazzo Besana. Arte Cinetica e programmata, ...*<sup>33</sup> (Italian Art. Besana Palace. Kinetic and programmed art, ...). The two exhibitions offered an example of Italian collecting who failed to have the same effect that instead from Germany was due to the collector and businessman Volker Feierabend.

Feierabend during the Eighties collected a large amount of Italian programmed works - when the market of these works had not great ambitions of profit - and destined to form the original core of the collection of Italian art from 1945 onwards, of the Frankfurt homonymous Foundation. Since 2000 works were left in storage at the MART in Rovereto and in 2001<sup>34</sup> formed the core of an important exhibition in Europe cured again by Meneguzzo<sup>35</sup>.

By the title *Luce, movimento & programmazione* (Light Motion & Programming), the exhibition was inaugurated at the Ulmer Museum in Ulm, in September 2001 and became a itinerant between Germany - in 2001 at the Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim, in 2002 at Städtisches Museum Gelsenkirchen, at the Stadtgalerie Kiel and at the Staatliches Museum Schwerin, - to arrive in December 2002 until March 2003 in Austria, at the Alpen-Adria-Galerie of

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<sup>32</sup> F. Gualdoni, *Arte Italiana - esperienze degli anni '60/'80 - arte concettuale, arte povera, costruttività, arte cinetica nella collezione della Banca Commerciale Italiana a Francoforte*, Umberto Allemandi, Torino, 1992.

<sup>33</sup> L. Parmesani, *Arte Italiana. Palazzo Besana. Arte Cinetica e programmata, nuova pittura e neostruttivismo nella collezione della Banca Commerciale Italiana a Milano*, BCI, 1994, Milano.

<sup>34</sup> *Un secolo di arte italiana. Lo sguardo del collezionista. Opere dalla Fondazione VAF*, catalogue, July 2<sup>nd</sup> – September 20<sup>th</sup> 2005, MART, Rovereto, Skira, Milano, 2005.

<sup>35</sup> *Luce, movimento & programmazione – Kinetische Kunst aus Italien 1958/1968*, catalogue, September 8<sup>th</sup> – November 4<sup>th</sup> 2001, Ulmer Museum, Silvana Editoriale, 2001.

Klagenfurt. This show was a revival of the one held at the Niccoli Gallery of Parma. Even if it did not make any significant contribution to historical survey, it has been fundamental in promoting the Italian programmed research, and because other works came from many other museums in Germany, it announced a further affirmation of German historiography and critical reading.

To confirm the above, in fact, Meneguzzo<sup>36</sup> organized at the Papesse Palace of Siena a retrospective exhibition devoted to relations between Italy and Germany. *Zero. 1958-1968 tra Germania e Italia* (Zero. 1958-1968 between Germany and Italy) was inaugurated in May 2004 and presented through a thorough historical investigation, relations between the Zero Group in Düsseldorf, whose works came from various German collections, the group of artists of Azimut, from Italian collections, and finally, the N and T groups, and Alviani, whose works came mostly from the collection of Feierabend.

Within the reports *Zagreb Nove Tendencije* exhibitions have been quoted as milestones of European art and realized once again within the span of the decade 1958-1968. Furthermore, it was ideally the final part of a trilogy begun in 2000 at the Niccoli Gallery and continued at the Ulmer Museum in 2001.

However, in November 2003, always in Siena, but at the Magazzini del sale of the City Hall, was hosted the exhibition *EXAT51 1951-1956/Nuove Tendenze 1961-1973* (EXAT51 1951-1956/New Tendencies 1961-1973). It showed for the first time in Italy, albeit in a superficial way, Croatian protagonists of the Concrete painting season of EXAT51 Group and artists whom from that group passed to *Nove Tendencije*. The exhibition was set by Marijan Susovski<sup>37</sup> up, under the Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti (already Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti) patronage, the supervision of the new director Snjezana Pintaric and under auspices of the Croatian Department of Culture.

The exhibition is intended more as a political operation than cultural, but also a milestone in Italy for a journey still ongoing to reach a shared memory of the experience of *Nove Tendencije*. The exhibition also was a re-edition of a former one, which had been held in Portugal at the Centro Cultural de Cascais (Cascais) from May to June 2001 and entitled *Exat 51 & New Tendencies...*<sup>38</sup>. Just in the title showed that such exhibition, compared to the Italian latter, was organized with a careful selection of works and an in-depth historical analysis of Croatian art events from the Twenties to the Sixties.

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<sup>36</sup> *Zero. 1958-1968 tra Germania e Italia*, catalogue, May 29<sup>th</sup> – September 19<sup>th</sup> 2004, Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena, SilvanaEditoriale, Milano, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> *EXAT51 1951-1956 Nuove Tendenze 1961-1973*, catalogue, November 14<sup>th</sup> 2003 – January 11<sup>th</sup> 2004, Magazzini del Sale, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, 2003.

<sup>38</sup> *Exat 51 & New Tendencies and Avant-garde international events in croatian art in the 1950s and 1960s*, catalogue, May-June 2001, Centro Cultural de Cascais, Cascais (Portugal), MSU, Zagreb, 2001.

Then two exhibitions in Portugal and Italy, the first major retrospective of *Nove Tendencije* was held in Germany in September 2006 at the Museum für Konkrete Kunst in Ingolstadt, edited by Tobias Hoffmann<sup>39</sup>, entitled *Die Neuen Tendenzen - Eine Europäische Künstlerbewegung 1961 - 1973* (The New Tendencies - A European artistic movement in 1961 -1973). It exhibited in most part works of Zagreb MSU, whose setting up was supervised by the director Snjezana Pintaric. That show in detail, and thanks to the NT Found in the MSU archive in Zagreb, partially documented *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions from 1961 to 1973. It also highlighted the European character of the events of Zagreb and identified links of continuity that presented works, especially in *Tendencije 4* and *Tendencije 5*, between 1969 and 1973, would entertained with video and computer art.

In a way not unlike from what explained by Frank Popper in *The Art of Electronic Age* of 1993, new tendencies in their turn became an artistic tradition in which artists of later generations could have seen, and how each tradition also had created its own mythology.

In that means new tendencies have been read as a part in the “Teutonic view of Konkrete Kunst”, by placing in the background, although the exact historical statements, Italian, French and paradoxically Croatian researches: to confirm that, for the occasion the text of Udo Kultermann, just published for the exhibition *Monochrome Malerei* in 1960, was reedited by the author to adapt to the times. It came true also in that case an identification between artistic movement and exhibitions that, instead, were opportunities of meeting and international exchange.

In addition, were also included *Tendencije 4* and *Tendencije 5* that should be rather considered as situations out of time from a history between 1961 and 1965.

A merit of the Ingolstadt exhibition was to gave an international importance at the Zagreb MSU collection, and at the same time recognized the important role of Getulio Alviani<sup>40</sup>, as a collector and witness of the *Nove Tendencije* history. In fact, the Italian artist, in conjunction with the German exhibition in December 2006, published an article on «Flash Art», almost ten years from the end of his column, to express his opinion on facts occurred in the Sixties.

According to his direct experience, told with fictional accents, new tendencies had short-lived because of the market and internal rivalry among artists, demonstrating the heterogeneity of theories and researches, not enclosed within summary label as 'new tendencies'.

Ingolstadt exhibition was also the precedent for the latest one on *Nove Tendencije*. In fact, the Zenter für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, in December 2008 organized *BIT*

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<sup>39</sup> *Die Neuen Tendenzen – Eine europäische Künstlerbewegung 1961 – 1973*, catalogue, September 29<sup>th</sup> 2006 – January 7<sup>th</sup> 2007, Museum für Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt (Germany), Edition Braus, Berlin, 2006.

<sup>40</sup> G. Alviani, *Nuove Tendenze. Appunti e ricordi sull'arte cinetica da parte di un testimone e protagonista*, «Flash art», no. 261, December 2006- January 2007, p. 91 et seq.

*international [nove] tendencije Computer und visuelle Forschung. Zagreb 1961-1973*, (figs. 19, 20) set with a main focus on *Tendencije 4* and *Tendencije 5* up, by Peter Weibel and Margit Rosen<sup>41</sup>.

According to the authors, Computer visual art in Europe, it had warning signs on such occasions, and on the «BIT» journal - that between 1969 and 1973 became the official press of events in Zagreb. *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions from 1961 to 1965, therefore, have been read as moments of the germ of new Computer visual art research. ZKM therefore, being one of the major European centers to study and popularize new electronic media, considered the research presented in *Tendencije 5* of 1973, as precursors of interactive electronic installations.

These are the assumptions upon which the project of Margit Rosen and Peter Weibel<sup>42</sup> is based on, from 2008 to 2010, they brought it to fruition with the publication of the book *A Little-Known Story about a Movement, a Magazine, and the computer's Arrival in Art New Tendencies and Bit International 1961-1973*. The main intention of the essay was to uncover the fundamental role played by Zagreb *Tendencije 4* and *Tendencije 5* exhibitions for the emergence of art form that in the Seventies began to use the computer as an artistic medium (fig. 20 ). However, compared to the exhibition of 2008, the essay was expanded with the scientific collaboration of Jerko Denegri, whom has been involved in the synthesis of Croatian history of new tendencies starting from Exat Group 51, and Darko Fritz<sup>43</sup>, Croatian designer, whom technically restored some of works.

In addition, the radius of the analysis was expanded to involve also exhibitions more or less related to the Zagreb *Nove Tendencije* and *Tendencije* ones. In fact, were finally taken into serious consideration the Italian, French and U.S. exhibitions from 1962 to 1965 for the definition of the artistic paradigm of new tendencies. The curator Margit Rosen wanted to enclose the whole art scene seen by several short essays that make up the volume, under the label of 'new tendencies'. In addition, there has been a systematic collection and illustration not only of art exhibitions as well as documents relating to them, preserved in the NT Found and in private archives of single artists and art scholars.

The ambition of that collective work, protracted, was to rewrite the history of new tendencies through what happened after 1968, on the Computer Art and its legacy in today electronic arts.

The essay has been defined by its editor as an 'User's manual' which summarizes two decades of criticism and historiographical proposals, which had started since 1983 Milan exhibition.

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<sup>41</sup> *BIT international [nove] tendencije Computer und visuelle Forschung. Zagreb 1961-1973*, catalogue, December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2008 – February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2008.

<sup>42</sup> M. Rosen (edited by), *A Little-Known Story about a Movement, a Magazine, and the Computer's Arrival in Art: New Tendencies and Bit International 1961-1973*, ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2010.

<sup>43</sup> D. Fritz, *Nove tendencije*, in «Oris», n. 54, Sept.-Dec., Zagreb, 2008, pp. 176-191.

Consequently, for the purposes of this present study, leaving each merit on the second part, we can advance on the first observations. A general observation on Rosen's work, concerns the large amount of documents on complex events that made some simplifications, in some cases tendentious to encourage once again a uniform and seamless continuity view between the phenomena examined. For example, *Nove Tendencije* occurred between 1961 and 1965, have been placed on the same level, considering the first exhibition of 1961 at the same plan of the next, without investigating what led to the birth of the Zagreb event and why it had been unknown at the time, outside the borders of Yugoslavia.

Indeed, international recognition came only from the second edition, to reach its peak in the third. In this regard, Rosen has not been slow on the matter concerning the differences between the classifications adopted with time and in different geographical locations, preferring to use the overall name of 'new tendencies'. Also it was not given the consideration to structural changes – that for reasons intrinsic to new tendencies theory it can not be define as 'stylistic' - occurred in works between 1961 and 1965.

On the contrary programmatic and critical texts have been enhanced, but unfortunately often texts did not tie with real artistic experiences. However, the essay edited by Rosen is a fundamental tool for the art historian, with a rich visual repertory, bibliography, and an important collection of documents. Its creation marked an important step towards a shared memory between Germany, Italy and Croatia of what happened in Zagreb in the Sixties, but at the same time, it wrapped new tendencies within the new myth of electronic art.

In conclusion, three were decisive moments in the history of new tendencies. The main merit of the exhibition set up by Lea Vergine recognized in 1983 was to close a period that was left over and then allow the start of a second phase more sensitive to the historiographical reworking than to the critic one. However, research of new tendencies in the Italian situation, suffered critical anxiety to historicize programmed works within quiet confines of a pictorial tradition that could only be explained by considering the international success of the *Transavanguardia*.

Compared to Croatian history, there was still missing a real discussion about the birth, development and heritage of research about Italian new tendencies. This occurred tanks to Jerko Denegri in 2000, however, even if shared in most of his arguments, he maintained critically valid the identification between *Nove Tendencije* and the artistic movement of new tendencies. Similarly, it must be recognize that in the powerful essay by Rosen in 2010, the network of relations between Europe and the former Yugoslavia remained in the shadow, without whose study *Nove tendencije* exhibitions can not be effectively contained within a common international history.



Just emphasizing this perspective we can retrieve the network of relations between Italy and Croatia and at the same time implement a proper balance between different national influences. Moreover, giving a specific value for each exposure, it is apparent that *Nove tendencije* exhibitions were not isolated phenomena, as were not a unitary phenomenon without interruption. In fact, with this work, we want to reconsider the critical proposal advanced in 1979 by Apollonius, trying to separate exhibitions from artistic concepts, in order to reconstruct, on a bilateral basis, events of the New Tendency.

## **Chapter 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Neoplasticism revival between Italy and Croatia: from Mondrian to the first *Nove Tendencije* in 1961.**

Kinetic and programmed art researches developed following some directions, which refused paintings techniques of the so-called Informel Art, and the recovery of the abstract tradition, which is identified with Piet Mondrian's<sup>1</sup> paintings and Neoplasticism – Concrete Art of Theo von Doesburg.

The element, which contributed to a renewed success of Neoplasticism theory and painting, could be found in the need of a composition order, which could free the gestural and material painting from the chance. That was degenerated in an academic rhetoric, which was perceived as a dependence on art trade rules. Furthermore, it allowed to reconsider the artist role, meant not to represent a romantic rebellion of Informel Art but a positive force of the social change. The rediscovery of Mondrian and De Stijl happened due to the spread of works and the Neoplasticism theory.

The rediscovery, at the European level, was supported by the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum<sup>2</sup> (fig. 1) - thanks to the engagement of its director Willem Sandberg - and by the Denise René Gallery<sup>3</sup> in Paris, thanks to the critic engagement of Michel Seuphor<sup>4</sup>. The first promoted its own collection of Neoplasticism works; the second organised some exhibitions dedicated to the Dutch artist, as for example the retrospective of 1957 in connection with the 1956 Venice Biennial.

At the Italian level, the museum activities promoted by Sandberg and critic statements by Seuphor were reference points for other museums and scholars. However, the art myth of Mondrian and De Stijl succeeded by means of the 1956 Venice Biennial and to the monograph by Ottavio Morosini<sup>5</sup>. As a consequence there was among artists, between Padua and Milan a renewed attention supported by the young people for the rationalism and Constructivism historical vanguards. It was that specific area because there Informel Art had represented the urgency to establish again some links with the European tradition.

The rational and Constructivist historical vanguards communicated their theories between the Twenties and Thirties through an industrial society ideology, which thirty years later appeared again in the Italian and European cultural debate<sup>6</sup>. However, the first industrial society transformed in a technological one, where scientific applications on the electronic technique had

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<sup>1</sup> J. de Sanna, *Forma. L'idea degli artisti 1943 – 1997*, Costa&Nolan, Ancona-Milano, 1999, pp. 11-13.

<sup>2</sup> I. Robinson, *Arte viva al Museo Stedelijk di Amsterdam*, «Civiltà delle Macchine», no.1, January, Rome, 1955, p.22.

<sup>3</sup> Mondrian, *L'organization de l'espace*, catalogue, Galerie Denise René, Paris, 1957.

<sup>4</sup> M. Seuphor, *Mondrian. Pitture*, Mondadori, Milano, 1958; M. Seuphor, *Mondrian. La vita e le opere*, Il saggiatore, Milano, 1960.

<sup>5</sup> O. Morisani, *L'astrattismo di Piet Mondrian*, Neri Pozza Editore, Venezia, 1956. The essay has a large appendix, which included Mondrian's writings.

<sup>6</sup> T. Maldonado (edited by), *Tecnica e cultura. Il dibattito tedesco fra Bismark e Weimar*, Feltrinelli, Milan, 1979.

become new points of reference. That renewed cultural positivism culminated in the International Exhibition of Bruxelles in 1958.

The Neoplasticism and Expo' were first fundamental episodes of mutual cultural exchange between Italy and Yugoslavia, for artists and intellectuals born in previous twenty years. In the 1956 Venice Biennial, the young Croatian art historian, Vera Horvat-Pintarić<sup>7</sup> (1926), won the award for a short essay in a foreign language, with *Etica ed estetica dell'assoluto* (Ethic and Aesthetic of the Absolute), where she underlined the influence of the Calvinist ethics and considered it the basis of Mondrian's art and philosophy.

In addition, during the 1958 Expo', Vjenceslav Richter (1916-2004) created the Yugoslav pavilion, according to the historical Constructivism revival. Horvat-Pintarić and Richter came from Zagreb where, in that period, new instances emerged in the cultural circle of the magazine «Čovjek i Prostor», which was an ideal laboratory for the critical activity of young scholars Matko Meštrović (1933) and Radoslav Putar (1929-1994). The latter two were going to elaborate the original ideology of the international display *Nove Tendencije*, observing new artistic impulses and matching them with the technological society.

*1. The rediscovery of Mondrian, the return to Neoplasticism and the 1958 Expo's technological culture.*

In Milan, during the Thirties, there had been a painting trend derived by Mondrian, where painters as i.e. Bruno Munari, Mario Radice and Manlio Rho had adopted French models, but that had been forcibly interrupted. Only after the Second World War it began to exist again following Parisian Concrete Art abstraction thanks to the Movimento Arte Concreta (MAC) (Concrete Art Movement). However there was a lack of some specific critical thoughts regarding the Neoplasticism painting, which had the first success only after the 1956 Biennial of Venice (figs. 2 – 5). The retrospective of Mondrian was interpreted by many scholars such as a compensation for the Italian art which had been deprived from its modernity – identified with Neoplasticism – because of Fascist twenty years<sup>8</sup>.

Giulio Carlo Argan<sup>9</sup> explained that the Mondrian's heritage was the change inside the painting, where the eye is the responsible for perception, from the world representation to the pianification of visual experience. Equally the architecture changed from one “made of facades”

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<sup>7</sup> V. Sinobad, *S venecijanskog biennala. Izložba Mondriana*, «Vjesnik», June 10<sup>th</sup> 1956, Zagreb, p.6. In that period Pintarić signed herself like Sinobad she was assistant professor at the History of art department in University of Zagreb. See appendix p.

<sup>8</sup> *Abstracta. Austria Germania Italia 1919-1939. Die andere “entartete Kunst”. L'altra arte degenerata*, catalogue, November 9<sup>th</sup> – January 12<sup>th</sup> 1997, Museion, Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bolzano, Electa, Milan, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> G. C. Argan, *Mondrian: quantità e qualità*, «Comunità», no.42, August-September, Milan, 1956. «La grande scoperta di Mondrian è proprio questa: come l'architettura non è più un'architettura di facciate ma di piante, così può esistere una pittura che abbia valore di pianta, cioè costituisca lo schema o il principio generatore dell'esperienza visiva» pp. 66-73.

into one “made of plans”. The younger Maurizio Calvesi<sup>10</sup>, instead, moved away from the Neoplasticism architectural dimension to indicate a renewal inside the painting, through a renewed spatial sensibility. Interpretations made simpler two directions which artists and architects followed to relaborate the Neoplasticism painting and architecture. Among Italian painters, from the second half of the Fifties, leaving those whom had continued the Concrete and Informel Art, there were two examples which clarified positions of Argan and Calvesi: Piero Dorazio and Tancredi Parmeggiani.

Dorazio<sup>11</sup>, foundation member of the Form 1 group and the International Art Club - which in 1951 organised the exhibition *Concrete art in Italy* in the GNAM of Rome – knew directly Mondrian works and his heirs<sup>12</sup>. Consequently Dorazio imprisoned the free Informel gesture in a composition scheme in order to regularize the sign and to present painting becoming a *texture* inside limits of the canvas ideal space (fig. 6). He showed the process explained by Argan<sup>13</sup>, whom in 1959 for the exhibition of Dorazio in the Springer Gallery of Berlin highlighted in the canvas not only the Mondrian’s heritage but also that of Moholy Nagy. Roma artist was, as regarding science, the result of a technical process and its test, against the Informel chance.

Tancredi, instead, referred directly to models by Jackson Pollock and the American *action painting*, thanks to the collector Peggy Guggenheim when he had been in Venice, and in 1963 illustrated that his change from an Informel abstraction to a sketched and gestural figuration was in the painting of Mondrian<sup>14</sup> debt. Consequently, as Calvesi understood, through the consideration on Neoplasticism, Tancredi recuperated a new spatial scheme on the canvas (fig. 7), where he regained an ideal centre which had lost its value with Informel Art. The cases of Dorazio and Tancredi represented in the Sixties, two directions to go beyond the Informel Art manner.

In the architecture, the second field of Mondrian’s heritage, an example was Carlo Scarpa, whose poetry focused on the role of perception, as Argan described, and at the same time

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<sup>10</sup> M. Calvesi, *L'anno di Mondrian*, «Comunità», no.48, March, Milan, 1957. «Cosa ci possa essere «al di là» di Mondrian non ci interessa.[...] Né possiamo accettare il luogo comune che vede nella sua pittura null’altro che la premessa di certo linguaggio architettonico. [...]Le più intime conseguenze del linguaggio di Mondrian non vanno, forse, ricercate tanto nell’architettura, quanto proprio nella pittura, alla quale egli ha portato il lucido contributo di una ridimensionata sensibilità spaziale, che veramente è l’indispensabile premessa di ogni nuovo discorso figurativo» pp. 58-65.

<sup>11</sup> P. Dorazio, *L’art club internazionale*, in *Art Club 1945-1946. La linea astratta*, catalogue, October 24<sup>th</sup> 1998 – January 20<sup>th</sup> 1999, Galleria d’Arte Niccoli, Parma, pp.7-9

<sup>12</sup> *Piero Dorazio*, catalogue, December 7<sup>th</sup> 1983 – February 5<sup>th</sup> 1984, Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna, Roma, Electa, Milano, 1983.

<sup>13</sup> G. Carlo Argan, *Dorazio*, in *Salvezza e caduta nell’arte moderna*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 1964. «[...] Considero qualità altamente positiva della pittura di Piero Dorazio il fatto ch’essa si produca attraverso un processo tecnico-critico che rimane interamente leggibile nella superficie del quadro, come attraverso una lastra di vetro. [...] Una pittura come scienza rigorosa, dunque, e in questo senso antitetica al neoromanticismo dell’Informale di cui rappresenta l’alternativa dialettica. Ma la sua novità sta appunto nel voler essere scienza in quanto pittura, e non imitazione di tematiche e procedimenti della scienza ufficiale. [...] i precedenti storici di questa pittura sono dunque: le indagini della Gestaltpsychologie; le esperienze sulle textures o sulla spazialità integrata alla superficie, compiute specialmente da Moholy-Nagy; le ricerche pittoriche sul contenuto e la struttura della percezione, da Mondrian a Tobey» pp. 278-279.

<sup>14</sup> *Tancredi*, catalogue, Novembre 25<sup>th</sup> 1967 – January 18<sup>th</sup> 1968, Ca’ Vendramin Calergi, Venezia, Comune di Venezia/Assessorato alle Belle Arti, Artegrafica Fantoni, Venezia, 1968. «L’origine della pittura gestuale è in Mondrian (1963)»

thought about the architectural dimension of Mondrian's works. After Venice, in fact, the retrospective of the Dutch master was moved to Rome in the autumn 1956 and in the first months of 1957 to Milan.

In both presentations Scarpa worked, according to Giuseppe Mazzariol<sup>15</sup>, to create some white aseptic environments to give visitors a complete contemplation of art works. Furthermore, between a room and another, passages disposition represented orthogonal modulations, separated by moving panels recalling Constructivism (figs. 8,9). Carlo Scarpa was at the very beginning of the serious Mondrian's theory, in some ways preferring a point of view more similar to Frank Lloyd Wright, but one of them did not put aside the other and viceversa.

Actually, Neoplasticism morphology in the architecture, in the version given by Theo Van Doesburg, had been conceived by Bruno Zevi<sup>16</sup>, since 1953, as an important element to implement the following experimentations because it was able to reach a continuous renewal. His most fundamental element was the orthogonal grid<sup>17</sup> which, as Gillo Dorfles<sup>18</sup> affirmed, was a symbolic synthesis, between an antique and new conception, transmitting an absolute modernity. Actually, hieratic geometric forms by Mondrian had a certain level of indetermination which emerged through irrational surreal pulses of the Informel painting.

Consequently we recognized that Neoplasticism's theories were playing a decisive role in many paintings of the Fifties and at the same time its modernity level was used to support the most contemporary art. An example regarding relations between Neoplasticism and Informel Art, was the retrospective *De Stijl*<sup>19</sup> exhibition at the GNAM in Rome held between December 1960 and January 1961, accompanied by the monograph written by H.L. Jaffé<sup>20</sup>. Also a symposium where Giulio Carlo Argan<sup>21</sup> sustained that De Stijl movement had not invented a new language as Informel Art did, but a new visual grammar.

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<sup>15</sup> F. Dal Co, G. Mazzariol, *Carlo Scarpa*, Electa, Milano, 1984. «Fu, in quell'allestimento, rispettoso della *tabula rasa* da cui Mondrian era partito e a questo fine lasciò le opere vivere in uno spazio libero e severo che ne accresceva la rigorosa imponenza» p.205.

<sup>16</sup> B. Zevi, *Poetica dell'architettura neoplasticista*, Libreria Editrice Politecnica Tamburini, Milano, 1953. «V'è poi un'altra considerazione che induce a studiare il neoplasticismo: è una poetica non ancora esaurita, anzi continuamente riaffiorante nelle esperienze architettoniche contemporanee.[...] Benché io non ritenga che il neoplasticismo, come tutti i derivati del cubismo, sia oggi integralmente attuale, va riconosciuto che la sua influenza è ancor viva e positivamente operante» p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> P. Mondrian, *Il Neoplasticismo*, Ascondita, Milano, 2008. «[...] Benché nella plastica architettonica si manifesti una forma, essa non è definita e delimitata: più della composizione dei piani rettangolari a colori del neoplasticismo in pittura. La forma reale è chiusa, o tonda, o curva, in contrapposizione alla forma apparente del rettangolo, in cui le linee si intersecano, si toccano, ma non per questo si interrompono» pp. 20,21.

<sup>18</sup> G. Dorfles, *Il divenire delle arti*, Einaudi, Torino, 1959. «[...] è evidente che la volontà di Mondrian – e quella di buona parte del gruppo De Stijl – di giungere ad un'arte che fosse ormai la sintesi delle tre arti visuali, e s'identificasse con una superiore architettura. [...] I nostri tempi, invece, hanno dato una smentita all'ideale razionale e lucido di De Stijl[...]. Tuttavia l'importanza storica di De Stijl è una cosa, l'importanza artistica di Mondrian è un'altra:[...]. Ogni dipinto, ogni frammento d'un suo dipinto porta con sé quel tanto d'indeterminato, d'irrazionale, di "fatto a mano" di artigianale, di non meccanicistico, che basta a redimerlo» pp. 115-117.

<sup>19</sup> B. Zevi, *Exposition du 'De Stijl' à Rome*, «Aujourd'hui. Art et architecture», no.29, December, Paris, 1960, p.3.

<sup>20</sup> H.L.C. Jaffé, *L'arte olandese il gruppo 'de stijl'*, Roma, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione/J.M. Meulenhoff, Amsterdam, 1960.

<sup>21</sup> *Les lundis de l'architecture « actualité ou non actualité du mouvement 'De Stijl' et de l'architecture de Frank Lloyd Wright*, editorial, «Aujourd'hui. Art et architecture», no.30, January, Paris, 1961. «'De Stijl', a observé le professeur Argan, vit d'un instant d'illumination, d'une tension dialectique entre la contingence et la transcendance ; il réduit l'art au concret des fait visibles, l'exprimant en termes d'une laïcité absolue, et suspendant le jugement de tout

A second example, derived from the first regarded the grammar and its implementation to promote the *Cultura Italiana d'oggi*<sup>22</sup> exhibition (Today Italian Culture), which was held in Copenhagen, at the Louisiana Museum, from March to April 1961, where Italian painting, sculpture and design were presented by a manifesto wearing a Neoplasticism “style” (fig. 10). That last incidence showed a distortion to which the Dutch movement was submitted especially in Italian studies. Here the element of team work to define a modern style was isolated from De Stijl unitarian theories which recently has been denied by Carel Blotkamp<sup>23</sup>.

The team work aspect, existing previously in historical vanguards, became again preponderant in the scientific research field. The reasoning about Neoplasticism went on together with the issue of the relationship between art and technique, elaborated in the European cultural debate, and German debate in particular, in the previous fifty years<sup>24</sup>. An example of the scientific discoveries divulgation, from atomic energy to the cybernetic theory, was the publication of the *L'ère atomique* in 1957 which was translated into Italian by the title *Enciclopedia della Civiltà Atomica* (Encyclopedia of the Atomic Culture) in 1959. The editor of the work consisting in ten volumes, was the philosopher and scientist Abraham André Moles, which was also the author of first studies in Europe about the Theory of Information applied on aesthetics, entitled *Theorie de l'information et perception esthetique*<sup>25</sup>.

Giulio Carlo Argan<sup>26</sup> was asked to illustrate the “atomic culture” aesthetics, whom described modern art as if it was regulated by experience data and by the space-time continuity. Architecture developed from a single houseplant together with the city plant, becoming urban demonstrating that a single life continued in a group life. Various forms of art were connecting with science and they were divided in ‘pure perception’ and ‘informel’, illustrated by works by Gabo, Pevsner e Bill, Munari, Pollock. Among them the industrial design and the rationalist architecture were respectively represented through Necchi sewing machine, designed by Marcello Nizzoli, and through Walter Gropius’s Bauhaus and the Luigi Nervi’s Sport Centre

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type de métaphysique. 'De Stijl' n'invente donc pas nouveau langage, il a inventé une nouvelle grammaire; aujourd'hui l'art informel recherche, au contraire, des valeurs concrètes sous la surface trompeuse des mots. 'De Stijl' n'a pas exprimé le nouveau structuralisme, mais seulement une exigence de structure; les peintres actuels expriment au contraire un pessimisme éthique qui n'est partagé, hélas, par aucun des principaux architectes contemporaines» p.3.

<sup>22</sup> *La mostra Cultura italiana d'oggi in Scandinavia*, editorial, «La Biennale di Venezia», no. 41, October-December, 1960, Venice, p.52.

<sup>23</sup> C. Botkamp, *De Stijl. Nascita di un movimento*, Electa, Milano, 1999. «[...] è un luogo comune, in quanto un collettivo di artisti così inteso, De Stijl non lo è mai stato, almeno non nel modo in cui lo furono altri movimenti di avanguardia della prima metà di questo secolo[...]. Nel periodo in cui la rivista era una realtà, non fu mai tenuta un'esposizione o una mostra alla quale partecipassero tutti i collaboratori, né alcuna riunione a cui intervenissero contemporaneamente più di tre o quattro di essi; neppure agli inizi, quando invece avrebbero potuto esserci dei motivi per discutere le modalità di collaborazione e fissare i principi in base ai quali creare e proiettare la propria immagine verso l'esterno. [...] L'immagine esistente di un De Stijl inteso come collettivo con un programma artistico ben definito, ancor più rigoroso di quello di altri movimenti di avanguardia, esige chiaramente una qualche rettifica», pp.9-11.

<sup>24</sup> T. Maldonado (edited by), op.cit., 1979.

<sup>25</sup> A.A. Moles, *Theorie de l'information et perception esthetique*, Flammarion, Paris, 1958.

<sup>26</sup> G.C. Argan, *Uno spazio continuo e dinamico*, in *Enciclopedia della civiltà atomica*, vol. VI, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 1957-59, pp.94-112.

(figs. 11-13). Argan's global message was that art as well as physics and modern logic did not participate to the technological society with its forms but with its signs.

That cultural atmosphere gained the most international relevance during the International Exhibition in Bruxelles in 1958, which was dedicated to science and technique wonders carrying some new values in a technological society. The most succeeded example of fusion between artistic and scientific researches was to be found in the Philips pavillion, commissioned by the homonymous electronics company, planned by Le Corbusier accompanied with the Concrete music by Edgar Varese and fluctuating projected images onto the structure internal space. The pavillion was important because it mixed together visual arts and electronic machines, which contributed to offer spectators a tactile visual and sound experience<sup>27</sup> (figs. 14,15).

1958 Expo gathered a wide publicity on divulgative press and on the specialistic one. According to Bruno Zevi<sup>28</sup>, the Italian pavillion was less spectacular than the one by Le Corbusier, but it presented a sober architecture thanks to efforts made by Lodovico Belgiojoso, Ignazio Gardella, Enrico Peressutti and Ernest N. Rogers, in contradiction with the giants made of steel and glass were built for other nations. A side of pavillion was occupied by Olivetti type machines, displayed upon pedestals like sculptures to symbolise the best industrial Italian design. As a consequence they gave the industrial product an independent artistic dignity and at the same time they invited the spectator to feel a tactile experience regulated through their function<sup>29</sup> (figs. 18,19).

As Argan had just suggested, a possibile artistic renewal could be transported by an industrial design, not only conceived at a formal level but at a deeper level to make the artist again an active force in the society, after many years of romantic isolation transmitted through Informel Art poetics. Aspects bound to Mondrian and Neoplasticism revival, of the relationship between art and science and the importance of art social function resulted to be driven to the 1958 Expo' in Bruxelles.

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<sup>27</sup> R. Devos, M. De Kooning, *L'architecture moderne à l'Expo 58*, Fonds Mercator et Dexia Banque, Bruxelles 2006, pp.318-335.

<sup>28</sup> B. Zevi, *Des dieux faits d'hommes*, «L'Espresso» 1958, in *Cronache d'Architettura*, vol. III, Laterza, Bari, 1971. «[...]Tutte le tecniche audiovisive, dal brano documentario al mero surrealismo vengono usate e mischiate senza riguardo per stordire in 480 secondi ventimila spettatori[...]. Piegata a questo fine, l'architettura perde i suoi connotati: lo spazio formato dai paraboloidi iperbolici, nell'ossessione dei colori e dei suoni, sconfigge la sua entità, diviene un contenente per il cinerama, incomprensibile al di fuori dello spettacolo» pp. 318-335; B. Zevi, *Italiani col cannocchiale alla rovescia*, «L'Espresso» 1958, in *Cronache di architettura*, op. cit., 1971, pp. 75-77.

<sup>29</sup> Adriano Olivetti Foundation archive, Ivrea, Documentary Units 1950 - 1960. Various Folders. Brochure for the Exposition Universelle et Internationale de Bruxelles, 1958. «The theme of Bruxelles 1958. Balance sheet for a more Uman World. Commissariat General of the Government. Bruxelles 1958 Universal and International Exhibition. [...] Nobody can deny that our age is dominated by scientific and technical progress in many countries "spiritual authority" has given place to scientific authority and its technical applications. [...] We shall find that deep disturbances in social, geopolitical and psychological spheres have followed an accelerated scientific evolution.[...] There can be only one solution, for each day brings increasing evidence in support of it – that of reconsidering the Modern World. in terms of man, the essential factor of race, civilisation and genius. [...] It therefore follows that it would be futile to display the most efficient of machine tools, the most outstanding mechanical brain or the perfect nuclear reactor unless at the same time attention is drawn to the human considerations concerned in the invention od production of the item or th the repercussions which the item has had on the daily life of man» pp.6-13.

In Italy nevertheless the real economic cultural challenge of the modernity was played between Ivrea and Milan<sup>30</sup>. In Ivrea thanks to the industrial activity by Adriano Olivetti, whom aimed to unify every single aspect of scientific and humanistic technical productions, a Centre of Studies was created and welcomed many intellectuals such as Paolo Volponi, Giorgio Soavi, Ottiero Ottieri<sup>31</sup>, and artists and designers such as Marcello Nizzoli, Bruno Munari and Enzo Mari. A modernity which Adriano Olivetti by himself tried to realize at the national level when, after becoming a politician, he desired to conciliate the American pragmatism with the Yugoslavian factory socialism, improvements of technique with care about the human psychology in order to improve the worker's life.

In addition, in Milan neighbourhood, Olivetti built one of the first experimental centres to conduct some researches on electronic computers. A considerable relevance was obtained through researches about the Information and Gestalt psychology by Cesare Musatti.

Milan, consequently, was the second important place where industrial and cultural activities had their headquarters and an ideal meeting place in which the changed Milan Triennial, during the Fifties, stimulated large debates among artists, designers and architects. In the 1951 and 1954 Triennials, discussed topics were considering the role of the artist in the industrial society.

Artists such as Lucio Fontana and Max Bill participated to meetings. Fontana represented the Spatialist Movement where it was thought according to futuristic clauses the electronic technical contribution among visual arts. Some direct examples were the neon ceiling which Fontana created for the 1951 Triennial (fig. 20) and the 1952 *VI Spatialist Manifesto*, where the new art form was still connected to an Informel Art morphology. It based its own values upon the 'colour', 'movement', 'time' e 'space' categories<sup>32</sup>. On the other side, Max Bill, played a central role in the 1954 Triennale, dedicated to the first Industrial Design International Congress, in which participated Giulio Carlo Argan, Luciano Anceschi, Tomas Maldonado and Konrad Wachsmann. Each interlocutor agreed that Mondrian, De Stijl and Bauhaus were the basis of the modern European society<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> G. Soavi, *Adriano Olivetti. Una sorpresa italiana*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2001. A similar displaying of typemachines was just experimented in New York at the Olivetti shop opened in 1954 on the 5th Avenue. Giorgio Soavi remembers that they displayed the typemachine on a pedestal, like a sculpture, to show the machine to people walking by outside the shop. « [...] I passanti potevano scrivere una lettera, e poi sfilare il foglio sul quale avevano scritto e andarsene per i fatti loro» p. 102.

<sup>31</sup> P. Bricco, *Olivetti prima e dopo Adriano. Industrie cultura estetica*, L'ancora del Mediterraneo, Napoli, 2005; M. Tafuri, *Aufklärung I. Adriano Olivetti e la communitas dell'intelletto*, in *Storia dell'architettura italiana 1944-1985*, Einaudi, Torino, 1986, pp.47-63; A. Manca, T. Mariani, *Un «mecenate» e i suoi intellettuali*, in *Un'azienda e un'utopia. Adriano Olivetti 1945-1960*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2001, pp.231-246.

<sup>32</sup> G. Giani, *Spazialismo. Origini e sviluppi di una tendenza artistica*, Conchiglia, Milano, 1956. The first editing of this manifesto was in 1951 during the Milan Triennial «[...] Conquistato il tempo, la necessità del movimento si manifesta pienamente. [...] L'esistenza, la natura, la materia sono una perfetta unità e si sviluppano nel tempo e nello spazio. Il movimento, la proprietà di evoluzione e di sviluppo è la condizione base della materia; questa esiste ormai in movimento e non in altra forma, il suo sviluppo è eterno, il colore ed il suono sono i fenomeni attraverso il cui sviluppo simultaneo s'integra la nuova arte.[...] si va formando una nuova estetica, forme luminose attraverso gli spazi. Movimento, colore, tempo, e spazio i concetti della nuova arte».

<sup>33</sup> L. Molinari (edited by), *La memoria e il futuro*, Skirà, Ginevra-Milano, 2001. «[...] 1) la funzione dell'artista non è di esprimere se stesso, ma di creare degli oggetti armoniosi al servizio dell'uomo; 2) l'artista in quanto responsabile della cultura umana deve occuparsi dei problemi della produzione in serie; 3) la base della produzione è di



According to Argan, the artist became a designer would find a solution for the conflict between the capital and work, through the team work. Max Bill disagreed and participated as the director of the Hochschule für Gestaltung of Ulm<sup>34</sup> – a reborn Bauhaus – and considered important to avoid anonymity to hold firmly the artist role, even if he was inserted in the industrial production. Two points of view would be discussed in the following years until the *aut aut* was substituted for identifying the artist with the designer.

In the relationship between art and design, a leading role was played by MAC which from 1948 to 1958 tried to perform the art synthesis. Two artists whom represented best results were Bruno Munari and Enzo Mari. Bruno Munari in his works and writings<sup>35</sup> mixed together the juvenile participation to Italian Futurism, the MAC Concretiste research and the work as designer<sup>36</sup>. His ludic projects, as unuseful machines, in the Fifties accompanied with a severe geometrical abstraction and extreme graphical linearity technique painting. In 1960 Munari<sup>37</sup>, in Milan, published *Il Quadrato*: a visual atlas dedicated to the square form, such as a constant element in every human handwork, privileging at the artistic level the Neoplasticism works. The illustrations– some of ones were taken away from the *Enciclopedia della civiltà atomica* – reproduced also works by Josef Albers, Max Bill and studies about composition of modular elements from Bauhaus course.

Among images, especially one was inserting itself in the debate between art and technology. It reproduced an electronic memory CPU, whose semiconductors circuits texture, made functional to the electric transmission, highlighted the new aesthetics flavor derived from first electronic computers and which started to appear in the panorama of visual artists (figs. 21,22).

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raggiungere l'unità delle funzioni, comprese le funzioni estetiche di un oggetto; 4) lo scopo di ogni produzione deve essere di soddisfare i bisogni e le aspirazioni dell'uomo» p. 66.

<sup>34</sup> P.C. Santini, *La scuola di Ulm: organizzazione metodi di lavoro*, «Comunità», no.72, August, Milano, 1959. «Si distinguono innanzitutto quattro sezioni: Industrial Design, Industrializzazione edilizia, Comunicazione visuale, Informazione. A tali specializzazioni si accede propriamente al secondo anno, essendo il primo occupato dal Corso fondamentale. Il quale ha il compito di: a) preparare gli studenti al lavoro delle sezioni, particolarmente per ciò che riguarda i metodi di lavoro; b) rendere familiare agli studenti i principali problemi della nostra civiltà tecnica, e con ciò stesso orientarli verso i compiti concreti della creazione; c) sviluppare la collaborazione fra le diverse discipline e l'attitudine al lavoro di gruppo; [...]. Questo programma si attua attraverso i seguenti insegnamenti teorici e pratici: Metodologia visuale che comporta esperienze e ricerche sugli spazi a due e tre dimensioni. Esperienze e ricerche che si fondano sulla teoria della percezione, della simmetria e della topologia. Esperienze di laboratorio compiute su legno, metallo, gesso e nel campo fotografico. [...] Sociologia: trasformazione delle strutture sociali dalla rivoluzione industriale in poi. Teoria della percezione, con l'esame e la trattazione dei principali problemi della percezione visuale.[...]» pp.48-60.

<sup>35</sup> T. Sauvage, *Pittura italiana del dopoguerra*, Schwarz editore, Milano, 1957. On December 1952, Munari wrote the *Manifesto del macchinismo* for his solo exhibition personale at the Galleria dell'Annunciata. In a paragraph, Munari told about art by the Futurist manner. «Il mondo, oggi, è delle macchine» Also, artists were able to preserve the humanity from risks of the machine power. To help the world, artists had to interest by themselves in machines, to give romantic paintbrushes, palettes, canvas and stretchers up; they had to know the mechanic anatomy to understand the nature in itself of machines, building artworks by machines. The new techniques had to use plastic matters, synthetic rubbers and resins. He strongly says «la macchina deve diventare un'opera d'arte!» from *Manifesto del Macchinismo* p. 241.

<sup>36</sup> P. Fossati, *Il Movimento Arte Concreta 1948-1958. Materiali e documenti*, Martano Editore, Torino, 1980.

<sup>37</sup> B. Munari, *Il Quadrato*, ed. Scheiwiller, Milano, 1960. «[...] con le sue possibilità strutturali ha aiutato artisti e architetti di ogni epoca e di ogni stile a dare uno scheletro armonico ove fissare l, la costruzione artistica. [...] è statico se poggia su di un lato, è dinamico se poggia su di uno spigolo» p.5; *Munari alla scoperta del quadrato*, editorial, «Domus», no.369, August, 1960, Milan, pp. 41-44.

The painter and designer Enzo Mari, younger than Munari, in 1958 thanks to MAC held his first personal in the Helicopter room in Milan. Mari interested in researches about distorted plain geometric figures and their three-dimensional development until the architectural scale level. Researches aimed not only to deceive our human eye but to enter its perceptive tactile dynamic space. As Munari thought, he felt as an artist and designer at the same time, as demonstrated by his industrial object production for the Milan company Bruno Danese<sup>38</sup>.

That was also a gallery at an international level, which in February 1960 held the *Opere d'Arte Animate e Moltiplicate* (Multiply and Animated Works of Art) exhibition, where multiplied objects seemed to derive from a fusion between visual arts and design. The exhibitors Pol Bury, Jean Tinguely, Diter Rot, Victor Vasarely, Bruno Munari and Enzo Mari brought mobile works, built by means of industrial materials such as plastic, paper, electrical small engines and metals (figs. 23,24). Among the peculiarities there was the fact that they were matching with each other, in open or closed forms (Munari), they had manual or mechanical movement (Vasarely, Tinguely, Bury, Rot) they played with the probabilities calculation (Mari).

Regarding the field of industrial design we can say it was submitted to the industrial object serial logic. Vasarely<sup>39</sup> in *Notes pour un manifeste* in 1955, had just asserted the art myth end of the unique art work in order to facilitate standard objects which are always perfectible and their standard production had had to meet economic reasons and simple construction. The exhibition occurred in a critic passage in which the unique and unrepeatable existential act of gestural painting was replaced by the artistic planning and object produced in series.

§ *The artistic research in Milan around 1960. Legacy of the Informel Art and his overcoming by the Miriorama generation.*

The need to consider in an objective way the artistic performance and the work was contrasting the arbitrary of the Informel Art painting, which nevertheless began to experience a historical morphological codification. An example was the essay *Morfologie autre* by Michel Tapié<sup>40</sup>, published by the Turin Experimental aesthetics Centre in December 1960<sup>41</sup>. Tapié singled out that in the “art autre” - such he defined it since 1951- repeated constant elements

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<sup>38</sup> *Vasi di ferro*, editorial, «Domus», no.358, September, Milan, 1959, pp. 31-34.

<sup>39</sup> V. Vasarely, *Notes pour un manifeste*, in I. Mussa, *op.cit.*, 1976, p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> M. Tapié, *Morfologie autre*, International Center of Aesthetic Research, Torino, Fratelli Pozzo Editore, 1960. This book, such as a lot of other ones, among catalogues and magazines edited between the Fifties and Sixties, was in the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti Library of Zagreb. The collection showed as aheads and art historians of the Gallery brought up to date on contemporary art matters. Nowadays the library is a department within the Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti (MSU).

<sup>41</sup> Experimental aesthetics Centre in Turin was found by Michel Tapié and the architect Luigi Moretti on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1960 and closed in 1987. Cf. L.M. Barbero, *Torino Sperimentale 1959/1969*, Umberto Allemandi &C., Torino, 2010.

which regarded continuity and the limit between real and ideal painting space, or inside the surfaces between repetition and the rhythm of signs bundling.

That morphological analysis, however, considered only the two-dimension canvas, while an other critic, Guy Habasque<sup>42</sup>, just in 1959 in *Au delà de l'informale*, had distinguished the overcoming of Informel Art by the three-dimension work. Borders between a lyrical abstraction and a constructive one had become vague because in the painting of Piero Dorazio as well as in the constructivism of Nicholas Schöffer (figs. 25,26) and Victor Vasarely there was the painting space acentricity of Pollock<sup>43</sup> and indirectly of Mondrian. There were common elements such as the light research, the virtual or mechanical movement and the space-color dynamism.

Schöffer and Vasarely could reach an architectural function: the viewer's real space was integrated inside the work by lights, sounds and perceptive distortions. The three dimension was following also the monochrome which could fill in a surface or an object. The relationship between second and third dimension, which monochrome made ambiguous, in the Italian situation, according to Emilio Villa<sup>44</sup> on September 1960, was shown in the young artist such as Franco Angeli, Francesco Lo Savio, Mario Schifano and Giuseppe Uncini - regarding the Roma area - and Piero Manzoni and Enrico Castellani - for the Milan area.

In Rome the origin of young painters came from Dorazio and Forma 1, while in Milan the situation was more divided. There was MAC and on the other hand Nuclearist and Spatialist researches. Spatialism and MAC relied on scientific progress instead the nuclearist movement felt a deep distrust in the technology. Among new representants of Nuclearism, in 1957 Manzoni signed the manifesto *Contro lo stile* (Against the style), with Enrico Baj, Sergio Dangelo, Yves Klein and Pierre Restany, where underlined the monochrome importance which could bury De Stijl, conceives as a unitarian style and still discussed due to fashion<sup>45</sup>.

In addition, in September 1959, a last Nuclearist event was the manifesto *Arte interplanetaria*<sup>46</sup>, signed also by Giovanni Anceschi. In the manifesto it was going on a debate with the Milan Concrete Art school and the Informel Art as a New-naturalism, supported by Francesco Arcangeli<sup>47</sup>. Nevertheless, the metaphors were borrowed directly from science -

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<sup>42</sup> G. Habasque, *Au-delà de l'informale*, «L'Oeil», no.59, November, Losanne, 1959, pp. 62-75.

<sup>43</sup> G. Dorflès, op. cit., 1959; G. Dorflès, *Le avanguardie artistiche*, «Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1959», Bompiani, Milano, 1958, pp. 276-285.

<sup>44</sup> E. Villa, *Jeunes artistes italiennes*, «Aujourd'hui Art et Architecture», no.28, September, Paris, 1960, pp.40-41. «Ce sont là des exemples nouveaux d'œuvres qui peuvent être rapprochées et considérées come de précieux témoignages d'une révolte des jeunes d'Italie contre le vice prédominant des œuvres picturales teintées de pléthoriques magmas symboliques, de plasmas chaotiques, de neurasthénies sophistiquées et emphatiques, de convictions existentielles» p.40.

<sup>45</sup> G. Celant ( edited by), *L'inferno dell'arte italiana. Materiali 1946-1964*, Costa&Noland, Genova, 1990. From *Contro lo stile*: «[...] De Stijl è morto e sepolto ed è al suo contrario – l'antistile – che spetta ora di abbattere le ultime barriere della convenzione [...]noi nucleari denunciemo oggi l'ultima delle convenzioni – lo stile. Noi ammettiamo come ultime possibili forme di stilizzazione le proposizioni monocrome di Yves Klein (1956-1957): dopo di ciò non resta che la tabula rasa o i rotoli di tappezzeria di Capogrossi. [...]Noi affermiamo l'irripetibilità dell'opera d'arte: e che l'essenza della stessa si ponga come 'presenza modificante' [...]» pp. 215-216.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. *Arte Interplanetaria. Dal pianeta terra, gennaio 1959*, p. 257.

<sup>47</sup> F. Arcangeli, *Gli ultimi naturalisti*, «Paragone», no. 59, November, Florence, 1954. «[...] La visione naturale non è più, ora, una sensazione da adeguare nell'opera [...], ma è un'impressione che subito l'emozione stravinca. Natura è la

gravity force, sodium vapors and lithium crystals - to oppose themselves to the painting made by drained brushes squeezed directly on the canvas. Everything showed a profound distrust in art and in the technique which in Piero Manzoni and Giovanni Anceschi did not maintain the existentialists tones by Baj o Dangelo, but it assumed some marked Dadaist undertones.

In the history of the Twenties vanguards, De Stijl and Dada were not opposed phenomena, but the De Stijl took from Dada a social renovation instance, while the Dadaists read the constructivist works to oppose themselves against 'easel art'<sup>48</sup>. A great difference, considering their predecessors, was that Manzoni and Anceschi mix together both points of view in their works. The Azimut Gallery, which Manzoni founded together with Castellani –and with the brief collaboration of Agostino Bonalumi -, represented an essential laboratory, actually, for new researches of the period.

Giovanni Anceschi, in the autumn 1959, with Gianni Colombo (1937-1993), Gabriele Devecchi and Davide Boriani, at the gallery Pater in Milan, formed a group called "T" for "Time"<sup>49</sup>. The name connected to the introduction of a kinetic factor, in their works, which materialize the observing time. In Informel Art, for example, the gesture represented time, but that was finished in the creation act, while T Group built mobile works, working manually or mechanically, which presented time not as a conscience datum, but as a crucial element for the experience happening.

On January 15<sup>th</sup> held the first exposition *Miriorama*<sup>50</sup> where T Group exposed several works, introducing a second Dadaist or Surrealist element: the collective signature which recalled surreal games which in the past were aimed at the work spersonality by psychic automatism. The last factor which was also considered by Informel Art painters. The difference between the latter and the former consisted in substituting psychic automatism – which remained inside human nature borders - with the machine automatism, which, implied a work dishumanition because it was artificial.

An example was the *Grande oggetto pneumatico* (Great pneumatic object) made by politene tubes where an electric pump injected compressed air at regular intervals. The plastic transparent material and the mechanical movement, accompanied by variations of volume of tubes in the space of the observator, summed up with the industrial production materials. It was reproducible in series. In continuity with Nuclearists, according to Tristan Sauvage, T Group wrote a manifesto for the occasion which outlined their art theory – time and space gathered together and

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cosa immensa che non vi dà tregua, perché la sentite vivere tremando fuori, entro di voi: strato profondo di passione e di sensi, felicità, tormento» p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> D. Riout, *L'arte del ventesimo secolo. Protagonisti, temi, correnti*, Einaudi, Turin, 2000, pp. 46-158.

<sup>49</sup> L. Meloni, op. cit., 2004.

<sup>50</sup> *Miriorama*, catalogue, January 15 - 17<sup>th</sup> 1960, Galleria Pater, Milano, 1960. The first T Group's manifest said: «Ogni aspetto della realtà, colore, forma, luce, spazi geometrici e tempo astronomico, è l'aspetto diverso dello SPAZIO-TEMPO o meglio: modi diversi di percepire il relazionarsi fra SPAZIO e TEMPO. [...]noi ravvisiamo nelle arti una tendenza ad esprimere la realtà nei suoi termini di divenire.[...]con questo noi non rifiutiamo la validità di mezzi quali colore, forma, luce, ecc., ma li ridimensioniamo immettendoli nell'opera nella situazione vera in cui li riconosciamo nella realtà, cioè in continua variazione che è l'effetto del loro relazionarsi reciproco». The others *Miriorama* happened from 1960 to 1962; often they were solo exhibitions and a few of them were collectives.

works made by industrial materials – and paid tribute to «Baj, Fontana, Manzoni, Munari and Tinguely».

Every one of artists had contributed indirectly or directly to the research of young people in Milan. For example, Tinguely and Manzoni, especially had faced the pneumatic object theme also. Tinguely<sup>51</sup> presented in 1959 at the *Première Biennale de Paris. Manifestation Biennale et internationale des jeunes artistes* (First Biennial of young artists of Paris) the *Meta-matics n.17*: a machine endowed with a convulse movement where a ball was inflated until it exploded, while it was creating on paper or canvas by Informel way some paintings (fig. 29).

Tinguely denounced the empty Informel Art academy and at the same time his machines – mindful of his *Homages to Malevitch* built in 1955 - gave a pattern to the time using the movement and unfortunately destined to their autodestruction.

Manzoni, instead, built between 1959 and 1960 the *Corpi d'Aria* (Air Body) – derived from the Dadaist joke of his contemporary *Fiato d'artista* (Artist's breath) – otherwise called *sculture pneumatiche*<sup>52</sup> (pneumatic sculptures) and exhibited on January 4<sup>th</sup> 1960 in *La nuova concezione artistica* (The New artistic conception). *Corpi d'aria* were some balls inflated resting on a base which was firing jets of compressed air, in order to make the balls could fly and swing in the air.

The *Grande oggetto pneumatico*, *Meta-matics n.17* and *Corpi d'aria*, possessed an environmental dimension which, nevertheless, had been just experimented by Gutaj Group<sup>53</sup> – shown in Turin in 1959<sup>54</sup>. The work by Akira Kanayama in 1955, *Ballon*, occupied the room volume through the unstable presence of the gigantic sphere (fig. 31). Besides the extraordinary chronological proximity, all these works had in common the idea of a spectator's space invaded by movements of machine and air bodies.

To transform the spectator from passive to active, was another aim which accumulated works which members of T Group exhibited singularly in the next *Mirrorama*. At the end of January, in *Mirrorama 2*, Boriani showed the *Superfici magnetiche* (Magnetic Surfaces), where a magnetized rotor, placed under a monochrome background, moved some iron filings (fig. 32). Thus fulfilled the random configurations - not dissimilar from experiments on magnetism (fig. 33) - and visually debtors to Informel painting, without any preordered intervention.

In *Mirrorama 3*, between January and February, Devecchi exhibited the *Scultura calciabile* (Sculpture by kicking), formed by rectangular foam and operated by spectator's kicks (fig. 34);

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<sup>51</sup> *Machines de Tinguely*, catalogue, May 15<sup>th</sup> – July 5<sup>th</sup> 1971, Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, 1971.

<sup>52</sup> *Piero Manzoni*, catalogue, February 6<sup>th</sup> – March 7<sup>th</sup> 1971, GNAM, Roma, 1971. «Nel 1959 ho preparato una serie di 45 “corpi d'aria” (sculture pneumatiche) [...] Nello stesso periodo ho progettato un gruppo di corpi d'aria (sempre sferici) del diametro di m 2,50 [...] Basandomi sullo stesso principio ho anche proposto per un'architettura, un soffitto ed una parete pneumatico-pulsante. Ancora per un parco avevo pensato avevo pensato ad un boschetto di cilindri pneumatici allungati come steli, che avrebbero vibrato sotto la spinta del vento. Manzoni, 1962» p.124.

<sup>53</sup> B. Altshuler, *Salon to Biennial – Exhibitions That Made Art History, Volume I: 1863-1959*, Phaidon Press, New York, 2008, pp. 339-352.

<sup>54</sup> L.M. Barbero, op. cit., 2010, p. 5-6.

in a similar way, in *Miriorama 4*, the foam was used by Gianni Colombo<sup>55</sup> for the *Superficie Pulsante* (Beating Surface), where small modular orthogonal units, were activated by a hidden ropes system due to the spectator intervention (fig. 35).

Another work by Colombo was *Spazio in divenire* (fig. 36) (Becoming Space) where pulling some ropes someone could create several depressions on the surface causing a perceptive ambiguity between second and third dimension. Debtor to “holes” by Fontana and to elastic surfaces by Pol Bury (figs. 37,38). At the end, for *Miriorama 5*, Giovanni Anceschi presented the *Tavola di possibilità liquide* (Liquid possibilities table), close to the work by Mari of 1959, which instead of geometric shapes, contained some colored liquid. That was moving on the surfaces of plexiglas forming some casual configurations according to hydrodynamic simple laws (fig. 39).

Considering again the first exposition *Miriorama*, it included also a didactical section where precursors of T Group were identified with futurists. The success of the Italian Futurism<sup>56</sup>, between 1958 and 1960 experienced an important episode of critic review and public divulgation<sup>57</sup>. To the first one contributed the publication *Archivi del Futurismo* (Futurism archives), and to the second one the Venice Biennial of 1960<sup>58</sup>. Guido Ballo pointed out the continuity factor between Futurism and contemporary art in the declaration by Boccioni:

«We'll put the viewer in the middle of the painting»<sup>59</sup>.

And Pierre Francastel<sup>60</sup>, finally, linked the myth of Futurist machinery with the new technological dimension of the atomic culture. The rediscovered modernity of Futurism was

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<sup>55</sup> *Miriorama 4*, Gianni Colombo, catalogue, February 9 – 18<sup>th</sup> 1960, Galleria Pater, Milano, 1960. «Da tempo ho cominciato a stabilire su piano del 'quadro-oggetto' dei dislivelli, in modo che l'occhio dello spettatore, scorrendo sulla superficie, fosse costretto a salire e scendere da spessori, ad entrare e uscire da cavità indagando gli aspetti che la luce in naturale variazione determinava nel quadro. Solo nei quadri che ora espongo un autentico variare si attua contemporaneamente a quello dell'occhio (e dell'umore) dell'osservatore»

<sup>56</sup> ASAC Archive, Venice. Historical Found. Visual Art series. Unit 91. Mostra storica XXX 1960 Il Futurismo (1959-60); Typewritten text by C.L. Raghianti on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1959, Florence. See appendix.

<sup>57</sup> G. Mazzariol, *La via dei futuristi italiani*, «La Biennale di Venezia», nos. 36-37, July – December, Venice, 1959. «[...]La mostra romana di quest'anno e la pubblicazione, nel 1958, del primo volume degli Archivi del Futurismo, rappresentano senza alcun dubbio, a tutt'oggi, il più sincero e impegnato avviamento alla revisione critica di quella stagione artistica.[...] Con ciò non si intende, sen'altro, di sottoscrivere i punti di vista generali e particolari di quella impostazione critica, ma di condividere, di preferenza, l'istanza fondamentale, per lungo tempo inavvertita, di revisione di un momento storico, che le polemiche, le esaltazioni, il discredito, le congiunture etico-politiche avevano posto nell'equivoca controluce di una complessa, e senz'altro deterioro, situazione di costume» p. 11.

<sup>58</sup> *XXX Biennale Internazionale d'Arte di Venezia*, catalogue, June- October, Girardini di Castello, Ente La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 1960, p. LXVII.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. «il Futurismo appare ormai senza equivoci come una delle avanguardie fondamentali nello sviluppo della cultura artistica del nostro tempo. [...] da questa premessa boccioniana, i motivi fondamentali diventano l'ambientazione dinamica, con un'azione che tende a coinvolgere lo spettatore, per renderlo partecipe; e quindi la vita moderna è sentita come il simbolo principale, nel contrasto e nei richiami di linee-forza, dinamismo simultaneo come sensazione, compenetrazione dei piani, complementarsimo dinamico, stati d'animo plastici» p.6.

<sup>60</sup> P. Francastel, *Il Futurismo e il suo tempo*, edizioni Ente autonomo La Biennale di Venezia, May 1960, Venice. «[...]Senza paradosso, gli uomini dell'atomo assumono nei riguardi della natura e della società un atteggiamento di cui i Marinetti e i San'Elia sono stati tra i primi iniziatori. [...]Non c'è oggi un'arte futurista che ci si presenti, alle soglie del nuovo avvenire, come la prefigurazione di uno dei vari universi resi possibili dai progressi dell'economia e della tecnica. [...]Notiamo, del resto, che per i futuristi il problema del movimento non si poneva, nel 1910, sotto lo

used also by some foreign observers, as in the magazine «L'Oeil» of January 1961<sup>61</sup>, to underline a continuity between the Italian Futurism and research of T Group. It always resulted more evident that the new research gained in Milan, apparently, meant to pass over the Informel Art, in order to build a genealogical line with historical vanguards.

§ *Between Azimut and N Group: from the absolute of Mondrian to the social role of the artist of De Stijl.*

The relationship between the “continuity” and “new” was the focus of the intervention, which Enrico Castellani held in January 1960 on pages of the homonym magazine «Azimuth» of the Azimut Gallery. The second and last issue was published in occasion of the group exhibition *La Nuova concezione artistica*, which was attended by Manzoni, Yves Klein, Heinz Mack - founder of the Zero Group in Düsseldorf in 1957 - and Almir Mavignier, a Brazilian young painter and graphic designer, whom had studied between 1955 and 1958 at the Hochschule für Gestaltung of Ulm (in 1962 also Giovanni Anceschi, advised by Gillo Dorfles, will enroll at the school, where he would be graduated in 1966). According to Castellani<sup>62</sup>, his own and others' art were in “continuity” with what Mondrian thought on the ratio between the surface of the canvas and also sought the absolute geometric orthogonality (figs. 40, 41). The “new” is bound to they consider the area - often monochromatic to the point being a-chromatic - as head of stimuli for retinal perception without bending expressionist<sup>63</sup>.

That consideration derived from another intervention, in the same magazine, by Udo Kultermann<sup>64</sup>, whom as the director of the city museum of Leverkusen, on March 1960 would have received the new concept art in the exhibition entitled *Monochrome Malerei*<sup>65</sup>. The monochrome, in fact, was another way to reach the level of necessary depersonalization to distance the research by Manzoni, Castellani and Klein from personalization of the Informel Art

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stesso angolo nel quale appare nel 1960, dopo mezzo secolo d'elaborazione delle forme e dei contenuti della cultura moderna. Oramai, l'identità di tutti i fenomeni e la loro riduzione al dinamismo fondamentale della materia fa parte delle nozioni comuni. [...] Il concetto, oggi corrente, di un universo della mobilità in cui lottano forze in fragile equilibrio, estranee le une alle altre in apparenza, identificabili nell'essenza, è conquista di questo ultimo mezzo secolo e sarebbe ingiusto opporlo alle problematiche del Futurismo negando a queste un carattere veramente moderno» pp.5-14

<sup>61</sup> L. Hoctin, *La jeune peinture à Rome à Naples et à Milan*, «L'Oeil», no.73, January, 1961, Losanne, pp. 78-85, 92.

<sup>62</sup> E. Castellani, *Continuità e nuovo*, «Azimuth», no.2, January, Milan, 1960.

<sup>63</sup> *Zero 1958-1960 tra Germania e Italia*, op.cit.,2004.

<sup>64</sup> U. Kultermann, *Una nuova concezione di pittura*, «Azimuth», no.2, January, Milan, 1960. «Mentre il tachisme intende come formazione dinamica le forze attive emozionali, ma nello stesso tempo fisiche emergenti nel corso dell'attività pittorica, che, anche se soltanto accennata, ha una proiezione nell'opera, i nuovi artisti cercano di rendere meccanici la materia, gli elementi cioè della formazione stessa, di dar loro un'intensità concreta di effetto, ciò che fa del quadro in sé una struttura dinamica[...], la nuova pittura vuole oggettivare gli strumenti dell'azione, tanto che la costellazione e la vera natura della stessa materia formatrice, diventano punto di partenza e modulo di effetto, e la struttura oggettiva e reale si mette al posto della vaga traccia di forme personalistiche di espressione.», pagine non numerate.

<sup>65</sup> *Monochrome Malerei*, catalogue, March 18<sup>th</sup> – May 8<sup>th</sup> 1960, Städtisches Museum Leverkusen, Schloss Morsbroich, 1960.

painting. Furthermore, in works by Castellani because of depressions and reliefs on canvas, or in ones by Mavignier (fig. 42) where the colour was concentrated only in single points in relief, it emerged the ambiguity between the second and third dimension, which moved their works from the painting field to the object field.

However, a third line research, beyond that of the T Group and Azimut, on Autumn 1959 developed in Padua, where Alberto Biasi, Ennio Chiggio, Antonio Costa, Edoardo Landi and Manfredo Massironi gathered together under the mathematical symbol “N” (as  $n$  natural number) – preceded a short while by the group, which artists themselves with others baptized “ENNEA”. Padua was important for some reasons: the University, thanks to the role of some scholars such as Sergio Bettini, was a bridge towards the Eastern Europe; the Psychology Institute from 1943 to 1973 thanks to Fabio Metelli, student of Cesare Musatti, concentrated his own researches about Gestaltpsychologie<sup>66</sup> and in the end the industrialization was reaching its maximum level.

Within that framework, it was profitable for N Group, its relationship with the *Circolo del Pozzetto*<sup>67</sup>, whose business was divided between the cultural promotion - from philosophy, sociology and cybernetics - and political militancy in the Italian Left-wing. Consequently the guideline followed by N Group unified the team work, according to the industrial model, together with scientific *equip* and political action, finding in De Stijl its own artistic referent. In a manifesto dated 1959, it praised the action of De Stijl and Russian Suprematism were and brought to the architectonic scale and targeted to the recover of the social dimension of the artist, on which N Group<sup>68</sup> based its own theory.

In 1959, Manfredo Massironi<sup>69</sup> entered in contact with the Milan artistic scene, when he participated to the San Fedele Award, with the work *Momento I* (fig. 43), which, at first was refused and then admitted again thanks to the intervention by Lucio Fontana. *Momento I* was a surface of corrugated cardboard for packing, cut vertically by a “zip” made of the same material and due to simple Gestalt principles transmitted a virtual vibration. Alberto Biasi, in the same year, realized *Trame*, using perforated cardboard and used in the sericulture, which were set in frames overlapping and penetrated by light, built a virtual volume inside the spectator space (fig. 44). At first sight the works could appear simple exercises of composition and analysis of perception, but they were targeted to create a scientific relationship between the eye and the observed object, to avoid the arbitrariness of aesthetic judgments.

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<sup>66</sup> P. Weibel, *La scuola di Padova e il MID*, in A. Barrese, A. Marangoni, L. Meloni, op.cit., 2007, pp. 16-25.

<sup>67</sup> F. Loperfido, *Il Pozzetto un Orizzonte aperto Ettore Luccini e la sua lotta contro l'isolamento politico e culturale della sinistra*, Editoriale Programma, Padua, 1992, p. 40.

<sup>68</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. NT Found. Folder N Group. Typewritten papers on which heading was written «alberto biasi ennio chiggio toni costa edoardo landi manfredo massironi scritti dal 1959 al 1961»; the latter ones follows the formers, and contained only writings dated in 1962. We could hypothesize that writings went to Zagreb just then 1963.

<sup>69</sup> Massironi. *La dinamica dell'oggetto visivo*, op. cit., 2009.



On April 1960, thanks to the relationship with Azimut, the last exhibition at the *Circolo del Pozzetto* was dedicated to *La Nuova concezione artistica* which came to Padua, including Biasi and Massironi (figs. 45, 46). The manifesto was elaborated by both artists – helped by Ettore Luccini, the director of the Pozzetto –, proposed to overcome the sentimental individualism in favour of an aesthetics of collective life; the abandonment of the limited space painting in favour of a multi-dimensional space and at the end the light was conceived as a determinant aesthetic factor<sup>70</sup>. The exhibition was accompanied with a conference held by the art scholar Luigi Ferrante that tracked down ideal origins of artists of the *La Nuova concezione artistica* in the Bauhaus and in Mondrian<sup>71</sup>. Massive extractions from the historical vanguards were implemented at a formal and ideological level, not without a risk of rhetoric repercussions and scholastic revivals.

Nevertheless, the action of N Group was fundamental to transfer contacts with Azimut, Zero Group and the French Motus Group from Milan to Padua and, as a consequence, to the Italian North-east<sup>72</sup>. The latter formed by Francois Morellet, Joel Stein, Garcia Miranda, Servanes and Yvaral (son of Victor Vasarely) was born in the atmosphere of Denise Renè Galerie – became then GRAV (Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel) with Demarco, Sobrino and Le Parc, with whom collaborated the Hungarian Vera (1922) and Francis Molnar (1924-1993) and they influenced the group with their middle European constructivist inheritance.

On April they exhibited at first by Azimut (fig. 47) and then on the following May at the Le stagioni gallery in Padua<sup>73</sup>, thanks to the solicitude of N Group. In occasion of the exhibition a foldable cardboard made the Italian public aware of strong points of their research: the denial of the *école de Paris* and the Concrete painting. It was exalted, instead, the collective work and the use of contemporary scientific discoveries in the artistic production. Their last goal was to eliminate any sentimentality as it was in the *tachiste* painting, and reject also the mysticism of the form as Mondrian did in his paintings<sup>74</sup>. Ideas found immediately some similarities with N Group's ones, which ever on May 1960 exhibited in Milan at the Azimut gallery in a collective with Almir Mavignier. The scientific attitude of N Group was central in their work, in which when they abandoned painting manuals, their reading turned one side toward *Ars as experience*

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<sup>70</sup> W. Feierabend, L. Meloni, op.cit., 2009. «La “nuova concezione artistica” è essenzialmente ricerca, si pone al di fuori di qualsiasi tendenza schematizzabile. Nasce dalla struttura molteplice della vita moderna. La “nuova concezione artistica” deriva dal superamento dell’ “arte per l’arte” è l’ “arte attraverso l’arte”, perché supera l’individualismo sentimentale. La “nuova concezione artistica” respinge il determinismo causale e l’indeterminato casuale per una ricerca di verità, che risulta da una adesione collettiva sempre più estesa. La “nuova concezione artistica” abbandona lo spazio limitato delle due dimensioni per uno spazio più vasto di cui la luce è l’elemento determinante. La “nuova concezione artistica” supera l’estetica tradizionale per difendere un’etica di vita collettiva. Biasi, Castellani, Mack, Manzoni, Massironi» p.44

<sup>71</sup> G. Segato, *Il Pozzetto e le arti visive*, in F. Loperfido, op. cit., 1992, pp.43-48.

<sup>72</sup> *Enne & Zero, Motus etc.*, op. cit., 1996.

<sup>73</sup> *E arrivano da Parigi le opere del gruppo artistico ‘Motus’*, editorial, «Il Gazzettino», May 5<sup>th</sup>, Venice, 1960.

<sup>74</sup> *Stratégies de participation. Grav – groupe de recherche d’art visuel. 1960/1968*, op.cit., 1998. On the invitation card, whose graphic was by N Group, we can read « Di fronte alla ‘Scuola di Parigi’ decadente MOTUS esiste a Parigi. [...]MOTUS è contro la personalità. Le sue ricerche illustrano delle preoccupazioni puramente formali, visuali, secondo un’andatura quasi-scientifica e non ‘artristica’ di cui tutto il lirismo soggettivo è bandito» p. 53.

by John Dewey<sup>75</sup>, Antonio Banfi for the applied phenomenology to the aesthetics of the industrial design, *La psicologia della forma* by Wolfgang Köhler<sup>76</sup> and *La teoria della percezione* by David Katz<sup>77</sup> (figs. 48,49). The latter readings<sup>78</sup> were common also to Mavignier whom in Ulm had attended courses of Gestalt psychology and the Theory of Information (fig. 50).

A last but fundamental difference between the T Group and N Group regarded their relationship with the art trade. T Group had used the collective work only for determined objects, but his member continued to exhibit as singles, in places such as the Pater Gallery and Bruno Danese in Milan, and San Matteo in Genoa. The ideological engagement of N Group, based on Azimut, GRAV and Circolo del Pozzetto, pushed him to try a complete autonomy from the trade, through the opening on November 1960, of the N Studio, which partially recalled the architectonic planning studio and partially the Studio F of Ulm, founded by Kurt Fried in 1959<sup>79</sup>. The N Studio was destined for a gallery and a laboratory, where group exhibitions took place and other ones with didactical feature about historical vanguards and Informel Art experiences, from Fontana to Wols.

The first exhibition of N Group in its own studio was entitled *Nessuno è invitato a intervenire* (Nobody is invited to take part in), held on December from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> 1960. The door of their studio was barred put under accusation the galleries and the cultural establishment of Padua<sup>80</sup> (fig. 51). In their declarations echoed expressions such as “new society” and “new art”, directly mutated from the Neoplasticism vanguard and the same invitation cards were black, red, yellow and blue (fig. 52). Nevertheless to prohibit the public access reminded to a Dadaist attitude, whose antecedents were in two exhibitions held by Iris Clert Gallery in Paris: *Le void* by Yves Klein of 1958, where the gallery was emptied and as a result dematerialized; and *Le Plein*, direct answer realized by Armand Arman to Klein, on October 1960, where the

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<sup>75</sup> J. Dewey, *Art as experience*, Perigee Books, New York, 1980.

<sup>76</sup> W. Köhler, *La psicologia della gestalt*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1961. «Con un modello costante di stimoli possiamo vedere nella fig.9 due forme diverse: o quella di una croce con quattro bracci sottili, oppure quella di un'altra croce formata da quattro triangoli più vasti. Finché abbiamo davanti a noi la prima forma, l'area della seconda resta assorbita nello sfondo, e la sua forma visiva non esiste. Quando emerge la seconda, scompare la prima. Si osserverà che in entrambi i casi gli stessi segmenti obliqui costituiscono i contorni limite delle forme che si vedono volta a volta. Le primo caso appartengono alla croce sottile, nel secondo alla croce larga» p.142.

<sup>77</sup> D. Katz, *La psicologia della forma*, Paolo Borighieri, Torino, 1960. «La legge della vicinanza. Le parti di un insieme percettivo vengono raccolte in unità conforme alla minima distanza [...] nella fig. 1, vengono raccolte in unità le linee e i punti che sono separati dai tratti spaziali più piccoli: nel settore delle linee si formano strisce che sono separate da intervalli maggiori, e nel settore dei punti si vedono, pure separate da intervalli maggiori, file di punti. È possibile, senza dubbio, di afferrare tanto le linee quanto i punti in altri modi, ma si riesce a farlo soltanto superando una marcata resistenza (soggettiva). Legge dell'eguaglianza. Se lo stimolo da una moltitudine di elementi diversi, si manifesta – ceteris paribus – una tendenza a raccogliere in gruppi gli elementi fra loro simili. Così, per esempio, nella fig.2 da un lato le linee di uguale spessore, e dall'altro lato i cerchi vuoti e i cerchi pieni si uniscono in forme o configurazioni. L'identità può anche riferirsi a un contenuto parziale degli elementi, al colore o alla forma che è loro comune. Sovente un oggetto si presenta come 'unità', perché la natura o la mano dell'uomo gli han dato un colore uniforme» pp.41-43.

<sup>78</sup> I. Mussa, op.cit, 1976, p. 118.

<sup>79</sup> K.F. Kurt Fried zu Ehren. *Erinnerungen an einen Kritiker, Förderer und Sammler von Avantgardekunst*, catalogue, April 7<sup>th</sup> – May 20<sup>th</sup> 1991, Ulmer Museum, Ulm 1991.

<sup>80</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. NT archive. N Group folder. [See appendix.](#)

gallery was fulfilled by detritus and waste to prohibit the public to enter. The exhibitions and N Group's one showed, consequently, their ulterior aim was to put into crisis exhibition spaces managed by the market and at the same time to displacing public expectations<sup>81</sup>.

§ 2. *The Yugoslav situation and Croatian art critique. Abstraction painting as a social art.*

In Italy the Yugoslav art had been considered a naïf painting, endowed with vague socialist realism and an abstraction connected to the natural element since the Second World War end. In 1956, when Vera Horvat-Pintarić interested in Mondrian, the Constructivism memory of the Twenties and Thirties, which regarded the Zenith vanguard between Zagreb and Beograd, had been resurfaced for a few years<sup>82</sup>.

After an interruption where the Yugoslav Communist Party had encouraged the Socialist Realism, in December 1951 painters Ivan Picelj (1924-2011), Vlado Kristl (1923-2004), Alexander Srnec (1924-2010) and architects Zvonimir Radić (1921-1985), Bernardo Bernardi (1921-1985), Vjenceslav Richter (1917-2003), Božidar Rašica (1912-1992) and Vladimir Zarahović founded the group EXAT 51 (Experimental Atelier 1951). Their intention was to conjugate the French Concrete Art, like in the painters Picelj, Kristl and Srnec, with an architectural planning reminiscent of European Constructivism and rationalism like in the architects Radić and Richter (figs. 53,54).

The synthesis of arts, in their interpretation, was removed by every influence of the "middle-class individualism"- according to the Realistim aesthetics by Andrej Zdanov (1896-1948)- and his goal became the common welfare of the society, through the research of visual communication<sup>83</sup>. Consequently a great attention received applied arts, especially for the creation of Yugoslav pavilions abroad and allowed some painters such as Picelj and Srnec to exhibit in Paris at Denise Renè during the 7<sup>th</sup> Salon des Realites Nouvelles in 1952. The global

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<sup>81</sup> B. O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, University California Press, 1999. «The gallery's implicit content can be forced to declare itself through gestures that use it whole. That content leads in two directions. It comments on the "art" within, to which it is contextual. And it comments on the wider context – street, city, money, business – that contains it» p. 87.

<sup>82</sup> J. Denegri, op. cit., 2004.

<sup>83</sup> J. Denegri, *EXAT 51, 1951-1956*, Galerija Nova, Zagreb, 1979. «See no connection between the actual framework of our artistic commitment on the one hand, and the space concept arising from a coordinated relationship between the productive and the social standard on the other; See no difference between so-called pure and so-called applied art; Consider that work methods and principles in the sphere of non-figural, or so-called abstract art, are not the expression of decadent aspirations, but, rather, think that the study of these methods and principles could develop and enrich the sphere of visual communications in our country; The Group intend to operate in actual time and space, assuming plastic requirements and potentials as a tentative point of departure; By understanding pur reality as an aspiration to progress in all forms of human activity, the Group believe in the need for struggle against outdated ideas and activities in the fine arts; Finally, the Group consider their major task to be, first, focusing artistic activity on the synthesis of all fine arts, and, second, emphasizing the experimental character of artistic activity, because any progress in a creative approach to fine arts is inconceivable without experiment; Consider the foundation and activity of the Group to be the positive outcome of the development of differences of opinion, which is a necessary prerequisite for the promotion of artistic life in this country. b.bernardi, architect; Z.Bregovac, arch.; i. Picelj, painter, Z. Radic, arc.; B. Rasica, arch; V. Richter, arch; A. Srnec, painter, V. Zarahovic, arch.»

life of the Group was relatively short, infact it dissolved in 1956, nevertheless, Picelj, Srnec, Kristl and Richter remained in contact with each other<sup>84</sup>.

The activity of EXAT 51 was contemporary to a critical season where protagonists of the debate about abstraction were Grgo Gamulin (1910-1997), defender of the figurative modern painting but against Socialist Realism, and Dimitrije Bašičević (1921-1987), supporter of the abstraction as mean to come into line with western modernity<sup>85</sup>. An open clash of points of view happened the day after the first abstract painting exhibition held in Zagabria at the Croatian Architects Association in February 1953, when exhibited Picelj, Kristl, Rašica and Srnec. To the attacks by Gamulin, Bašičević – mindful of the Mondrian's poetics and the Moholy-Nagy's didactics-answered, attributing to the EAXT 51 abstraction, an effective role in the Croatian public social life.

Furthermore, the Concrete Art was a defence against the American and European abstract Expressionism invasion, identified with very middle-class degeneration. Similarly intervened the critic Rudi Supek (1913-1993) whom accused the Abstract Expressionism of being supported by Christian academism, middle-class liberalism and European Marxist link. A third intervention in favour of Concrete Art, came by Richter whom claimed the relationship between applied arts and the abstract painting, based on Mondrian, Malevitch and Bauhaus, as the organic capacity to revolution relations system between industrial production and painting, national decoration and Croatia modernism, identified with the aerodynamic line of objects. Consequently the revaluation of Neoplasticism happened on the basis of materialism and the civil value of abstraction, as it would be successively meant, in the first Sixties, to promote new tendencies opposing the Pop Art and New Dadaism<sup>86</sup>.

The critic activity of Horvat-Pintarić<sup>87</sup> was, then, inside such cultural panorama, which was illustrated on the «La Biennale di Venezia» in 1959 by the young art historian. After the award

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<sup>84</sup> When Croatian artists signed their manifesto in 1951, that could be possible by the political breaking-off just happened in 1948 between Tito and Stalin. As a consequence the new Yugoslavian cultural course aligned with the European one. Richter, also, was a partisan and became an important member of the Yugoslavian Communist Party. Between 1951 and 1952 in Yugoslavia an economic and social passed, in contrast with the Sovietic five-year plan. In name only the power of the factory Committee was inscribed and the propriety right of workers was encouraged to buy shares in nationalized industries. Therefore a similar idea was applied to cultural activities. The EXAT 51's manifesto highlighted as fundamental the team-work and the art research for the social welfare. The two political and cultural situations closed to each other and that showed quite liberality by Communist Party.

<sup>85</sup> L. Kolešnik, *Art criticism and polemics in Croatia during the Ninetenn-Fifties*, in *Hrvatska likovna kritika 50ih*, Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, Zagreb, 1998, pp. 279-296.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. D. Bašičević, *Jesik apstraktne umetnosti*, «Krugovi», no. 4, Zagreb, 1953. «Kada Mondrian piše da je umetnost našeg vremena 'oslobodena svega da bude stvarno plastična', a mi znamo da je ona uvek bila 'stvarno plastična', to ne znači da je ovaj Holandain bio prepotentam, već da je plastični ideal izmenjen.[...] Ni sami apologeti, teoretičari, kritičari astratizma još nisu na čisto kada se govori o karakteru njihova izraza.[...] Ličnosti ili dela? Konvencija je stvorila pojam umetničke ličnosti, koja je polazna tačkaza umetnička dela. Dok jedan umetnik ne stvori ime, njegove se slike ne cene. Obratno, pod etiketom imena, vrednuju se fantastično»

<sup>87</sup> V. Horvat-Pintarić, *Pittura jugoslava oggi*, «La Biennale di Venezia», no.35, April-May, Venice, 1959. «Nel 1951 apparve per la prima volta a Zagabria il gruppo 'EXAT 51 (atelier sperimentale) composto da quattro giovani pittori che esaltarono nel loro programma la concezione della pura plasticità sulla base della pittura concreta: Picelj, Srnec, Kristl, Rasica. Se pur questi pittori hanno trovato l'avvio dai principi di Mondrian e dall'esperienza di alcuni concretisti francesi, sarebbe sbagliato pensare che si tratti di una semplice importazione. Essi hanno sviluppato il senso della loro nozione plastica in stretto contatto pratico e teorico con alcuni giovani architetti orientati in senso

for art critique<sup>88</sup>, infact, tightened its relations with the conservator of the Contemporary Art Historical Archive, the critic Umbro Apollonio from Trieste.

Horvat-Pintarić presented the artistic researches between Ljubljana, Zagreb and Beograd, which since after the Second World War had been alternated in a similar way to what the Serbian art critic Oto Bihalij-Merin<sup>89</sup> (1928-1999) described in the essay included in *L'arte dopo il 1945* published in Italy in April 1959. According to Horvat-Pintarić and Bihalij-Merin, the Group EXAT 51 painting was linking to Mondrian's one<sup>90</sup>, while the synthesis of the arts, searched through the fusion with the architecture by Richter<sup>91</sup>, was a fundamental revival of the middle European constructivist tradition.

§ *Artistic relations between Italy and Croatia in the 50s: The Industrial Design and the Informel Art in Zagreb.*

In Zagreb, Concrete painting and architecture had their best time of encounter in industrial design, when in 1956 was held the *First Biennial of Industrial Design*, experience however, that ended in 1959 with its second edition. Among organizers there was Vjenceslav Richter, whom referring to such European events and especially to the Milan Triennale – in which, in the 1957 edition, with Ivan Picelj, was awarded for the Yugoslav pavilion - gave to the one in Zagreb in 1959 a precise ideological imprint<sup>92</sup>.

Richter said that the ultimate goal of industrial design, as in other arts, was to achieve through the shape of objects, an democratic aesthetics in a society in which the value of worker

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moderno. Assieme a questi architetti essi hanno concepito le proprie opere entro organismi architettonici nei quali avrebbe dovuto realizzarsi l'idea dell'integrazione dell'arte» p. 21.

<sup>88</sup> ASAC Archive, Venice. Folder Raccolta Documentaria Arti Visive 1956 16/20. On spine "Premio critica 1956". It included four articles by Vera Sinobad on «Vjesnik» in 1956. *Pogled na Biennale u Veneciji. Zanimljivo poprište interkontinentalnih i evropskih likovnih susreta*, 1 VII 1956; *Sa XXVIII. Biennala u Veneciji. Eugene Delacroix i njegov romantizam*, 14 VIII 1956; *Sa XXVIII. Biennala u Veneciji. U dvoranama Italije*, 30 VIII 1956; *Sa XXVIII. Biennala u Veneciji. Izložba Mondriana*, 6 X 1956. Folder Ufficio Stampa 37. Folder Application forms by winners of the Critique Award at the 28<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial. Letter by Vera Sinobad of May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1957 replied to Autonomous Body's one of April 26<sup>th</sup> 1957.

<sup>89</sup> O. Bihalji-Merin: *Iugoslavia, Polonia*, in *L'Arte dopo il 1945. La pittura*, Il saggiaiore, Milano, 1959. «Dopo che nel mondo orientale della riforma socialista l'arte ufficiale era stata avviata verso le mete di un primitivo conformismo materialistico e di un naturalismo deterioro, in Iugoslavia [...] la coscienza e le aspirazioni artistiche si sono volte di nuovo liberamente, ai problemi e agli svolgimenti dell'arte moderna. [...]Le fonti da cui attingono le nuove generazioni non sono [...] uniformi. La dissonanza frammentaria, il magico e l'astratto appaiono ora come l'espressione di un'estrema sensibilità. L'arte priva di oggetto è sentita nella sua amplificazione astratta, di nuovo come concreta. Essa si è inserita completamente nel linguaggio dell'arte moderna. Gli aspetti surrealisti, invece, seguono piuttosto la linea di un surrealismo magico che cerca d'interpretare la realtà visibile e invisibile, divenuta complessa» pp. 132-133.

<sup>90</sup> J. Denegri, op. cit., 2004, pp. 13-22.

<sup>91</sup> In 1958 Vjenceslav Richter became a correspondent of the parisian art magazine «Aujourd'hui art et architecture», directed by Alexandre Bloch.

<sup>92</sup> V. Sinobad-Pintarić, *XI Triennale*, «Čovjek i Prostor», no.66, September, Zagreb, 1957, pp. 4-5.

management was strong and therefore cultural<sup>93</sup>. In 1954 that allowed the Association of Croats Architects in Zagreb to print the magazine «Čovjek the Prostor», which militated in favor of the synthesis of the arts and helped to import in Croatia, the European debate in that area, through interventions, among others, of Herbert Read, Walter Gropius, Max Bill, Henry Moore and Victor Vasarely.

Many of these texts were translated by the young art historian Radoslav Putar, which was accompanied by the original critical reflection of Matko Meštrović and Vjenceslav Richter. Their focus ranged from Olivetti to the Milan Triennial and from the École de Paris to the Concrete Art research of Espace Group and André Bloc, in order to weave a cultural plot dedicated, between the 50s and 60s, to the relationship between visual arts, architecture and design and between human and technical-scientific areas.

An analysis of the first report came on the issue of «Čovjek the Prostor» dedicated to 1958 Expo' in Brussels, when an article by Bruno Zevi<sup>94</sup> was published, just appeared on «L'Espresso» in 1958. Zevi indicated that the ideal motivation of the Expo' was an international collaboration, through technology and science, to overcome the anguish of modern man. However, that purpose was frustrated in practice by pavilions were the expression of a neurosis structuralist, wherein participated also the Yugoslav. The structure was designed by Richter and decorated by Srnec. His rationalist idea was manifested in lines of cubic volumes and in large windows, reminiscent of Mies van de Rohe. The propaganda machine of Yugoslav society was given to Srnec<sup>95</sup>, whom made a graphic design related to graphics layout of the Bauhaus and De Stijl (figs. 55, 57).

As for relations between the humanistic and scientific areas, on the «Čovjek i Prostor» in September 1960 Putar translated also Giulio Carlo Argan<sup>96</sup>, in the article *Koga čeka komanda?* (Who controls what?). Argan outlined two options that were offered to the future of man: the first, according to Lewis Mumford<sup>97</sup>, insisted on the positive interaction between man and

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<sup>93</sup> 2 zagrebački triennale, catalogue, April 22<sup>nd</sup> – May 20<sup>th</sup> 1959, Umjetnički paviljon, Zagabria, 1959. The exhibition contemporaneously was set up with 40<sup>o</sup> anniversary of the Yugoslav Communist Party, showing the link between politicians and artists. Richter wrote the introduction to the catalogue. «Iako još u začetku – rješavanja ovog pitanja likovna umjetnost postaje društvenim faktorom takve demokratske kategorije na kulturnom planu, kao što je na društveno-političkom planu sistem radničkog i društvenog samoupravljanja».

<sup>94</sup> B. Zevi, *Doppio proposito frustrato dalla vanità*, «L'Espresso», 1958, op. cit., 1971 «Quale doveva essere il proposito culturale di Bruxelles 1958? Era stato annunciato chiaramente: 1) affermare l'esigenza di una collaborazione internazionale[...]; 2) prospettare la possibilità per l'uomo moderno di superare lo stato di angoscia provocato da un progresso tecnico incontrollato.[...] Contrariamente al programma Bruxelles 1958 aggiunge all'angoscia contemporanea la nevrosi strutturalistica» pp.68-73

<sup>95</sup> J. Galjer, *Expo 58 i jugoslavenski paviljon Vjenceslava Richtera*, Horetzky, Zagreb, 2009.

<sup>96</sup> G.C.Argan, *Koga čeka komanda?*, «Čovjek i Prostor», no.102, September, Zagreb, 1960, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> L. Mumford, *Arte e tecnica*, Comunità, Milano, 1961.

machine for the collective improvement of the society. The second possibility, more pessimistic, was expressed by Sigfried Giedion<sup>98</sup>, whom feared the complete alienation of man, because of objects produced by the machine. Argan agreed with Mumford, as arts, according to science, would have humanized the industrial production and the artist's work would become a professional technique and not more romantic.

In parallel in the exhibition practice, the update of Yugoslav art passed through the French Concrete Art, European Informel Art and Italian Nuclearism. In Zagreb, for example, in 1957 was held the teaching exhibition *Suvremene Umjetnost*<sup>99</sup> (Contemporary art) organized into two sections. The first was a brief history of modern art from Van Gogh to Mondrian with particular attention to the Bauhaus. The second section contained silkscreens by Victor Vasarely, André Bloc<sup>100</sup> and Edgard Pillet which represented the line of the French Concrete Art close to the Denise René Gallery (figs. 58,59). Italian contemporary art since 1945, was presented on October 1956 in the itinerant exhibition *Suvremene Talijanske Likovne Umjetnosti*<sup>101</sup> (Contemporary Italian Fine Arts), and went on to Ljubljana, Skopje and Beograd. The works also discussed the latest research of Afro and Mirko Basaldella, Emilio Vedova, Renato Birilli and Alberto Viani (figs. 60,61).

It was an official occasion linked to diplomatic reasons with the former Yugoslavia where cultural openness, encouraged by the government in Bograd, was promoted by Croatian newspapers as a must to observe the most advanced Italian painting and sculpture<sup>102</sup>.

Also in Zagreb, a few months earlier on February was inaugurated the exhibition *Devet suvremenih talijanki umetnika iz Milana* at the Museum za umjetnost i obrt (Museum for Applied Arts) by the art critic Josip Depolo<sup>103</sup>. Enrico Baj and Sergio Dangelo exhibited

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<sup>98</sup> S. Giedion, *Mechanization takes command*, Oxford University press, 1948.

<sup>99</sup> *Suvremene Umjetnost I*, catalogue, April 1957, Gradska Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1957. In 1957 the Committee of the Galerija in Zagreb set up a didactic exhibition by several reproductions of Mondrian's artworks by Denise René Galerie. See J. Denegri, op. cit., 2004;.

<sup>100</sup> The Concretist painter and architect André Bloc was both director of the magazine «Aujourd'hui» and a founder member of the artistic group Espace. My study has a great interest in Bloc's activities, because a lot of issues of «Aujourd'hui», published between the Fifties and the Sixties, is maintained at the Richter Archive in Zagreb. The issues are valued for being visual sources utilized by Croatian artists like Vjenceslav Richter, Ivan Picelj, Vlado Kristl and Alaxander Srnec.

<sup>101</sup> *Izložba Suvremene Talijanske Likovne Umjetnosti*, catalogue, October 30<sup>th</sup> - November 21<sup>st</sup> 1956, Umjetnički paviljon, Zagreb, Gradska Galerija, 1956. However, Italian artists just were in Ljubljana to exhibit at the First International exhibition of graphic art in 1955.

<sup>102</sup> V. Sinobad, *Korisni Susreti, uz izložbu suvremene talijanske likovne umjetnosti u Zagrebu*, «Vjesnik», October 14<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1956. ALUH. Archiv za Likovne Umjetnosti HAZU (Hrvatska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti), Zagreb. Folder *Izložba, suvremene talijanske likovne umjetnosti*: pictures of exhibited works and relative index cards. That exhibition was set up by ULUH (Udruženja likovnih Umjetnika Hrvatske) and Italian Ministry of education. In the Committee were Yugoslav Zoran Krzislak and Marino Tartaglia; Italians Marcello Mascherini and Giovanni Carandente.

<sup>103</sup> *Devet suvremenih talijanski umetnika iz milana*, catalogue, February 5 – 25<sup>th</sup> 1956, Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb, 1956. «Preko ove izložbe upoznajemo se, u prvom redu s najrecentnijim kreatorskim snagama suvremene

representing the Nuclearist research while Lanfranco, Fiorenzo Tomea, Alfonso Sella, Gianfranco Ferroni, Caramel Cappello and Mauro Reggiani were, as wrote the local newspapers, more in line with the Italian figurative tradition, that thing was praised also by the establishment of Croatia (fig. 62).

The exhibition was born under auspices of Tito to the coexistence between the two nations, in which Milan was considered an important artistic center for the upgrade of Croatian artists.

In Italy, however, works of Yugoslav artists were known primarily through institutional opportunities, such as the Biennial in Venice where, after 1948 - when Yugoslavia did not participate - their presence was constant<sup>104</sup>. Biennials prior to 1954, the year of the return of Trieste to Italy, suffered the political climate of the Cold War<sup>105</sup>, when the Yugoslav Communist propaganda was opposed by Italian law enforcement agencies<sup>106</sup>. Only during the Biennial of 1954 relations between the two governments shared a gradual thaw<sup>107</sup>. Finally, the Biennial of 1956 marked an effective new political, economic and cultural life<sup>108</sup> that would culminated in 1961. In every Biennials, the Yugoslav Commission presented artistic pursuits that were tolerated by the cultural line of the Yugoslav Communist Party.

The first major exhibition outside the Biennial, was *Arte jugoslava contemporanea*<sup>109</sup> (Yugoslav contemporary art) and it was held on December 1956 in Rome at the National

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Italije, jer se uistinu milanski slikarski kug može poistovjetiti sa slikarstvom čitave Italije».ALUH archive, Zagreb. Folder *Devet suvremenih talijanski*: the catalogue and several no dated articles on the exhibition. 1) *Otvorena je izložba osmorice talijanskih umjetnika*. 2) *Izložba talijanskih umjetnika u Zagrebu*.

<sup>104</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Series countries 1940-1968. Unit 34 Jugoslavia 1939-1962. Correspondence between Rodolfo Pallucchini and Milos Zorzut, press agent of the Soc. Fed. Rep. of Yugoslavia in Rome. From February 25<sup>th</sup> 1950 to November 10<sup>th</sup> 1950.

<sup>105</sup> F. Stonor Saunders, *La guerra fredda culturale. La CIA e il mondo delle lettere e delle arti*, Fazi Editore, Roma, 2004.

<sup>106</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Series countries 1940-1968. Unit 34 Jugoslavia 1939-1962. Correspondence between the Prefect of Venice Attilio Gargiulo and president of Autonomous Body Giovanni Ponti. From July 12 to 18<sup>th</sup> 1950.

<sup>107</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Series countries 1940-1968. Unit 34 Jugoslavia 1939-1962. Correspondence between the commissioner prof. France Stele from Ljubljana and Rodolfo Pallucchini. Form February 1954 to April 1955. Letter by Stele to Pallucchini on 06.30. 1954 when the latter was been Lubiana, to thank him for hospitality. « spero che la collaborazione effettuata in questa occasione significhi l'inizio di vivace cooperazione culturale tra i nostri due paesi nell'interesse dell'umanità e del progresso del sincero accordo tra i popoli».

<sup>108</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Series countries 1940-1968. Unit 34 Jugoslavia 1939-1960. Correspondence between the commissioner Aleksa Čelebonović from Beograd and Rodolfo Pallucchini. From March 10<sup>th</sup> – October 25<sup>th</sup> 1956. The 1956 Biennial have to be remembered as «Biennial of Mondrian». In fact, when the manifestation closed, the director of Stedelijk Museum Willem Sandberg asked for exhibit Yugoslav artworks in Holland. Therefore, he asked to Autonomous Body for plead with the commissioner Čelebonović, to send Yugoslav works and Mondrian's ones altogether. Also, cf. E. Vrsaj, *La cooperazione economica Italia-Jugoslavia*, Edizioni Rivista "Mladika", Trieste, 1970.

<sup>109</sup> *Arte jugoslava contemporanea*, catalogue, December 1956, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Roma; Jan.- Feb., 1957, Palazzo della Permanente, Milano, Editalia, Roma, 1956. «Constatamo perciò con grande piacere che la Jugoslavia, tra tutti i paesi di democrazia popolare, è quella che meglio si è resa conto di questo fatto; a giudicare dalle opere che ci ha mandato (del resto anche già dall'ultima esposizione alla Biennale veneziana), essa mostra di rispettare ogni espressione d'arte che sia giustificata in quanto arte e di avere bene inteso che il miglior modo per farsi capire è parlare il linguaggio comune».



Gallery of Modern Art (GNAM) and then in early 1957 in Milan, at the Palazzo della Permanente. The exhibition, officially promoted by both Governments, explained to the Italian public that art passed the Yugoslav socialist realism, to prefer a reflection on the tradition of Cezanne within the scope of figurative works. Among exhibitors were Anton Gojmir Kos (1896-1970), Oton Gliha (1914-1999), Kosta Angeli Radovani (1916-2002) and Dušan Džamonja (1928-2009) whom, as the Italian curator Bucarelli Palma wrote, represented a reached modernity at the European level (figs. 63-66).

However, even in that exhibition was absent the Concrete Croatian painting and artists such as Ivan Picelj, whom had just had success in France, arrived in Italy in 1959. In that year in Venice and then in 1960 in Milan, Picelj participated at the *Mostra nazionale dell'incisione jugoslava*<sup>110</sup> (National Exhibition of Yugoslav engraving), with an engraving work of particular interest since it declared a direct dialogue with the Russian Constructivist tradition, entitled *Homage to Lissitsky*, by an oil of 1956 (fig. 67). In addition, the exhibition highlights the fortune of the Slovenian<sup>111</sup> and Croatian printing, which by the second mid-Fifties with the International Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana and with the one in Zagreb entered the European art scene.

Finally, in July 1961 in Rimini, was held the *III° Premio Morgan's Paint* (3<sup>rd</sup> Morgan's Paint Award) which was devoted to cultural relations between Italy and Yugoslavia. Interventions in the catalogue by Zoran Kržišnik (1920-2008), director of the Modern Galerija of Ljubljana, and the art critic Francesco Arcangeli described the contemporary painting and sculpture of Informel Art matrix. Kržišnik pointed out that the modern Yugoslav art, landed on the Informel horizon, had its roots in different national traditions. Arcangeli pointed to a

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<sup>110</sup> *Mostra nazionale dell'incisione jugoslava*, catalogue, July 25<sup>th</sup> – August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1959, Sala Napoleonica, Comune di Venezia, 1959. In the catalogue the commissioner Zoran Kržišnik, director of the Narodna Galerija of Ljubljana, explained the reasons and aims of the exhibition. It had a national origin and in the same time its aim was to show different artistic tendencies, especially the abstraction one. «L'arte jugoslava è oggi veramente nazionale, potremmo quasi dire pan jugoslava; essa cioè comprende, oltrepassando i limiti delle singole nazionalità, l'intera estensione del territorio jugoslavo e attraverso questa sintesi, s'inserisce nell'ampia corrente di creazione d'arte figurativa europea e mondiale, [...]. La fonte di ispirazione sarà per gli artisti jugoslavi la medesima che per gli altri artisti [...]: si ispirano cioè al mondo degli oggetti e delle idee.[...] Tuttora forte è la corrente che è la corrente che prese origine dal fauvisme occidentale e dall'espressionismo dell'Europa Centrale[...] L'arte astratta si fece sentire lungo una duplice via: risvegliando elementi latenti nella tradizione slava nel dominio dell'arte figurativa astratta e nel contempo offrendo un largo appoggio alla così detta "pittura dei concetti", pittura che conviene allo spirito speculativo dei nostri artisti contemporanei». As a reply to Kržišnik, the Italian Minister of trade Eugenio Gatto highlighted that «la prima grande manifestazione dedicata all'Incisione Jugoslava che sia stata organizzata in Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi» and, on the exhibited works, «lo sviluppo di questo sforzo creativo di relazioni umane, che vede già oggi Venezia al centro di un nuovo sistema di vivi e fruttuosi scambi internazionali [...] con Lubiana, Zagabria e Belgrado[...].»

<sup>111</sup> Ljubljana was the most representative city in Yugoslavia for economical and cultural exchanges with Italy. Then the Trieste matter, the first international event was the *Mednarodna grafična razstava* (International exhibition of graphic), where Lojze Spacal won a prize as Italian artist. Often, in the relationship among Ljubljana – Zagreb – Beograd, Ljubljana was in the Yugoslav tour the first stage for Italian artists or international exhibitions, since 1955.

common cultural root to the two Adriatic coasts in the idea of 'province', in which freedom of action allowed to artists, was positively opposed to major international centers. Among the artists were Oton Gliha with the New-naturalist painting of karst landscapes and the sculptor Dušan Džamonja with its cellular forms in wood and welded nails. The works had a dialogue within the Informel views with Italian ones like Tancredi and Leoncillo (figs. 68-71).

The relationship of Yugoslav art with the Informel Art research, in fact, since the early Sixties became more intense, until it reached some artists, such as Croatian ones, with attempts to overcome the same Informel. In Zagreb, in fact, the painter Ivo Gattin<sup>112</sup> became a point of reference for the update on the Informel Art (1926-1978). From the second half of the '50s, he experimented techniques of burning and tearing of material surfaces made by not pictorial materials, including wax, metals, sand and resins. Among painters whom passed from Concrete to Informel Art, there was Vlado Kristl whom in his first exhibition in 1959 exhibited the *Positiv e Negativ*, surfaces on the edge of monochrome, black or white, that on one side were mindful of the Informel matter forms and on the other resumed the "PanSlavist" tradition of Suprematism by Kasimir Malevich with i.e. *White on White* of 1918.

Overcoming of such practices occurred around 1960, when Julie Knifer<sup>113</sup> (1924-2004), whom had the decisive encounter with Mondrian's painting during the Venice Biennial in 1956, came to an abstract painting based on the perceptual ambiguity and absolute squareness of forms. In fact, Knifer and painters Vaništa Josip (1924), Marijan Jevšovar (1922-1998) and Ivan Kožarić (1921) felt the urge to align with what was happening in Europe, and with art critics Radoslav Putar and Matko Meštrović formed the Gorgona Group<sup>114</sup>. Thanks to them in Zagreb was manifested a line of marked New Dadaism inspiration, based on models of Fluxus and Azimut, of which Piero Manzoni became an important collaborator and admirer. Gorgona thus became the other way rather than the new constructivist one that would find the support of Almir Mavignier.

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<sup>112</sup> *Ivo Gattin*, catalogue, September 24<sup>th</sup> – October 25<sup>th</sup> 1992, Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti, Zagreb, Galerije grada Zagreba, Zagreb, 1992.

<sup>113</sup> *Julije Knifer*, catalogue, June 9<sup>th</sup> – November 4<sup>th</sup> 2001, Pavilion Croatia, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, 49°. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, Venezia, Ministry of Education, Zagreb, 2001; A. Pierre, op. cit., 2001.

<sup>114</sup> *Gorgona*, catalogue, March 10<sup>th</sup> – April 3<sup>th</sup> 1977, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb. Galerija Grada Zagreba, Zagreb, 1977.

§ 1960: from the Biennial of Venice to the *Nove tendencije* exhibition.

New tendencies in Croatia, however, not always met the favor of the establishment government and especially for abroad exhibitions. As for the internal cultural policy, in Zagreb in May 1961 was held a group exhibition *Slikarstvo Skulptura 61*<sup>115</sup> (Painting Sculpture 61) at the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti (Gallery of Contemporary Art), which presented the different Croatian artistic milieu (figs. 72-77): the Concrete Art of Vlado Kristl and Ivan Picelj, the Informel Art of Ivo Gattin, Oton Gliha, Vojin Bakić (1915-1992) and Dušan Džamonja, the New Dadaism of Gorgona, and eventually other artists within the figurative and naïve as Ivan Rabuzin (1921-2008).

Abroad Croatian new tendencies had no voice in official events, but Matko Meštrović, thanks to links with Mavignier, in June 1961 could lead to Ulm, at the Studio F, the collective *Maler Jugoslawische*<sup>116</sup> in which the exhibitors included the Gorgona members as representatives of Croatian art research (figs. 78-80). The exhibition was important because during the stay of Meštrović in Ulm for the preparation of the exhibition, they had a match with Mavignier in which were placed the groundwork to organize the largest international exhibition of *Nove Tendencije*, that would be held in Zagreb in the next August. In a letter dated in February 24th, Mavignier<sup>117</sup> was decided – although missing a definitive title of the exhibition - to invite among Croatian artists Ivan Picelj, Vojin Bakić and Frano Šimunović (1908-1995) and Italian ones Piero Manzoni, Enrico Castellani, Antonio Calderara and Piero Dorazio.

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<sup>115</sup> *Slikarstvo Skulptura 61*, catalogue, May 15<sup>th</sup> – June 14<sup>th</sup> 1961, Graska Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1961. Cf. Andro-Vid Mihičić, *Slikarstvo-Skulptura 61*, «Telegram», no.59, June, Zagreb, 1961, p.6. ; M. Peić, *U pitanju je-kvaliteta, Kritičke opaske u provodu posljednjih likovnih izložbi u Zagrebu*, «Telegram», no. 61, June, Zagreb, 1961, p.6.

<sup>116</sup> *Jugoslawische Maler*, catalogue, June 3<sup>rd</sup> – July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1961, Studio F, Ulm, 1961, Galerija Suvremena Umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1961.

<sup>117</sup> M. Rosen, *op. cit.*, 2010. Letter by Mavignier to Meštrović of February 24<sup>th</sup> 1961. «Je suis très heureux de voir que les projets pour l'exposition des artistes yougoslaves marcheront bien. L'exposition chez freid semble que sera un succès mais, je vous prie de faire une selection impeccable. Encore une nouvelle : j'ai convançu m. freid de faire une exception dans le cas de ne pas presenter des sculpteurs. Il s'agit d'exposer le sculpteur bacic (celui que j'ai visité) je le considère un des meilleurs artistes chez vous. [...] ne pas oublier pycel, simunovic et le peintre monochromiste (celui qui fait des films). Pour moi, un de plus importante faits de cet exposition est qu'elle permetra qu'un des jeunes critiques como toi puisse venir en alemagne et avoir de contact avec des gents, des artistes et quelques vous. [...]je pense de vous présenter à Bense, piene, mack, alors on va voir qu'on pourra faire.[...] pour l'exposition de groupe à zagreb. [...] le groupe d'artistes que je proposerai sera international[...]. Il y a un point très important : j'ai la responsabilitée d'organisation de l'exposition et à ce moment là, la libertée de choix des artistes[...] aussi necessaire, je crois, de declarer dans l'invitation que le peintre almir mavignier a été charger de choisir des artistes que selon son avis, forme un groupe international que travaille dans une ligne experimental de l'art dont les œuvres se font toujours le but de cet exposition est de présenter au publique yougoslave dont quelque uns pourront peut-être represente aujourd'hui ce qu'on appellera demain d'avant-garde[...]. Ici, les nome des artistes pour l'invitation : [...] Italie : Piero Dorazio tableaux Rome Piazza Armelini 16 Piero Manzoni tabl. + scult. Milano, Via Cernaia 4 Enrico Castellani tableaux - Milano, Via Cernaia 4 (chez Piero Manzoni) Antonio Calderara tableaux - Milano, Via Bianca Maria 35» pp. 59-60.

The idea of an international exhibition to be held in Zagreb had took shape in Almir Mavignier just in the summer of 1960, when the Brazilian artist after visiting the Venice Biennial saw on that event weighed on three issues: the organization of the Biennial was still tied to traditional categories of painting and sculpture, and suffered interferences of the cultural policies of participating nations, without any active role of exhibiting artists, in addition, the presence of Informel Art overhung the innovative research that were developing in Europe.

The issues, however, were not foreign to contemporary Italian critical discussion inner at the Biennial, where for example, Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti and Giulio Carlo Argan<sup>118</sup> argued the need to overcome rigid categories of painting and sculpture, to introduce the industrial design, as the status of the artwork was turning toward that direction, as was the case in contemporary trials of N and T groups, Mari and Munari.

The new research, in fact, in the Biennial of 1960 were visible through works of Piero Dorazio whom, according to the art critic Bruno Alfieri<sup>119</sup>, shared with industrial objects a process of production, which in both cases was the idea of continuous technical and formal improving. Finally, the active role of the artist was, according Mavignier necessary to avoid falling into the logic of politics, the art trade and consequently to allow maximum freedom of expression.

After Venice, Mavignier in Zagreb, thanks to the painter Frano Šimunović knew Ivan Picelj, whose art was similar to the Brazilian's one, and while Matko Meštrović whom was interested in the school of Ulm and to the relationship between art and industrial product. Thanks to the meetings was planned, with the collaboration also of Radoslav Putar, an independent exhibition from large international networks, in which bring together two main lines of research: the monochromatic abstraction derived from *Tachisme* and the geometric one of Concrete Art. These two currents denounced a flawed art by the artist's subjectivity and the need to bring chaos of the Informel Art to an objective order.

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<sup>118</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Visual arts series. Unit 89 XXX Biennale 1960. Comitato consultivo internazionale di esperti: consultazioni from April 18<sup>th</sup> 1959 to July 5<sup>th</sup> 1959. From July 11<sup>th</sup> to August 11<sup>th</sup> 1959. See appendix.

<sup>119</sup> *XXX Biennale Internazionale d'Arte di Venezia*, catalogue, June-October, 1960, Giardini di Castello, Venezia, Stamperia di Venezia, 1960, pp. 134-136.

§ 3. *The visual perception and tactile experience: Konkrete Kunst and Bewogen Bewegung before Nove Tendencije.*

The ideology of the exhibition in Zagreb, according to Mavignier Almir, Matko Meštrović and Radoslav Putar consisted in the rejection of the model of the Venice Biennial, but could not ignore other international exhibitional cases. Among these, two were ones directly considered: the exhibition *Konkrete Kunst* (Concrete Art) in 1960 and *Bewogen Bewegung* (Movement in motion) in 1961. The two exhibitions faced separate problems, but had in common the aim of suggesting specific lines of contemporary artistic research.

*Konkrete Kunst*<sup>120</sup> was held in Zurich in June 1960, organized by Max Bill in collaboration with Max Bense and Margit Staber, gathered historical abstraction with latest tendencies represented by European and American researches, in other words New Constructivism and Informel Art.

The first section was divided between the irrationalism by Vasily Kandinsky and the rationalism by Piet Mondrian, through masters of the Bauhaus. The second, exemplified on this division, illustrated the *tachiste* line with works by Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Mark Tobey, Mario Deluigi, Jean Debuffet and Goerges Mathieu, while the one constructivist with works by Bruno Munari, Ellsworth Kelly, Antonio Calderara, Enzo Mari, Piero Dorazio, Almir Mavignier, Victor Vasarely, Francois Molnar, Heinz Mack and Francois Morellet.

Max Bill, according to Dorflies<sup>121</sup>, selected works which manifested the spatial function of the painting surface, whose organization originated the radiation center of a dynamic perception. Within the Constructivist line were created interesting parallels, for example, among works of Morellet and Dorazio, whom insisted on the common derivation from the grid of Mondrian, or between the work of Molnar and Munari, whose painting was based on the perceptive ambiguity between positive and negative derived from Vasarely (figs. 81-85)

Molnar, however, in the title of his work proposed a different way of conceiving the artwork: *Effet esthétique de l'inversion des fonctions par la fluctuation de l'attention* was a definition close to scientific experimentation - as well as in Morellet saw the common

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<sup>120</sup> *Konkrete Kunst. 50 Jahre Entwicklung*, catalogue, June 8<sup>th</sup> – July 14<sup>th</sup> 1960, Helmhaus, Zurich, 1960.

<sup>121</sup> G. Dorflies, *Ultime tendenze dell'arte oggi*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1961. «La generazione di campi di energia con l'aiuto del colore è una delle nuove possibilità. Un'altra possibilità è la creazione di ritmi, che non possono venir generati in altri modi. Questi sono contrassegni essenziali dell'arte concreta. Un quadro ha, oggi più che mai, una funzione spaziale esplicita. Esso è un centro di irradiazione, così come una sorgente di luce o una sorgente di calore. La differenza sostanziale consiste nel fatto che questa irradiazione proviene dall'organizzazione propria del quadro e quindi non deriva da una fonte di energia esterna rispetto all'opera d'arte. Max Bill» p.46.

participation to the GRAV – that to the traditional lyrical of Concrete painting. Finally, works of Mari and Mavignier approaching the industrial production, considered the common search inner to the design and graphic industry.

Konkrete Kunst had success in Italy and Croatia. In Italy, Gillo Dorfles in *Ultime tendenze nell'arte d'oggi*<sup>122</sup> (Recent tendencies in art today), dwelt on the exhibition in Zurich, because it gave value to the Concrete Art, despite the ideological forces implemented by Bill. The Swiss artist, in fact, justified revolutionary instances of New Concrete tendencies, considering them as a direct derivation from the manifesto *De Stijl* of 1918 and from the *Manifesto of Concrete Art* by Theo van Doesburg in 1930.

In that regard, Margit Staber<sup>123</sup> in the catalogue of the exhibition, identified the Concrete Art by a Gestalt foundation, in which visual perception was determined by organized structures without any metaphysical purpose. Staber's text was published in Zagreb in 1961<sup>124</sup>, accompanied by pictures of works of Kandinsky, Malevich, Balla, Mondrian and Lissitsky. The text was translated by Putar and it came with the new enthusiasm for the Neoplasticism and Constructivism revival that in the same year was felt in Zagreb, even by artists whom, like Alexander Srnec<sup>125</sup>, were slowly moving away from the Concrete Art to return to a direct reflection on works of masters such as Mondrian and Lissitsky (fig. 86).

The second exhibition, *Bewogen Beweging*<sup>126</sup>, was inaugurated in early March 1961 at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, organized by Jean Tinguely, Daniel Spoerri and Dieter Roth, directed by Wilhelm Sandberg and Pontus Hulten.

The main theme was the art movement in the Twentieth century from Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Alexander Calder to the mechanical insane sculptures of Jean Tinguely, that were main attractions for the public. Besides the Swiss artist, there were studies on the kinetic of bodies and on the perception of Jesu Raphael Soto, Pol Bury, George Rickey, Nicolas Schöffer and Italian Bruno Munari, T Group and Enzo Mari.

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid. «Il tentativo di dare – o di restituire – un valore al movimento è stato ottenuto da Max Bill attraverso un duplice meccanismo: quello di ‘storicizzare’ la mostra facendole percorrere le tappe che si snodano, a partire dal già citato acquarello di Kandinsky [...], attraverso le prime opere astratte (concrete) di Frank Kupka [...], fino a quelle futuriste più decisamente concrete [...] sino alle ultime leve [...]» p.110.

<sup>123</sup> M. Staber, *Verzeichnis der ausgestellten werke*, in *Konkrete Kunst*, op. cit., 1960, pp.9-57

<sup>124</sup> M. Staber, *Počeci konkretne umjetnosti*, «Čovjek i Prostor», no.106, January, Zagreb, 1961, p.7. The text also was translated by Radoslav Putar and it became important because was published on the only issue – for economical reasons - of «Čovjek i Prostor» in 1961.

<sup>125</sup> J.Denergi, *Srnec*, Sudac, Zagreb, 2008.

<sup>126</sup> *Bewogen Beweging*, catalogue, March 10<sup>th</sup> – April 17<sup>th</sup> 1961, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1961.

Objects by T Group were reviewed on «Domus» by Munari<sup>127</sup> pointing them as coming from the exhibition *Miriorama 8* shows held in December 1960 at the Bruno Danese Gallery. The objects – among them there were *Abstract video* by Anceschi, *Superficie magnetica* by Boriani, *Rotoplastik* by Colombo, *Miriamondo* by De Vecchi and *Sferisterio semidoppio* by Varisco (which in the meantime joined T Group) -, like many of works presented in Amsterdam, called for the direct manipulation by the viewer, but they were still far from a scientific planning, since they were still immersed in a New-Dadaist dimension (fig. 87).

The entire exhibit, in fact, was considered as the expression of a “rhetorical Dada” by the “veteran” Hans Richter<sup>128</sup>, whom was appalled by the participation of artists like Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, whose purpose was not to break as in the original Dada, but to satisfy commercial aims of the art system.

Richter, on the contrary, considered positively works of constructivist matrix produced by Bruno Munari – as said Richter - with his wires hanging<sup>129</sup> (figs. 88,89), Frank J. Malina and Nicolas Schöffer with their moving machines with light projections, adhering to technological models. The show stated that the function of car in art, no longer passed through the Futurist iconography of the representation of the movement, but through the presentation of the motion made by three-dimensional objects<sup>130</sup>. Even in Zagreb the attention of the press focused on the latter figure, however, was highlighted the constructivist component of East European matrix and its aesthetic, ethical and political values.

*Konkrete Kunst* and *Bewogen Bewegung* allowed, therefore, an international meeting of all that research organized around two main factors: the surface of the canvas was as an active field

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<sup>127</sup> B. Munari, *I giovani del « Gruppo T »*, «Domus», no.378, May, Milan, 1961, p. 53.

<sup>128</sup> H. Richter, *Exposition du mouvement à Amsterdam*, «Aujourd’hui Art et Architecture», n.31, May, Paris, 1961. «S’il est vrai que l’art Néo-Dada est très inventif, il n’est pas seulement cela. Nous avons dû faire face à une certaine époque à un public et à critique violemment hostiles. Nos actions, de par leur existence, étaient des ‘provocations’, le public les ressentait comme des chocs électriques. [...] Aujourd’hui, rien de tout cela, au contraire: des encouragements, des applaudissements de la critique et du public qui demande qu’on aille plus loin, jusqu’à un ‘double choc’, mais cela ne marche plus. [...] Au lieu de prendre des risques, on vend [...], l’art néo-dada entre dans les collections des galeries et des musées» pp. 54-55.

<sup>129</sup> B. Munari, *Arte come mestiere*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1966 (1975). «Che differenza c’è tra le mie macchine inutili e i mobili di Calder? [...] Si potrebbe dire che Calder è il primo scultore degli alberi [...]. Prendete un ramo con le foglie e osservate un mobile di Calder, hanno lo stesso principio, [...], lo stesso comportamento dinamico. Gli elementi che compongono una macchina inutile invece, ruotano tutti su se stessi e tra loro senza toccarsi, hanno una origine geometrica e sfruttano le due facce degli elementi rotanti per effetti di variazione cromatica» pp.9-10.

<sup>130</sup> At *Bewogen Bewegung* also Le Parc and Yvaral took part in, who published the work of GRAV Group by a manifesto entitled *Proposition sur le mouvement*. «Le but était pour eux d’échapper aux courants actuels de l’art dont l’aboutissement est le peinture unique, pour essayer, par un travail en équipe, de clarifier les différents aspects de l’art visuel [...] Nos expériences peuvent avoir encore une apparence traditionnelle – peinture, sculpture, reliefs – pourtant nous ne plaçons pas la réalité plastique dans la réalisation ou dans l’émotion mais dans la relation constante existant entre l’objet plastique et l’œil humain. [...] cette situation nouvelle placée en dehors de l’objet sur un plan non émotif – entre celui-ci et l’œil humain- constitue un nouveau matériau de base pour développer de nouvelles méthodes combinatoires, la statistique, la probabilité, ect», in *Stratégies de participation. GRAV – groupe del recherche d’ari visuel, 1960/1968*, op. cit., 1998, pp. 66-67.

of visual perception and the movement of objects as tactile experience of the viewer. Both factors would be channeled for the international exhibition in Zagreb.

§ *Origin of a name: Nove Tendencije.*

Almir Mavignier over the years justified the adoption of the title *Nove Tendencije* as a direct shot from an exhibition that was held in Milan in December 1959 at the Pagani Gallery and entitled *Stringenz-German New Tendencies*<sup>131</sup> were performed German artists including Heinz Mack, Otto Piene and the same Mavignier.

Gillo Dorfles<sup>132</sup> called the artists as representative of an anti-*taschisme* trend, as well as Klaus-Jürgen Ficher<sup>133</sup>, painter and organizer of *Stringenz*, wrote that artists were opposed to the rhetoric of *Tachisme*, because their works were conceived as a continuum painting where elements of paintings were independent from psychology and then objective.

Appealing to the Constructivist tradition, considered as a beginning point and not as a arrival one, for the methodological clarity that would be the basis of a new painting of the order. The theoretical position of Jürgen-Fichera, in fact, was found in the theory of the *Nuova concezione artistica*, in which had exhibited Enrico Castellani, Piero Manzoni and Almir Mavignier.

In addition Mavignier<sup>134</sup> supported similar ideas in an interview on Croatian magazine «Telegram» in August 1961, which showed a dualism in the exhibition: the monochrome painting *Tachiste*-derived and research of Constructivist matrix developed within Germany,

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<sup>131</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. Section *Umjetnici m*, folder *Mavignier*. Letter by Mavignier to Božo Bek of December 12<sup>th</sup> 1963 « [...] comme titre de l'exposition je proposais 'nouvelles tendances', terme empreinté à l'exposition réalisée par le galerie pagani de milan 'stringenz, les nouvelles tendances allemandes' à laquelle j'avais participé.». Also in 1969 Mavignier wrote the history of *Nove Tendencije* on the catalogue of *Tendencije 4*. «Za naziv izložbe predložio sam ime: 'nove tendencije'. Taj naziv potječe od imena izložbe: 'strogost – nove njemačke tendencije', koja je godine 1959. bila održana u galeriji Pagani u milanu.» in *Tendencije 4*, catalogue, May 5<sup>th</sup> – August 30<sup>th</sup> 1969, Galerija Suvremena Umjetnosti/Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb, 1970.

<sup>132</sup> G. Dorfles, op.cit., 1961. «Stringenz: gruppo artistico tedesco di cui fecero parte alcuni artisti di tendenza anti-tachista, come: Holweck, Jürgen.Fischer, Mack, Piene, Sellung, Mavignier, Vorberg e altri.» p. 219.

<sup>133</sup> K. Jürgen-Ficher, *Stringenz. Nuove Tendenze Tedesche*, in *Zero Italien. Azimut/Azimuth 1959/60 in Mailand. Und heute*, catalogue, December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1995 – February 25<sup>th</sup> 1996, Villa Merkel, Galerie der Stadt Esslingen, Cantz Verlag, Esslingen, 1995. « Solo un'arte, in cui di fronte all'istinto regni la riflessione, di fronte al caso l'occasione, e una chiarezza metodica, si dimostra costruttiva in un futuro. [...] Una nuova arte dell'ordine può collaborare con tutti gli elementi. Si tratta solo di rendere visibili questi elementi e di riunirli poi in una chiara operazione. [...] I mezzi della pittura e della scultura sono così ridotti al minimo espressivo sia per quello che riguarda la forma che il colore» p. 175.

<sup>134</sup> *Dijalog u prolazu. Na pragu novog?*, editorial, «Telegram», no.68, 11 August, 1961. « Situacija u umjetnosti u svijetu vrlo je kompleksa, postoje različita polazišta i različiti rezultati. [...] Eto, poslije tašizma, što je proizišao sigurno iz avanture Kandinskog, javljaju se umjetnici koji osjećaju potrebu za redom. Neki od njih su pokušali tražiti red u pojednostavljenju boje, što je dovelo do slikarstva sasvim monohromnog. Kad su stigli do monohronizma, susreli su s druge strane umjetnike koji već ranije rade na jednom drugom geometrijskom redu, umjetnike koji se zovu konkretizma. [...] Dakle imamo umjetnike koji proizlaze iz tašizma i preko monohronizma se susreću s onima koji dolaze iz geometrizma; a preko konkretizma. Svi se ti umjetnici približuju jednoj zajedničkoj platformi, što se vidi i na ovoj izložbi u Zagrebu» p.15.



Switzerland and Italy. Taken together, works exhibited in Zagreb were in opposition to American Abstract Expressionist, whose influence weighed too long in European painting. François Morellet, in fact, in the same interview, claimed that the new artistic methodology took example from the Mondrian's *Boogie Woogie* and not from Informel Art abstraction<sup>135</sup>.

However, the designation of *Nove Tendencije* - based on archival documents preserved at the Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti (Museum of Contemporary Art) in Zagreb - came after a long period of reflection in Spring 1961<sup>136</sup>.

The original group of invited artists were listed on a paper, dated on April 20<sup>th</sup> 1961, in which appeared eighteen names and their works, including Italian Piero Manzoni, Enrico Castellani, Piero Dorazio and Antonio Calderara. In the subsequent letter of invitation, the Director of Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, Božo (Božidar) Bek<sup>137</sup> (1926-2000) stated that artists had been invited on the advice of Mavignier and the aim was to highlight a new international avant-garde, referring to the exhibition that was initially titled as *Art Concret*.

Piero Manzoni and Enrico Castellani in their reply on April 27<sup>th</sup>, expressed some doubt for a show that they believed not in line with their artistic research. In addition, this letter probably followed the one which was written by Dada Maino<sup>138</sup>, a young painter whom approached the

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> In addition, we can assume that the term 'Tendency' had a general meaning that was spread by the artistic critique and historiography. For instance, taking as well-known its critic fortune since 20th century, several essays were published between 1959 and 1961 like *Dei valori nelle tendenze* (1959) by Umbro Apollonio, *Le tendenze della pittura contemporanea* (1960) by Nello Ponente or *Ultime tendenze nell'arte d'oggi* (1961) by Gillo Dorfles.

<sup>137</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT found. Folder Br.01-1961\_1961.NoveTendencije1. Correspondence Božo Bek. Letter from Calderara of May 12<sup>th</sup> 1961: «Chiar.mo Signor bozi bech, mi scuso di rispondere con tanto ritardo alla sua 21-4-61 [...]. La ringrazio del suo invito a partecipare all'esposizione 'art concret', che si terrà al museo di zagabria nel luglio 1961[...]». Example of application form. See appendix. Typewritten list of April 20<sup>th</sup> 1961. See appendix. Correspondence Božo Bek. Letter from Piero Dorazio of June 7<sup>th</sup> 1961. Correspondence Božo Bek. Letter from Piero Manzoni of April 27<sup>th</sup> 1961. «Mansieur, je bien reçu l'invitation à l'exposition 'Art Concret', et je vous remercie beaucoup. Avant de vous donner notre (moi et Castellani) assentiment, on voudrait savoir la liste des participant, etant que le nom 'Art Concret' et aussi la limitation de notre participation aux tableaux 'Achromes', nous donnet un raisonnable supçon de tomber dans une exposition dans la quelle notre participation n'aye pas de signification, et la raison d'etre de notre travail puisse etre sujet d'equivocue.». Correspondence Božo Bek. Letter from Piero Manzoni of April 27<sup>th</sup> 1961. «Mansieur, je bien reçu l'invitation à l'exposition 'Art Concret', et je vous remercie beaucoup. Avant de vous donner notre (moi et Castellani) assentiment, on voudrait savoir la liste des participant, etant que le nom 'Art Concret' et aussi la limitation de notre participation aux tableaux 'Achromes', nous donnet un raisonnable supçon de tomber dans une exposition dans la quelle notre. participation n'aye pas de signification, et la raison d'etre de notre travail puisse etre sujet d'equivocue.». Correspondence Božo Bek. Letter to May Bauermeister of June 8<sup>th</sup> 1961. See appendix. Correspondence Božo Bek. Letter from Almir Mavignier (croatian translation) of May 15<sup>th</sup> 1961. «Smijem li predložiti da naslov izložbe preinačite? Umjesto 'konkretna umjetnost', 'Avant-grade 1961'». Correspondence Božo Bek. Letter from Joël Stein of June 10th 1961. «Monsieur, Je viens de recevoir aujourd'hui une invitation à participer a l'exposition 1961 nouvelles tendances[...]». Correspondence Božo Bek. Letter from N Group of June 13th 1961. «Egregio sig, Bozo Bek, siamo il gruppo 'enne' di Padova di cui le deve aver scritto Almir Mavignier di Ulm. Le inviamo come da invito formulatoci da Mavignier le notizie riguardanti la nostra attività i quadri e gli oggetti li spediamo mercoledì 14 giugno con la massima urgenza».

<sup>138</sup> F. Battino, L. Palazzoli, *Piero Manzoni. Catalogue Raisonné*, ed. Vanni Scheiwiller, Milano, 1991. Letter from Manzoni to Dadamaino of March 1961. «Cara Dada, grazie per la tua lettera [...]. per il Meštrović, è molto gentile. Però si potrebbe scrivergli che per quanto siamo molto contenti della mostra, siamo dubbiosi sul risultato, data l'assoluta ignoranza dei problemi d'arte moderna, in generale, e di quelli dell'avanguardia in particolare, di Mavignier. Puoi scrivergli proprio usando queste mie parole, a mio nome [...]» p. 119.

group of artists of Azimut. In March 1961 Manzoni delegated Dada Maino to respond to Meštrović, to inform him of his skepticism towards ideas of Mavignier.

An opposed consideration was however by Antonio Calderara that, in a letter dated on May 12<sup>nd</sup>, become in the meantime a close friend of Mavignier – thanks to Mavignier his works attained success in Germany<sup>139</sup> - enthusiastically agreed to participate in the exhibition *Art Concret*. That title, in fact, could call up the exhibition in Zurich that was oriented towards *Taschisme* and *Concrete Art* working way, in contrast with the poetry of Manzoni, Dorazio and Castellani were going into opposite directions.

The doubt coincided with a second proposal, put forward by Mavignier in the letter on May 15<sup>th</sup> to Bek, which proposed *Avant-garde 1961* and extend the invitation to Joel Stein, Baumaister May, Herbert Oehme and Uli Pohl. Joel Stein, in fact, in a letter dated on June 10<sup>th</sup>, confirmed its presence by quoting the exhibition titled *1961 tendencies nouvelles*.

That indicated he had come to a definition of the title, between the second half of May and early June. To confirm that change, Mavignier in a letter to Meštrović on July 5<sup>th</sup>, stated the intention of the exhibition was to show to the Yugoslav public the “nouvelles tendances” - and not new vanguard - which had been disregarded by the Biennial of Venice. However, that reference was still vague. As a result of steps led to the definition of the title, we could be placed - between the letter of invitation to Baumaister on May 15<sup>th</sup> and Stein’s one on June 10<sup>th</sup> - an unpublished letter, sent from Bek to Meštrović, whom was in Ulm to organize *Jugoslawische Maler*, and dated on June 8<sup>th</sup> 1961.

Bek<sup>140</sup> did not consider appropriate to name the exhibition “Avant-garde” and suggested instead, after reading the article by Alexander Leisberg on «Kunstwerk» (no.10-11) in April-May 1961, to use terms as “Neue Tendenzen” or “Nove koncepcije”. It was clear that in a few days the change of the title, also meant a new direction to the original plan of Mavignier. In fact, the membership of N Group for *Nove Tendencije* came at the invitation of Mavignier, with a letter dated on June 13<sup>rd</sup>, so their works were added to ones of Morellet, Stein, Roth, Paul

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<sup>139</sup> A. Calderara, *Autobiografia*, in *Collezione Calderara*, Fondazione Antonio e Carmela Calderara, Skira, Geneve-Milan, 1998, pp.294-305.

<sup>140</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT found. NT Diraj filenovi izložbi. Letter by fax headed Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti of Zagabria, property architect Polak, that was sent from Božo Bek to Matko Meštrović of June 8<sup>th</sup> 1961. «Što se tiče izložbe ‘Art Concret’! [...]Još dvije stvari. Mislim da bi naziv izložbe svekako trebalo izmijeniti. ‘Avangarda’ mi djeluje pretenciozno. U ‘Kunstwerku’ za mjesec april-maj (br.10-11) objavljen je članaka Aleksandra Leisberga pod nazivom “Neue Tendenzen”. U članku se govori o imenima koja će biti zastupljana i na našoj izložbi. Predlažem da se za našu izložbu uzme ili taj naziv ili ‘Nove koncepcije»

Talman, Julio Le Parc, and among Croats, ones of Picelj and Knifer, reinforcing a rigorous research on the kinetic and perception of visual structures<sup>141</sup>.

§ *Nove Tendencije 1961: critic interpretations and formal differences in the exhibited works.*

*Nove Tendencije* was held in Zagreb at the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti from August 3<sup>rd</sup> to September 14<sup>th</sup> 1961. The selection of European artists was entrusted to Almir Mavignier, while the director Božo Bek and critics Radoslav Putar and Matko Meštrović were occupied of local artists and critical exegesis of works.

The latter represent the main lines of research of new tendencies: from *Achrome* by Piero Manzoni to *Surfaces* by Castellani and Picelj, from grids by Morellet and Dorazio to *pointillisme* by Mavignier and to *Meanders* by Knifer, and from *Dynamic Structures* by N Group to Le Parc and Paul Talman.

The structures of Biasi and Massironi were suspended in the space of the room, such as apertures through which light could cast virtual geometrical shadows on the wall. The display presented an analogy with the exhibition of the baker Giovanni Zorzon that a few months earlier, the N Group had inaugurated nearby its Studio. Other items of Chiggio and Landi were directly related to the urgent need to escape the Informel Art chaos, through a process of visual clarification, on the example of Mondrian<sup>142</sup>.

In accordance with indications by Putar in the catalog, the formal values of *Tachiste* matrix were found in Manzoni, Castellani, Dorazio, Mavignier and Knifer, while the Constructivism was present in works of the Group N and Picelj. The latter presented a series of *surfaces* that were the result of a recent development of his concretist painting. In fact, Picelj in 1957 proposed to Richter to decorate the Yugoslav pavilion for 1958 Expo' in Brussels, by means of panels whose formal solutions were borrowed from Victor Vasarely. That architectural relief conveyed a research on the perception of the dynamic and luminous ambiguity caused by the structure of the *Surface* which would be exhibited in 1961.

View all together, works were not large because their construction was conditioned from spaces offered by the ancient building, situated in the center of the old Zagreb, and consequently

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<sup>141</sup> Names of Calderara, Klein and Tinguely disappeared from the list.

<sup>142</sup> Archivio MSU. Fondo NT. Folder N Group. [See appendix](#).

were hung on walls or placed on pedestals that ended up debasing the time of renewal, proposing instead a traditional layout of the museum (figs. 90-107)

As for texts in the catalogue<sup>143</sup> were two types: on one hand the critical interventions by Matko Meštrović and Radoslav Putar, and on the other the writings by the same artists.

Meštrović continued the philosophical discourse, inspired by phenomenology, just addressed for the exhibition in Ulm, since that approach in the analysis of new tendencies was combined with the scientific attitude by which they were made.

Radoslav Putar, in his essay<sup>144</sup> used the term 'program' (program) to indicate that the ideal program of the exhibition contemplated both Informel Art and Constructivist operative declinations. Using to define the programmatic intent of new tendencies in their Neoplasticism derivated by Theo Van Doesburg and the *Manifesto of Concrete Art*, published in Paris in 1930<sup>145</sup>.

The unification of *Tachiste* drifts within the panorama of Concrete art had similarities with the operation by Max Bill<sup>146</sup> in *Konkrete Kunst* and with a text by Giulio Carlo Argan, published in Italy on «Il Verri» in June 1961<sup>147</sup>. In fact, Argan indicated the absence of a program in Informel Art, corresponded to the programmatic statements of manifestos drawn by Constructivist and Neoplasticism tendencies, citing as example the *Manifesto of Concrete art* in 1930.

New tendencies, therefore, had a program, perhaps not yet precisely defined, but still able to bring them within the panorama of historical avant-garde. Finally, return to the catalogue the

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<sup>143</sup> *Nove Tendencije*, catalogue, August 3<sup>rd</sup> – September 14<sup>th</sup> 1961, Galerija Suvremena Umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1961.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. «[...]veliko da pravom perspektivom životu, naivrednijm faktima i oblicima aktualne stvarnosti i predvidljive budućnosti. Uistinu, djela plastičara konkretne umjetnosti jesu svijetla i na svojoj frontalnoj liniji – beskompromisna afirmacija života. [...] u konkretizacijama ‘apsolutnih vrijednosti’ djela mondrianovih, u ideologiji bauhausa i u koncepcijama ruskih konstruktivista [...] njihova imena, kao i ona drugih, koji su prisutni na ovoj izložbi, ne pripadaju sva nekoj određenoj, zatvorenoj grupi, a naziv ‘konkretna umjetnost’ pristaje uz njihova djela u općenitom, djelomice uobičajenom smislu upotrebe toga termina. Prvi ga je upotrebio doesburg već 1930 godine kad je pokušao da ime ‘apstraktne umjetnosti’ zamijeni nazivom ‘konkretna umjetnosti’, a odnosio se na djelovanje smjera ‘neoplastičara’[...] neuspjeh, promašaj i poraz ne mogu isključiti iz programa onih koji nisu zadovoljni s inventarom prošlosti i sadašnjosti, ali svatko pada u nekom smjeru».

<sup>145</sup> The date ‘1930’ and Paris were also in Argan’s essay. The coincidence could suggest that Putar knew it. However in the *Nove Tendencije* found, exactly into Folder Putar – Venezia 1976, there is the copy of the catalogue *Konkrete Kunst*. That could mean both Argan and Putar referred to the Zurich exhibition in 1960, where the Van Doesburg’s manifesto was quoted in.

<sup>146</sup> *Konkrete Kunst*, op.cit. 1960, pp. 23-24.

<sup>147</sup> G. C. Argan, *Salvezza e caduta dell’arte moderna*, «Il Verri», no.3, June, 1961. «La possibilità di educare o formare o riformare la società *through design*, e cioè attraverso un *training* tecnico-progettistico, era dunque subordinata al fatto che l’artista-progettista potesse controllare e orientare lo sviluppo progressivo della tecnica e, in un ambito più largo, il comportamento attivo o produttivo della società: ciò che significa assumere la direzione politica della produzione. [...] L’Informale non è una tendenza organizzata intorno a un programma e, soprattutto, non è una tendenza d’avanguardia perché, quando non si riconosce più nella storia il fondamento e il principio strutturale o direttivo dell’esperienza e dell’attività umane, non ci si può più collegare consapevolmente al passato né pretendere di considerare l’avvenire. [...] siamo tutti d’accordo che l’Informale non è un’arte d’avanguardia: bisogna anzi andare oltre, e riconoscere senza tremare che la posizione attuale degli artisti, come di tutti gli intellettuali borghesi, è decisamente una posizione di retroguardia» pp. 4-30.

writings of artists, in some cases similar to aphorisms, was not a new idea, since it had already been used in *Konkrete Kunst* or in *Monochrome Malerei* catalogues, but it was useful to confirm the ideology of an event that was intended by the artists' point of view and not by a cultural establishment or trade.

The statements were favourably received by the local press, which focused on Italian artists, and especially on N Group's works. However, the latter were also used to denigrate the event, as for example in the section *Postscriptum* by art critic Nada Marinković<sup>148</sup> (1921-1998), the work by Costa in 1961, *Dynamic Vision*, ironically proved the exemplification of how new tendencies materialized their items in a short time compared to the long working of traditional arts. In addition, a *Visione Dinamica* by Biasi in 1960, was used in support of the second page of the «Telegram»<sup>149</sup>. Le Parc also suffered darts of conservative critics. Peić Matko (1923-1999), in fact, claimed that Le Parc's work was used for diagnose astigmatism<sup>150</sup>.

In addition, the Massironi's work made in 1960, *Struttura trasparente con occhielli* (Transparent structure with loops), appeared in the only article in favour of the exhibition, published on «Telegram» and written by Boris Kelemen<sup>151</sup> (1930-1983), critic and art historian, secretary of the Gallery.

He turned his attention to the principal factor, present in the works, which *Nove Tendencije* highlighted: the transition from easel painting to the object as structure of optical and dynamic values. Kelemen showed their historical matrix: Constructivism, Mondrian and the Bauhaus for N Group, Le Parc and Morellet, *Tachisme* for Mavignier and Castellani, and at last New Dadaism for Manzoni's drifts. Also showed the anti-romantic character of new tendencies and their stringent current events, though still not understood by the public.

Finally, the work of Dorazio, *Orange* (1960), one by Marc Adrian and one by François Morellet were used for the promotion of *Nove Tendencije*, on the back cover of the magazine «Republika»<sup>152</sup>. Compared with the probable exhibition poster, designed by Ivan Picelj, the datum that emerged indicated the presence of a graphic taste linked to pagination of Concrete abstract graphic<sup>153</sup> (figs. 107,108).

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<sup>148</sup> N. Marinković, *Post Scriptum, Stvaralastvo I strpljenje*, «Telegram», August 11<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>149</sup> See «Telegram», n.71, September, Zagreb, 1961, p.2.

<sup>150</sup> M. Peić, *Mala Likovne Lexicon, modelacia I astigmatizam*, «Telegram», no.71, September, Zagreb, 1961, p.2.

<sup>151</sup> B. Kelemen, *od slike do objekta*, «Telegram», no.73, September 15<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1961, p. 5.

<sup>152</sup> «Republika», n.9, September, 1961.

<sup>153</sup> *Ivan Picelj. Kristal i phoba/ 1951-2005*, catalogue, April 3<sup>rd</sup> – May 15<sup>th</sup> 2005, Galerija Klovičevi dvori, Zagreb, Galerija Klovičevi dvori, Zagreb, 2005. The poster was redesigned by Picelj in 2007, by his memories because the original had been lost. In fact, in the early Sixties Picelj worked as graphic artist and used to apply similar forms to

Since 1959, in Milan, the young artists whom rejected the Informel Art painting, gathered around the Azimut Gallery, directed by Manzoni and Castellani, with whom Agostino Bonalumi collaborated for a short time. Artists, however, distinguished themselves in two different groups: T Group and N Group. For them, the main problem was how to escape the bonds of a style that was hypertrophied in the Informel Art painting, which reached the zero degree in their own language, disconnecting from society, putting the “world in brackets” and preferring subjective time with to the historical one.

In contrast the N and T groups, resumed the historical time, making it an object using kinetic works, or works in which the motion was virtual, produced by the perception of the viewer. The return to the social reality was mediated by Futurism, Dadaism, and Neoplasticism avant-garde traditions. However, they considered only plastic and visual aspects, through a process of reduction in the surface of works to its basic values of volume and color, to resume a direct dialogue with the viewer based on the tactile and visual experience.

In that first phase, differences between groups were not so pronounced, because both used industrial materials and flat or solid geometries to give shape to their creations, which in turn conveyed an important factor: the pursuit of objectivity and impersonality of the work, which found the first event in the *Nuova Concezione Artistica* in 1960.

That was opposed to Informel painters whom made impersonal painting through time of the unconscious and in the gesture of psychic automatism. However, from Informel young artists drawn a fundamental teaching on the surface of canvas as the field of random events and re-experienced by the viewer. The randomness, however, was mitigated by design - not yet an actual programming - that clarify the creative process for artists and viewers. In addition, groups referred to the past of the avant-garde to find a principle of continuity that lost with the Informel Art and at the same time began to move toward a vision of technology and rational ability to make a difference.

The latter new lines of Italian art had parallels in the Croatian art scene, in which Informel Art researches were not perceived as academy to overcome, but how modernity to incorporate.

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design posters for exhibitions like *Gliha*, *Slikarstvo skulptura 61*, *Kulmer*, *Jordan*, *Herman*, held between 1960 and 1961 at the Galerija suvremene umjetnosti of Zagreb.

In fact, the direct continuity with historical Constructivism was warned in advance of the appearance of Informel Art research. As a consequence, Ivan Picelj, Vjenceslav Richter and Vlado Krtisl innovated the constructivist tradition, while others like Julie Knifer and Marijan Jevšovar, passed from Informel Art to New Dada solutions. In both cases, also in Zagreb arose the need to avoid in works any emotional and individualistic emphasis, supporting, to a greater extent than in Italy, the role of the artist engaged in society.

Such a cultural situation allowed Italian and European artists, in particular to find favorable conditions for groping to emancipate themselves from the art trade system. In that regard, a common element to both areas of art, Croatian and Italian, was to have re-read the work of Mondrian, according to two interpretation keys: in the first read Neoplasticism was considered the example of order and operational clarity in which, however, as stated by Enrico Castellani<sup>154</sup> and previously by Vera Horvat-Pintarić, was predominantly a spiritual dimension, not metaphysical but ethical. The second read reconsidered the Neoplasticism order by scientific and rationalist bases, that found in psychological Gestalt a justification in materialistic and sociological terms. The two ways had long term repercussions even within new artistic researches. The first event of the *Nove Tendencije*, therefore, was encouraged by means of cultural exchanges among artists. On the other hand, was influenced by the relaxed political atmosphere that Yugoslavia Gouvernement entertained in with other European nations<sup>155</sup>. In conclusion, the exhibition could be regarded as a test for the development of early kinetic and Concrete art forms which afterwards would be known as “programmed”.

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<sup>154</sup> E. Castellani, op. cit., 1960. «[...] (per quanto interessanti, i problemi della topologia non ci daranno mai che un'informazione molto parziale delle conquiste dello spirito, e, una volta posti, ci vuol ben altro che un quadro ad olio per risolverli; e la Gestalt Theorie in fase creativa non potrà creare che mostruosità estetizzanti per ch  avulsa da ogni nozione di tempo».

<sup>155</sup> S. Clissold, *Storia della Jugoslavia*, Einaudi, Torino, 1969, pp. 274-293.

### Chapter 3<sup>rd</sup>. A new artistic form in the technological society times.

In the Summer of 1961, the sociologist Gianni Scalia<sup>1</sup> identified in Italy a direct relationship between new business - during the economic boom - and contemporary Italian society, in which the urban landscape became 'industrial' and human relationships were enriched by the presence of machine. His action turned the «*homo faber*» to «*homo technicus*»<sup>2</sup>.

A first consequence from a philosophic and aesthetic point of view - albeit in a contrasting positions landscape - was the idea of “the death of art” corresponded to an integration phase between arts and technology. A second consequence, tied with the urgency to encode a language was able to express contents of such evolutionary process. The writer Elio Vittorini<sup>3</sup>, for example, believed, in his contemporary literature, Italian intellectuals regarded the factory by pre-industrial tones - borrowed from Nineteenth-century culture - which were not adapted to new developments in the worker's life whom was experiencing the changing rhythms of production.

The debate gathered between 1961 and 1963, on the pages of «*Tempi Moderni*», «*Menabò*», «*Nuova Corrente*», «*Il Mulino*» and «*Il Verri*». Similarly in visual arts, artists and critics warned changes were not at the level of representation that painting and sculpture gave of an industrial nature, but how relating to objects produced by it. A solution was to consider the vanguard of the beginning century - Futurism, Constructivism and Neoplasticism - in order to rediscover the actuality to overcome limitations of the Informel Art research.

However there were two orientations: in the first the avant-garde were intended as likely sources of inspiration for the experimental research while in the second one were experienced as a recovery, sometimes naïve and rhetorical, of formal solutions were just been encoded. The new attention given to Mondrian, for example, in the essays by Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti<sup>4</sup> - which covers the historical development of the Neoplasticism form - and Filiberto Menna<sup>5</sup> - focused on

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<sup>1</sup> G. Scalia, *Per una scienza della partecipazione*, in *Valori e miti nella società italiana dell'ultimo ventennio (1940-1960)*, «*Tempi Moderni*», no.6, July - September, 1961, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> G. Scalia, *Dalla natura all'industria*, «*Menabò*» no. 4, Turin, 1961. «Il concetto di industria [...] non è più quello inteso nel senso ottocentesco: l'affermazione di un potere 'progressivo' dell'uomo. [...] L'industria, ora, significa potenzialità operativa di dominio, costruzione, controllo; decisione e programmazione; possibilità reale di scegliere un piano di conoscenza e di azione. Il futuro non è più lo sviluppo di una nuova legalità oggettiva ma la progettazione di 'fatti' come atti determinati da scelte facoltative. In tal senso se l'industria non era più il risultato del fato o della necessità ma di una possibilità di scelta l'homo faber si fa homo technicus, funzionalizzato in una realtà tecnico logico-industriale che è una nuova natura» pp. 99-108

<sup>3</sup> E. Vittorini, *Industria e letteratura*, «*Menabò*», no.4, Turin, 1961 «[...] è innegabile che la letteratura, in confronto alla trasformazione grandiosa e terribile che avviene nella realtà intorno a noi [...], risulta nel suo complesso storicamente più arretrata non solo della sociologia neomarxista o di alcune tecnologie ma anche di attività artistiche come la pittura o come la musica che almeno si sono lasciate alle spalle [...] la loro dimensione melodica di vecchie complicità della 'natura'» p.17.

<sup>4</sup> C. L. Ragghianti, *Mondrian e l'arte del xx secolo*, Comunità, Milano, 1962.

<sup>5</sup> F. Menna, *Mondrian: cultura e poesia*, edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma, 1962.



the birth and subsequent relapse of the Neoplasticism theory - found between 1961 and 1962 new vigor was due to events like *La Nuova Concezione Artistica*, *Konkrete Kunst* and *Nove Tendencije*.

In Yugoslavia, in parallel, the relationship between art and the technology was studied by the art critic Oto Bihalji Merin<sup>6</sup> whom read, for example, works of Mondrian and Gabo through their formal correspondence with the artificial world of the technological society (figs. 1,2). In addition, Yugoslavia helped to design the new industrial landscape during the *Esposizione Internazionale del Lavoro* (International Exhibition of Labour), held in Turin in 1961.

On the other hand, new Italian research from Milan and Rome, met in Lissone for its namesake Award in September 1961. Among these N Group showed symptoms of a change took place after the first *Nove Tendencije* exhibition, showing affinity with GRAV and leading their own research within confines of the debate on industrial design. Finally, on November 1961 thanks to Umberto Eco, Italian public was brought to the attention of the artistic direction taken by N and T groups and other authors, where the industrial culture was taken from an original aesthetic form.

*§1. Places and topics: the debate on the society and arts in the industrial age.*

The annual *Convegno Internazionale Artisti Critici e Studiosi d'Arte* (International Conference Artists Critics and Scholars of Art) of Verucchio in editions of 1959 and 1960 was the main point of the debate on the relationship between art and science. Among proposals set out therein, such as ones by the scholar of logic Raffaele Bosari<sup>7</sup> offered a first attempt to combine mathematical sciences with the contemporary artistic research. In fact, Bosari insisted on the possibility the artistic process would be read by means of mathematical logic in order to achieve an objective aesthetic judgment.

According to Bosari, it could get an objective cognitive value, considering, in particular, the Informel painting and experimental sciences shared the absolute confidence in the datum of experience. However, the Informel painting was based on an process in which the phenomenon

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<sup>6</sup> Oto Bihalji Merin pubblicò *Prodori moderne umetnosti*, Nolit, Beograd, 1962.

<sup>7</sup> R. Bosari, *Arte e scienza. VIII Convegno Internazionale Artisti Critici e Studiosi d'Arte*, Rimini, Verucchio, San Marino, 1959, in *Testimonianze' dagli atti VIII-IX-X-XI Convegno Internazionale Artisti Critici Studiosi d'Arte, Rimini, Verucchio, San Marino 1959-1960-1961-1962*, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma, 1963, pp. 18-20.

was not repeatable, as in sciences, in laboratory and therefore that art was intended as a learning experience but pre-scientific.

The abstract painting, then, was not interpreted only by a formal level - according to principles of order or disorder of the sign - but through data of experience contained in it<sup>8</sup>.

An opposite position, but focused on the same issue of the cognitive experience value, in 1960 came from Galvano Della Volpe<sup>9</sup> in *Critica del gusto*. In the chapter *Laocoonte 1960*, Della Volpe through a sociological and Marxist reading, pointed out that signs, lines and colors were formally empty and varied according to changes in their function.

In Art - as in Giotto or in contemporary painting - for example, the straight line conveyed a content, which was experienced, but that was internal to the illusory space of representation. In contrast, the same straight line contained in a graph showing the market, referred to the outside world and then to secondary function shared by the observer.

Borsari and Della Volpe as a consequence did not confuse the art in science or science in art but, giving value to the experience, they attributed even a new importance to the role of the observer or user. These readings and others like them, however, were misunderstood and caused, between artists and critics, of the old guard of Italian culture, the alarmism about the “death of art” - not by Hegel’s meaning<sup>10</sup>, but as disappearance of the idealistic category of the 'Beauty'.

On that view, for example, there was the philosopher Pietro Raffa<sup>11</sup>, whom recovered on the one hand the positive sense of the “death of art” - which was foreshadowed by Mondrian - as a transformation of painting and sculpture in architecture, on the other hand, understood in negative the constant state of existential angst conveyed by Jackson Pollock. In fact, in the case of American painter, the “death of art” derived from having lost its ability to act in the real, because of the consumer society and the culture industry. That definition covers the system of art and the idea of avant-garde was transmitted by early Nineteenth-century artistic movements. The industrial culture, therefore, meant the contemporary avant-garde was not a break with tradition - such as Cubism against the painting of the Nineteenth century - but only with itself.

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<sup>8</sup> R. Borsari, *Estetismo e Scientismo, IX Convegno Internazionale Artisti Critici e Studiosi d'Arte, Rimini, Verucchio, San Marino, 1960*, in *Testimonianze' dagli atti VIII-IX-X-XI Convegno Internazionale Artisti Critici Studiosi d'Arte, Rimini, Verucchio, San Marino 1959-1960-1961-1962*, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma, 1963, pp. 20-28.

<sup>9</sup> G. Della Volpe, *Critica del Gusto*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1960.

<sup>10</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Arte e morte dell'arte*, Mondadori, Milano, 2000, pp.44-71.

<sup>11</sup> P. Raffa, *Studi sulla "morte dell'arte"*, «Nuova Corrente», no. 27, July - September, Genoa, 1962. «L'esteticità degli oggetti industriali non ci porta ad isolarci dal piano pratico-esistenziale dell'esperienza, come invece avviene con le opere dell'arte bella, perché ciò non è conforme alla loro natura[...]. Mentre nella fruizione dell'arte bella, attingendo quell'universo irreali [...] facciamo un'esperienza squisitamente contemplativa, qui invece la natura dell'oggetto esige che l'atteggiamento contemplativo sia per così dire bloccato a metà strada e incorporato a mo' di dimensione nel comportamento pratico-esistenziale, il quale non cessa affatto di essere tale, ma si arricchisce di un supplemento di coscienza estetica» p. 54.

Each innovative proposal, in fact, arose at the same time as avant-garde and tradition of another one previous or next. In that game of mirrors, as well as logical mathematical analysis, to the sociological and Marxist, was intended the phenomenological interpretation thanks to two philosophers, Antonio Banfi and Dino Formaggio.

According to Banfi<sup>12</sup>, in a technological-scientific society attended the end of 'beautiful' art - understood as the end of ideal beauty -, applied arts acquired a new value through industrial design. The traditional painting and sculpture were no longer able to reflect the actual industrial experience, while applied arts were no longer considered mere decoration. Consequently, the industrial design as it gave forms specific utility functions, was directly connected with the phenomenon lived from the experience. Dino Formaggio, between 1961 and 1962, starting from positions close to Banfi's ones, focused on the relationship between 'artisticità' (artness) and functionality.

According to Formaggio<sup>13</sup>, contemporary art was no longer aimed at the contemplation of nature, but assumed a specific function within the scientific society, its purpose was to free artwork matters<sup>14</sup>. Formaggio then, referring to the speech given by Tomas Maldonado<sup>15</sup> in the

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<sup>12</sup>A. Banfi, *Filosofia dell'arte*, Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1962. From *L'arte funzionale (1955?)*, posthumous published on «Il Verri», n. 4, August, Milan, 1960. «La crisi dell'arte contemporanea si rivela nella sua evasività, compiacendosi di raffinatezze formali o di esasperazioni di anomali contenuti, fuori della concreta umana realtà. A ciò si rapportano l'isolamento dell'artista, la sua inquietudine, il carattere riflesso e la cerchia stessa dell'interesse artistico, l'indifferenza del pubblico, le stesse condizioni del mercato d'arte. [...]Ora è caratteristico che di fronte a tal crisi dell'arte pura, l'arte minore, applicata, funzionale, manifesta un vivace risveglio, germogliando là dove l'altra di isterilisce, conquistando nuovi campi, ridestando nuovi valori. [...] E mentre l'esigenza di un realismo sociale rinnova la problematica e la spinta dell'arte pura, si afferma il problema di creare un'atmosfera vivente di artisticità che penetri e consacri l'azione umana in tutti i suoi aspetti, nei suoi oggetti, nei suoi strumenti, nella stessa potenza meccanica della sua tecnica. Bisogna tuttavia riconoscere che solo un pregiudizio romantico può vedere una contraddizione tra l'arte e la produzione industriale in serie. Il pezzo unico, sul mercato artigianale, ha un valore morale e materiale che spesso poco ha a che fare col suo pregio artistico. E il lavoro industriale può garantire un progetto di grande perfezione, una materia adatta, una forma raffinata di accorgimenti tecnici, una sensibilità al variare e al diffondersi delle esigenze e dei gusti. Può soprattutto assicurare all'artisticità un sempre più largo campo, una sempre più immediata presenza liberatrice alla vita, a tutta la vita di tutti, da sé ed in sé consacrantesi, così che l'umanità vi si riconosca e vi si celebri, così che la benedizione dell'arte accompagni ogni nostro lavoro e ogni nostro riposo» pp. 138-139.

<sup>13</sup>D. Formaggio, *L'idea di artisticità. Dalla «morte dell'arte» al «ricominciamento» dell'estetica filosofica*, Casa Editrice Ceschina, Milano, 1962. Among thirty-six thesis by Dino Formaggio, the 29° concerned the art form in contemporary art: «essa non può essere considerata sullo stesso piano della tecnica ripetitiva o meccanica, e meno che mai limitata negli schemi chiusi della precettistica di mestiere. Al contrario, essa si pone, da un lato, come l'ideale stesso di liberazione di ogni mondo di lavoro, di ogni alienazione del lavoro in tecnica meccanica o industriale[...]: ed allora la fenomenologia della tecnica artistica rivela l'ideale mondo di un lavoro e di una società interamente disalienati, liberati dai giochi paralizzanti della tecnica per la tecnica e dell'arte per l'arte; dell'altro lato, infatti, la tecnica artistica si pone – dopo aver frantumato le barriere che tenevano in separazione mortificante il mondo della tecnica e del lavoro, da una parte, e dall'altra il mondo iperuranico e utopico dell'arte – come la legge stessa costrutturante del farsi della'arte, come un momento essenziale dell'idea di artisticità, considerata nell'atto stesso del suo esistenzialarsi. L'arte [...] torna ad incontrare il mondo della tecnica e del lavoro» p. 320.

<sup>14</sup>D. Formaggio, *Artisticità e funzionalità*, in «Arte Figurativa», no. 54, November – December, Milano, 1961, pp.42-49. Formaggio esplicita il nuovo senso storico che l'arte e la tecnica andavano assumendo «in tutto il mondo della tecnica, in ogni atto di tecnicità che l'uomo compie[...] vi è una uscita, od almeno un tentativo di uscita sul piano di qualche cosa che costituisce la intera liberazione significativa di quel cercarsi e di quel tentare; è allora che l'opera diventa opera d'arte» pp.47-48.

<sup>15</sup>T. Maldonado, *Disegno e le nuove prospettive industriali*, in *Avanguardia e razionalità*, Einaudi, Torino, 1974. «Il disegno industriale non è un'arte, e il disegnatore industriale non è un artista. La maggior parte degli oggetti di "good design" esposti nei musei e nella gallerie sono anonimi, spesso creati in uffici tecnici da impiegati subordinati, che non si

opening of the 1958 Brussels Expo, noted that the industrial design met technical and artistic quality.

In industrial design, also the author's signature was no longer part of the work and therefore it was necessary to organize institutions were able to “educate engineers”, through a specific program which would bring together the art and technique at a methodological level. The relationship among the art, technology and use of mathematics in the aesthetics, and out of Italy and in the mid-Fifties, was analyzed by two important exegetes: Lewis Mumford<sup>16</sup> and Max Bense.

In the U.S., Mumford was linked to American pragmatism, and his speculations were collected and published in *Art and Technics* in 1952. Mumford – whose Italian edition dates 1961 for the publisher Comunità<sup>17</sup> - supported the positive and mutual exchange between arts and technology, the latter understood as a mental model for a rational understanding of the world. Furthermore, the technique represented a practical experience through objects produced by the machine that, by means to mass production, permitted improving the social welfare.

The other, Max Bense<sup>18</sup>, in Germany was a well-known scholar in the Theory of Information studies and in 1960 he published his fourth and final volume of *Aesthetica*, entitled *Programmierung der Schönen* (The programming of beauty). Bense took the theory of cybernetics, of the American Norbert Wiener<sup>19</sup>, to implement a reconciliation between new technological world of the first computers and research of artistic and Concrete rationalist abstraction<sup>20</sup>. At the base of his studies there was a mathematical calculation of the probability that from its application in industrial design ended up investing even a work of art, since in both cases objects were meant to convey a certain amount of aesthetics information (according to the scheme sender-message-receiver).

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confiderebbero mai degli artisti. Invece gli orrori dell'industria odierna sono realizzati in nome delle bellezza e dell'arte» p. 59.

<sup>16</sup> L. Mumford, *From Handicraft to Machine Art*, in *Art and Technics*, Columbia University Press, New York-London, 1952. «From my point of view, the greatest developments to be expected of technics in future, [...] will not be, as we are usually led to think, in the direction of universalizing even more strenuously the wasteful American system of mass production: no, on the contrary, it will consist in using machines on a human scale, directly under human control[...],» p. 78. E come diretta conseguenza l'effetto delle machine nella produzione artistica è «to make us conscious of the play of human personality [...]. The Artists who have taught us most about the values of the machine in our day – I would single out particularly Alfred Stieglitz, Brancusi and Naum Gabo – have been remarkable for this exquisite touch, for this sense of a perfection in form achieved by leaving the minimum human imprint on a natural form or a purely geometrical shape[...]» p.82.

<sup>17</sup> L. Mumford, op. cit., 1961.

<sup>18</sup> M. Bense, *Aesthetica (IV). Programmierung des Schönen. Allgemeine Texttheorie und Textästhetik*, Agis, Krefeld/Baden-Baden, 1960.

<sup>19</sup> R. Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1950.

<sup>20</sup> M. Bense, *Aesthetica (III). Ästhetik und Zivilisation. Theorie der ästhetischen Zivilisation*, Agis, Krefeld/Baden-Baden 1958. In 1958 Bense studied the relation between culture and the Theory of Information, according to Abraham Moles and his theories.

Therefore from the classical idea of artistic creation, uncontrollable and craft, it came to that of a programming and industrial production, so the possibility of useful design to define an exact aesthetic value in accordance with principles of the Gestalt. These two positions in Italy found the attention respectively of Giulio Carlo Argan, whom was an admirer of Mumford, and Gillo Dorfles whom disagree with theories of Bense. Argan, whose thought was part of a sociological aesthetics, indicated in the social function - and therefore the convergence with Mumford - the main purpose of art and technology. Dorfles, on the contrary, considered reductive the Bense's thought, even if applicable to the Concrete painting, it was not to Informel Art. However, two orientations, the one concerned the function of the art work and the other the structure of the language used, were also at the centre of the debate on industrial culture, which was initially preferred in the field of literature.

The discussion climax took place in 1962 as part of the novel production, in which emerged a dilemma between industrial issue and correct language used to define it. The first term in question concerned the issue of the worker in the industry that was not a member of the political ideology of Italian Left-Wing, as new workers were also placed in the flow of mass consumption.

For example, in the novel by Giovanni Arpino, entitled *Una nuvola d'ira*<sup>21</sup>, confrontation between old and new worker world was consumed in the powered Turin in 1961. According to Renato Barilli<sup>22</sup>, that novel represented the new political-existential malaise of the average, while it was opposed to another contemporary novel, *Memoriale* by Paolo Volponi<sup>23</sup>. In the latter, Barilli trace a new form of alienation experienced by the worker, whose main problem was not political but psychological.

However, both novels attended the second term of the dilemma between its language and industrial thematic, in fact they persisted in using a Neorealist language - that is adherent to the presumed people language which still derived from natural and romantic Nineteenth-century culture.

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<sup>21</sup> G. Arpino, *Una nuvola d'ira*, Mondadori, Milano, 1974 (1962). «Oltre le ondulazioni dei giardini, erano le centinaia di chilometri quadrati della Fiera[...]un immenso viale s'apriva oltre la cancellata della Fiera, illuminato da una fuga infinita di neon sospesi. [...]Camminavano piegati, alzando la testa solo per un'occhiata rapida agli enormi padiglioni, irti di luci, che chiudevano come un muro, al fondo, il viale rettilineo deserto. - Ecco, il cinerama è lì- indicò Angelo. -E tu? Dove vai?-. -Al padiglione della tecnica, dove vuoi che vada... Quando sei stufa, mi trovi là: non siamo in Africa- e proseguì senza aspettarmi» p.91 et seq.

<sup>22</sup> R. Barilli, *Le tentazioni della "letteratura industriale"*, «Il Mulino», no.119, September, Bologna, 1962. «Il rifiuto ad assimilare la "civiltà tecnologica" avviene, e in modo ben più grave, in un altro senso: è lo stesso patrimonio linguistico, tecnico, stilistico di cui si vale il narratore a mostrarsi incongruo a far presa su di una simile realtà» p. 949.

<sup>23</sup> P. Volponi, *Memoriale*, Einaudi, 1981 (Garzanti, 1962). «La fabbrica mi appariva sempre più bella e mi sembrava che si rivolgesse direttamente a me, come se fossi l'unico o uno dei pochi in grado e ben disposto a capirla [...] è [...] bella la fabbrica, con i suoi vetri e metalli, con le grandi arcate azzurre e tutte le macchine in fila, quando è deserta e sembra che tutti gli uomini che lavorano a quei posti puliti, vicini ai banchi e alle manopole, debbano naturalmente essere sinceri e coraggiosi» p. 42 et seq.

The problem, for example, was highlighted by the critic Marco Bosselli<sup>24</sup>, in *Taccuino Industriale*<sup>25</sup> by Ottiero Ottieri, in which the theme was innovative - factory work as a positive social experience - but the story was still the traditional kind. Therefore the solution proposed by Boselli was to practice a linguistics testing that buckled under conditions and timing of industrial production.

A third presentation was by Italo Calvino, whom enlarged the scope of the debate between tradition and experimentation, to all arts. Calvino<sup>26</sup> defended the rationalist line of visual culture of the Twentieth century, indicating in geometric abstraction, in architecture and industrial design inherited from the Bauhaus, the ability to redeem the mechanized world of human labor. Therefore, the artificial environment of the industry was naturalized, but it was opposed the other Informel Art nature - visceral and unpredictable - in mutual dialectical relationship. For the artistic avant-garde, then, two natures, in turn, were steeped in tradition and experimentation, without interruption.

A final meeting place for literary and artistic critique, in October 1963 in Palermo was the conference dedicated to avant-garde arts. For the occasion was formed the 63 Group<sup>27</sup>, composed among others by the above-mentioned Barilli, Nanni Balestrini and Edoardo Sanguineti. It was attended by scholars and art critics Dorfles, Umberto Eco, Achille Perilli and Nello Ponente.

The avant-garde matter, according to Sanguineti, was not only linked to linguistic choices, to subvert recognized standards, but also to its ideological action. The concept of ideology, however, was in sharp contrast to the previous neo-realist avant-garde. According to Sanguineti<sup>28</sup>, in fact, it

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<sup>24</sup> M. Bosselli, *Narrativa sotto accusa. A proposito di letteratura e industria*, «Nuova Corrente», no.25, January - March, Genoa, 1962. «[...]è proprio vero che la speranza umanistica e romantico-naturalistica è sempre viva nel cuore degli scrittori.[...] si dovrebbe pensare che quando lo scrittore sceglie per argomento l'industria o entra nella fabbrica, non ha bisogno di ricorrere al linguaggio o entra nella fabbrica, non ha bisogno di ricorrere al linguaggio sperimentale. È un problema che non lo interessa; ma egli ha torto perché la crisi del linguaggio derivante dal suo "consumo" in rapporto alla realtà industriale, non può essere progressivamente superata soltanto con la conoscenza diretta di questo nuovo ambiente, di queste "cose nuove": occorre la sperimentazione linguistica» p.11.

<sup>25</sup> O. Ottieri, *Taccuino Industriale*, «Menabò», no.4, Turin, 1961. Ottieri wrote on psychological matters of the working class. «Mira della psicotecnica è quella di scomporre gli uomini e misurarli. Io dovrei essere un narratore e quindi appartenere alla categoria che sente gli uomini nel modo opposto alla scienza[...]. Dovrei odiare la scienza dell'uomo e infatti un poco la odio. Ma la psicotecnica può servire come mezzo, ed è l'unica scienza cui possa accostarmi, proprio perché è scienza dell'uomo» p.30.

<sup>26</sup> I. Calvino, *La sfida al labirinto*, «Menabò», no. 5, Turin, 1962, in *Italo Calvino. Saggi. 1945-1985*. Vol. I°, Milano, 1995. «[...] Caratteristica fondamentale di questo atteggiamento stilistico che potremmo chiamare "la linea razionalista dell'avanguardia", è l'ottimismo storicista: contro le posizioni di rifiuto e dell'evasione, s'afferma il riscatto estetico-morale del mondo meccanizzato. [...] è questa la linea che salva, nella cultura artistico-letteraria del nostro secolo, una carica morale di non rassegnazione, nell'amore per le cose della vita e del lavoro, nell'urgenza di vederle come in un anticipato mondo nuovamente umano[...]. Il monopolio dell'opposizione all'ideologia industriale sembra assunto dagli sviluppi della linea "viscerale" ([...]Burri, l'Informel, la musica e la pittura del "caso", la beat generation) ma è un'opposizione così poco dialettica che potrebbe essere considerata anche una tranquilla spartizione di territori», tuttavia a questa dicotomia Calvino anticipa la considerazione che « [...] è difficile ormai sceverare un prima e un dopo [...] e tracciare una linea netta tra "tradizione" e "avanguardia"» pp.105-123.

<sup>27</sup> N. Balestrini, R. Barilli, G. Dorfles, U. Eco, *Il dibattito in occasione del primo incontro del Gruppo a Palermo nel 1963 [3-8 ottobre]*, in "Gruppo 63". *Critica e teoria*, edited by Renato Barilli, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1976, pp. 264-287.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

could not be argued Neorealist rationality was the heir of the bourgeois rationality of Enlightenment. It was necessary to overcome that concept to redevelop «*a notion of rationality that it also includes a whole range of abnormalities, hitherto relegated to the margins of everyday experience*». The instance also involved internal matter of visual arts, including the idea of a rhetoric and outdated avant-garde, and a possible trial of the continuous operation.

According Dorflies<sup>29</sup>, in fact, the solution could be reached only by reflecting not only on works, even on the real absence of an audience to the edge, were able to grasp the actual innovation was made by artists. The task of the intellectual, then, would be to configure a new key of reading, not limited by the contrast between tradition and experimentation, to foster a sense of continuity contained in the process of 'becoming' (divenire) of arts in industrial society. The language of poetry was restored to its linguistic structure, as well as visual arts to their structural components in the perception field.

The tradition and experimentation, therefore, found both themselves within mixed researches of N and T groups or Castellani and Manzoni, whom attended but did not represent an industrial culture, directly through their works. The existent, finally, audience - which allocate works - was a topic originated a few years before, to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Italian Unity, in which emerged a new visual and collective imagination were tied to the new economic and productive reality.

#### §. *The Italian industrial world: Italia 61.*

The show entitled *Italia 61*, from May to October 1961, celebrated the centenary of national unity. In Turin, held the most part of celebrations - at a cost of billions of lire<sup>30</sup> - and for that occasion was built the Labor Palace (figs. 3,4), colossal work by Pier Luigi and Antonio Nervi<sup>31</sup>. By its 650000 cubic meters of volume, the structure collected regional pavilions, the *Padiglione Unitario* (Unit Pavilion) and pavilions of nations invited to submit a theme inherent in work.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> B. Zevi, *Torino conquista cinquanta ettari. Bilancio di "Italia '61"*, «L'Espresso», 1961, in *Cronache di architettura*, op. cit., vol. IV, 1971. «si è parlato di sessanta miliardi spesi per questa manifestazione, ma alcuni affermano che si tratta soltanto di quindici» p. 235.

<sup>31</sup> *Esposizione Internazionale del Lavoro*, catalogue, May – October, 1961, Comitato Nazionale per la celebrazione del 1° Centenario dell'Unità d'Italia sotto l'alto Patronato del Presidente della Repubblica, Stampa ILTE Torino, 1961. «Su una superficie quadrata di 160 metri di lato, sedici elementi bastano a sorreggere una copertura che racchiude un volume pari a 650 mila metri cubi. Ogni colonna di cemento, [...] sopporta 1600 metri quadri di copertura. L'altezza di ciascuno elemento è di 26 metri, mai raggiunta al mondo» p. 49.

In fact, the “man on the job - 100 years of technical and social development” was the second main topic of the event. Bruno Zevi<sup>32</sup> compared to the engineering skill of Nervi, the building to its illustrious past - from *Crystal Palace* in London in 1881 to the *Atomium* in Brussels in 1958 - but he noted the monumental engineering had just exhausted the task of representing positivism of Nineteenth-century.

According to Zevi, the one of Nervi was an exhibition of engineering technology, but Luigi Carluccio<sup>33</sup> was contrary. The critic of Turin praised the “way of truth” that the work of Nervi embodied, an example of science of construction. Carluccio showed the Nervi’s architecture, subject of the scientific principle of verification, did not hide its structure but, in contrast, urged to discover laws of its design. The Labor Palace, according to Carluccio, was intended as a machine because of the speed of execution by the industrial assembly. As a whole, then, building was an open door for Italians on the future.

After the “Unity” and “work”, the third major topic was the machine progress. Leonardo Sinisgalli<sup>34</sup> said that machines were no longer a taboo, and showed the passion of Italian people for machines of any kind, because new machines were for the world the fountain of youth, freedom and truth. Consequently, according to Sinisgalli, their simplicity and their role in education acted on the moral and human physiology. The “toys” praised series compared to the piece, as an agent of change in social behavior, as just experienced in contemporary studies on industrial design and in recent artistic experiments of N and T groups.

A great machine, in fact, aimed at the vision, was the *Circarama* (fig. 5), installed not far from the Labor Palace. The *Circarama* was a cylindrical pavilion of thirty-two meters in diameter – just set up in the American Pavilion of the 1958 Expo -, and donated by Walt Disney - whom had the patent since 1955 - and built by FIAT industries<sup>35</sup>. That was one of the major attractions

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<sup>32</sup> B. Zevi, *Cinque metri in tremila anni. Palazzo del Lavoro di P. L. Nervi*, «L'Espresso», 1961, in *Cronache di architettura*, op. cit., vol. IV, 1971. «I sedici pilastri di Torino, dopo la prima meraviglia e malgrado l'ammirevole realizzazione tecnica, lasciano indifferenti. Dopo la dissociazione verificatesi durante il secolo scorso, l'ingegneria è tornata all'architettura. Senza un contenuto e una funzione, i fasti strutturalistici cadono nell'esibizionismo.» p.236.

<sup>33</sup> L. Carluccio, *L'esposizione del lavoro*, in *Italia '61*, «Comunità», n.90, June, Milan, 1961. «il Palazzo del Lavoro [...] sembra che viva come una macchina e che stia unito con la stessa coerenza di una macchina. [...] la rapidità e la regolarità dell'esecuzione, addirittura favoloso, si collegano a un concetto generale di macchina, ed alle caratteristiche dell'azione di montaggio tipica delle macchine» p.4.

<sup>34</sup> L. Sinisgalli, *Le macchine non sono un tabù*, in *Esposizione Internazionale del Lavoro*, op. cit., 1961. «Nessun popolo europeo ha dimostrato in questo dopoguerra tanta confidenza, tanto entusiasmo, tanta passione per le piccole macchine – telefoni, jukeboxes, scooters, radio, caffettiere, vetturine, ciclomotori – quanto il popolo italiano. [...] La nostra cultura non è ancora riuscita a cogliere, ad assimilare, a digerire i frutti della civiltà delle macchine. A troppa gente questo immenso potere [...] fa terrore. [...] Sono gli stessi che hanno paura della libertà, [...] della verità, [...] della bellezza. [...] Le macchine ringiovaniscono il mondo. [...] La morale della macchina è la stessa morale del giocattolo [...]. Le macchine come i giocattoli devono essere semplici. Le macchine più semplici sono le più belle. [...] La civiltà delle macchine rifiuta il capolavoro, l'unicum [...]» pp. 37-39.

<sup>35</sup> F. Vegliani, *Una stupenda emozione e un po' di capogiro*, «Il Tempo», June 10<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1961. «Nella struttura dell'edificio [...] sono disposti in cerchio e a uguale intervallo l'uno dall'altro nove proiettori da cui partono i fasci



of *Italia 61* because in the same time, in addition to the contingency business, was growing the attention for the visual communication, perceptual aspects connected to it and the direct involvement of the spectators.

To realize that goal contributed Italian and foreign artists, past and contemporary, both in the preparation of ten sections of the Italian pavilion and in the great exhibition entitled *Moda Stile Costume* (Fashion Style Costume). Italian were Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Ettore Sottsass, Marco Zanuso - whom designed a throw of rectangular advertisements and bright, reflecting the improved standard of living - Bruno Munari - whom created a visually "technological glossary" - Albe Steiner, Egidio Bonfanti, Franco Grignani, Max Huber - whom worked in *L'evoluzione della forma* (The evolution of form) - and finally artists Renato Guttuso, Fausto Melotti and Lucio Fontana. Melotti and Fontana realized works that were intended to engage viewers (figs. 6-10).

The first created a giant wall by ceramic plates near which were suspended in precarious condition of balance three large panels, which exerted a dynamic kinetic than the fixity of the wall. The other, Fontana, created an environment for the space dedicated to power source - sponsored by ENI - which, according to Carluccio, carried a strange mixture of «*development baroque-inspired on breaks of De Stijl*», which could be difficult to understand for spectators<sup>36</sup>.

As for other sections, there was one dedicated to "origins" of work in Italy, sponsored by Rizzoli, with graphics by Bruno Munari in which were identified ideal matrices of the Twentieth century in rationalism, humanism and spirit of enterprise<sup>37</sup>. In addition, the section on "scientific research", sponsored by Pirelli Spa, was set up by the architect Franco Albini and the painter Guttuso. Another section was that devoted to the "industrial organization" to "productivity" and "market". Sponsored by Olivetti and ordered by Luciano Gallino, Riccardo Musatti and architects Franco Albini and Egidio Bonfanti, that section was dedicated to technological productivity, the use of machines and in particular new automated operating machines produced by the Olivetti.

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luminosi delle immagini che si intersecano al centro e si ricompongono sullo schermo: uno schermo per ciascun proiettore, senza soluzione di continuità tra l'uno e l'altro[...]. Lo spettatore è circondato, senza via di scampo si può dire, dalle immagini del film e viene a trovarsi al centro delle scene che si proiettano attorno a lui[...] si tratta di scene in movimento, e lo spettatore ha la sensazione di essere trascinato sul mezzo da cui sono effettuate le riprese» p.23.

<sup>36</sup> L. Carluccio, op. cit., 1961. «all'esposizione del lavoro il visitatore rimane letteralmente sconcertato. [...] le invenzioni [...] girano a vuoto [...]. Non si può [...] non gradire la partizione dello spazio elaborato dal gruppo Monti, Steiner e Fontana nel settore delle fonti della energia.[...] è uno spazio che mostra lo sviluppo di un'ispirazione barocca su pause De Stijl: uno spazio che ha scioltezza di movimento e rigore di definizione nei singoli tempi del movimento [...] e la pedanteria dei settori di servizio di una grande fabbrica. [...] Il visitatore sale lentamente [...] senza aver visto nulla: il contrasto tra la vitalità intuitiva del tema, la grandiosità dei mezzi e i risultati oggettivi è così stridente [...] che il visitatore pensa che in qualche modo, del quale gli sfugge la logica, si sia voluto beffarlo» pp.8-9.

<sup>37</sup> *Esposizione Internazionale del Lavoro*, op. cit., 1961. « Umanesimo, individualismo, razionalismo: sono queste le nostre fonti spirituali, le "matrici" che le fondate speranze di nuove e straordinarie conquiste di impongono di non rinnegare. Perché l'uomo possa sentirsi sempre libero educatore e signore di se stesso» p. 254.

The key concepts expressed by authors of the pavilion Olivetti concerned the way to rationalize the management of the company, through means offered by the technology, wherein was applied the linear programming and information theory in order to make the factory more and more automated according to principles of the cybernetics. These concepts were also soon used to define the operational scope of artists like Mari, Munari and N and T groups, according to, of course, the aim which would have the Olivetti.

To latter sections, since June 9 was joined the great international exhibition *Moda Stile Costume* (Fashion Style Costume) (fig. 11), which enclosed inside three different exhibitions: the first on visual arts *Da Boldini a Pollock*, a second on *Forme Pure* and the last about the *Pane*.

The first had among its editors Franco Russoli, Luigi Carluccio, Michel Tapié and Marco Valsecchi. The main aim was to present the panorama of visual arts, from the age of Impressionism to Informel Art. As for the Informel Art, according to Tapié<sup>38</sup>, works were representing the richness of the “Baroque” current, which was in opposition to the functionalism triad of 'Bauhaus-LeCorbusier-Mondrian', accused of impoverishment of contemporary art.

It was no accident that Carluccio and Tapié approached the historical category of the Baroque to the Informel Art current one - represented by Fontana or Pollock - because at the level of phenomenological analysis was affirming the idea of “open form”, traced in both artistic tendencies. In opposition to such “open forms”, there was the second exhibition devoted to “Pure Forms”, sorted by Leonardo Sinisgalli involving engineers and mathematicians to create sculptures whose abstract forms were displaying mathematical calculations (fig. 12). The last show, then, was that about the “Bread”, understood as a fundamental element of the Italian cultural tradition, but innovated through the art of Franco Assetto (Turin, 1911-1991), which exhibited works by bread (fig. 13) - just displayed at the Bussola Gallery in Turin in 1953. On the pages of «Notiziario 61» stating that

*«in the 'catino' [...] were placed gypsum blocks with 'abstract' forms. It is the realm of Leonardo Sinisgalli, [...]: wanted to show the material representation of abstruse formulas. [...]. Sinisgalli called them 'pure forms'.*

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<sup>38</sup> M. Tapié, *Sur l'art de maintenant*, in *Da Boldini a Pollock*, catalogue, May – October, exhibition *Moda Stile e Costume*, Italia 61, Torino, 1961. «Dans ce Palais on peut enfin voir que l'art de vivre n'est peut-être pas complètement perdu au XXème siècle: c'est ici l'extrême richesse d'un actuel baroque qui témoigne de notre temps, et non plus des conformistes autopunitives (Dali dixit) du fonctionnalisme attristant des Bauhaus-Corbusier-Mondrian engendrant l'ennui et la stérilité» p. XIX.

*From the 'pure forms' to the bread. [...] Bread from all regions of Italy picked up by the painter Franco Assetto [...]»<sup>39</sup>.*

A curious parallelism, after the clamor that the “bread” exhibition had at *Italia 61*, was the interest by N Group and Piero Manzoni manifested for a Dadaist interpretation of the object-bread, between 1961 and 1962.

In Padua, N Group invented the figure of the baker Giovanni Zorzon to hit the cult of personality in art with an exhibition in March 18<sup>th</sup> 1961<sup>40</sup>. The fight against the cult of personality collimated with that of GRAV, which opposed the individualistic romanticism that still pervaded the Art Informel current. The works of the Baker - sandwiches, bread sticks and loaves - were hung from the ceiling as “useless machines” as Munari’s style and finally their possible edibility reminded the exhibition that Piero Manzoni<sup>41</sup> held in 1960, dedicated to works - eggs - which were intended to be eat. Moreover, the same Manzoni fused together his idea of *achrome* by bread, in works dated between 1961 and 1962, as a direct response to the N Group exhibition (figs. 14,15). However, the paradoxical exhibition of the alleged baker Zorzon still revealed a New Dadaist attitude that, after the first edition *Nove Tendenze*, the Padua group would have phased out.

As for the exhibition *Moda Stile Costume*, Italian critics was divided between excited and skeptical. Giulio Carlo Argan<sup>42</sup>, in reference to the educational exhibition on the development of applied arts from Art Nouveau to Bauhaus – set up by Carlo De Carli -, lingered on terms “standard”, “technical”, “performance”, “project” and “type”, borrowed from the industry universe language.

Argan argued, at the socio-political level, that the positive nature of the industry ensured a high level of quality in the production to an audience of consumers no longer elitist. Items were standardized as the result of a specific function, they did not represent but assumed a value based on their performance. In addition their shape, indefinitely repeatable, would not have lost the value

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<sup>39</sup> S. Pace, C. Chiorino, M. Rosso, *Italia 61. Identità e miti nelle celebrazioni per il centenario dell'Unità d'Italia*, Umberto Allemandi & C., Torino, 2005, pp. 69-72.

<sup>40</sup> L. Barzini jr., *Arte e salame*, «Corriere della sera», June 18<sup>th</sup>, Milan, 1961.

<sup>41</sup> F. Battino, L. Palazzoli, op. cit., 1991. Manzoni was delighted by N Group “bread” exhibition (March 18th) and sent a letter to Biasi, affirming that he made a bread work in honour of that (Biasi remembered the episode in July 1990), p. 118.

<sup>42</sup> G.C.Argan, *Moda stile costume, Figure di un'epoca 1900-1961*, Ed. Fratelli Pozzo, Turin, 1961. «[...]che poi il “progetto” o disegno dell’oggetto possa avere, come tale, qualità estetica e di stile è evidente, solo che si consideri che ogni progetto implica in nuce tutte le fasi dell’esecuzione e che, proprio in quanto “progetto”, esprime il modo tipico del procedimento mentale, o del “tecnicismo” non meno ideativo che esecutivo che è proprio del nostro tempo».

since the original product was not to be considered an object but a project whose technical value would be found in all objects in the series.

Argan repeated his own ideas in other occasions and at the same time he helped to define the theoretical framework in which the artistic research was acting in N and T groups. From the point of view of detractors<sup>43</sup>, critics were shut, as in the case of Bruno Zevi, or Italo Calvino described the view presented by *Italia 61*, as a «*belle époque inaspettata*»<sup>44</sup> (belle époque unexpected) bearer of dangerously nihilistic instincts.

Even in Zagreb the event *Moda Stile Costume*, was analyzed by Vera Horvat-Pintarić<sup>45</sup> that on «Telegram» concentrated her attention on mathematical sculptures of Sinisgalli, since these represented an innovative investigation of the natural and mineral world both in the scientific sense and in the sense of involve also visual perception. In addition, works by Assetto, according to Horvat-Pintarić, were examples of current internal research about Informel Art lines by means of free rhythms of forms. Finally, the author praised the Yugoslav pavilion, showing it received the recognition of its value by the architect Nervi.

§ *The Yugoslav pavilion: Vjenceslav Richter's contribution to define the ideology of Nove Tendencije.*

In the monumental Nervi's Labor Palace, halls of host nations illustrating the theme according to different angles, from the economic to sociological or ecological ones. To Britain was given the topic of scientific research, to United States the one of technological development

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<sup>43</sup> C.L. Raghianti, *Vergogna '61*, «SeleArte», no.54, November – December, Florence, 1961. «[...] semplicemente scandalosi gli stipendi e i compensi che sono stati distribuiti per una quantità di opere fatiscenti o precarie, che generalmente hanno riscosso critiche negative, o per opere architettoniche enormi, di pretesa faraonica, che resteranno senza che si sappia che cosa farne di utile, mentre sono nel compenso brutte, anche se dovute ad architetti di fama. [...] in queste condizioni storiche e sociali, una manifestazione come quella di Torino è una prova di grossolanità, tipica di un'Italia che somiglia in peggio, alla Francia bigotta e materialista dell'enrichissez-vous frustata da Daumier [...] la futile festa torinese passerà senza traccia, lasciando solo un vuoto di cassa. Lo storico di domani, interrogando i documenti, confronterà la cultura e la vita morale e sociale italiana del 1961 con il baraccone celebrativo, e ne ricaverà forse quel giudizio di decadenza e di euforia bizantina, che non osa e non può dare chi è ancora impegnato a portare avanti l'eredità del Risorgimento» pp.48-49.

<sup>44</sup> I. Calvino, *La "belle époque" inaspettata*, in *Valori e miti nella società italiana dell'ultimo ventennio (1940-1960)*, «Tempi Moderni», no.6, July - September, Rome, 1961, «Quindi anni fa prevedevamo tutto, tranne una cosa: che il mondo sarebbe entrato in una fase di "belle époque". Adesso ci siamo dentro in pieno. C'è il boom economico, un'aria di cuccagna, ognuno bada ai suoi interessi[...] Allo stesso tempo, ogni periodo di "belle époque" è pur sempre tempo di estremismi rivoluzionari e nichilismi ideologici»,

<sup>45</sup> V. Horvat Pintarić, *Moda, stil i navike*, «Telegram», no.71, September, Zagreb, 1961. «[...] s druge strane do njih je izložen još jedan ansambl neobičnih skulptura: u dimenzije statua i spomenika oprostorene matematske formule (Enneperova površina, modularna eliptička površina, konkavni polijedri itd.) i grafički prikazi simultanih diferencijalnih jednadžbi. U toj sekciji "čistih formi" suvremena znatiželja otkriva pod elektronskom lupom nova područja interesa u svijetu organskih materija i minerala ali ne samo u naučnom smislu nego i kao proširenje vizuelnih senzacija [...] izložba kruha – od jednostavnih i funkcionalnih oblika do invenciozne igre formi – komponirama je u slobodom ritmu suvremenog informella» p. 8.

and to Switzerland the one on environment and industrial impact. To France was reserved the issue of intellectual work, to Finland the free time and relationships in the workplace.

Yugoslavia, in fact, instituted - or perhaps we should say touted - new working relationships, in which the worker directly participated in the administration of the company or institution, according to the principle of community in the investment and profits. That was the “collective management”<sup>46</sup>, which also involved spheres of the culture, as for example, the *Nove Tendencije* exhibition in Zagreb, could be implemented thanks to a certain degree of the autonomy from Bograd, from the trade and the principle of free association among artists.

The Yugoslav pavilion – even if it had a look still didactic close to the one of the 1958 Brussels - was designed by Vjenceslav Richter, with the help of Ivan Picelj and Alexander Srnec, for decorations and informative boards (figs. 16-18). On Croatian magazine «Arhitektura»<sup>47</sup> in 1961 the plastic of the pavilion received a great attention. Richter seemed to overcome the rationalism reminiscent of Mies van der Rohe, organized according to parallelepiped in steel and glass, for a careful composition to the modularity of primary geometric elements.

In that case, Richter used triangles and circles for an organic and at the same time dynamic building. That technical and stylistic result was just shown in 1960 on «Čovjek i Prostor»<sup>48</sup>, editorial dedicated to the competition held in Yugoslavia, to select the designer of the future pavilion which would set up in *Italia 61*<sup>49</sup>. Richter, for his part, recognized also to Nervi to have influenced on its stylistic development. In Zagreb, in fact, the works of Nervi were just known for long time and were considered among the finest examples of contemporary architecture, and Richter included the same Nervi in that landscape, in a short essay of 1960.

According to Richter<sup>50</sup>, origins of the synthesis of arts, as in the case of EXAT 51 group, found itself in the triad Mondrian-LeCorbusier-Mies van der Rohe. However, their works, in the Marxist interpretation of Richter, were functional to collective design of socialist society.

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<sup>46</sup> *Esposizione Internazionale del Lavoro*, op. cit., 1961. «Questi nuovi rapporti esistenti nell’ambiente di lavoro determinano un vivo interesse di ogni operaio ai buoni risultati della sua impresa, esercitano una favorevole influenza sulla produttività, e sull’elevamento professionale di tutti e spronano l’iniziativa creativa di ognuno. [...] In Jugoslavia la funzione del lavoratore non è limitata soltanto alla gestione nell’ambito dell’impresa. Essa si estende agli altri campi della vita sociale» p. 178

<sup>47</sup> *Maketa jugoslavenskog paviljiona u Torinu*, editorial, «Arhitektura», nos. 3-4, Zagreb, 1961, p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> Vittoriano Vigano, *Pier Luigi Nervi – Doprinis suvremenoj arhitekturi*, «Čovjek i Prostor», no.97, April, Zagreb, 1960, pp.4-5.

<sup>49</sup> *Italja 61 Međunarodna izložba rada u Torinu*, editorial, «Čovjek i Prostor», no. 103, October, Zagreb, 1960. «[...] na kojemu je pobijedio arhitekt Vjenceslav Richter s projektom koji se bazira na konsekventno provedenom konceptu slobodnih linija, te na taj način omogućava elastično rješavanje relativno teško predočljivog sadržanja» p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> V. Richter, *Dilema suvremenog likovnog kretanja*, «Čovjek i Prostor», no. 100, July, Zagreb, 1960. «Tri giganta suvremene likovne cjeline Mondrian, Le Corbusier, Mies Van der Rohe najčišći su i najjači izvori likovne istine XX stoljeća[...] Geometrijska apstrakcija, iako nije stvorila kolektivno djelo sinteze, barem je tražila put k arhitekturi, stvarajući zajednički neoplastički jezik[...] štafelajnog slikarstva, studirajući vrijednosti plohe i proporcija, stavila se u istu kožu s arhitekturom. [...] Relativna tehnička lakoća likovne prakse težizma otvorila je vrata daleko većoj masi

As for visual arts, Richter argued - in opposition to *Tachisme* – the Neoplasticism grammar, fusing painting and architecture through the collective work, would lead to the democratization of art. Although Richter by that reading did not reach absolutely orthodox tones that Argan<sup>51</sup> utilized to define the Nervi's poetic, among Richter, Argan and Nervi the major contact point was in the vision of a society built according to rational principles. Democracy, moreover, would be conveyed by an architecture become engineering. Richter, finally, did not attend the first *Nove Tendenze* in August, but his influence would begin to occur in the second edition of 1963, so far as to contribute to its ideological definition.

§ 2. *The 12<sup>th</sup> Lissone Award*<sup>52</sup>: the first national meeting among new Italian researches.

The analysis of sociology, philosophy, artistic and literary critique on the new industrial culture, which in Italy showed unprecedented consequences, outlined a positive picture of the situation. From artists point of view, however, there were two different attitudes, one conservative and one alert to new factors, which were distributed between the two generations, from the one born in the late Nineteenth century to one originated in the Thirties.

To the first generation belonged artists such as Mario Mafai and Gino Severini, that in an investigation appeared on «Civiltà delle Macchine», in June 1961, agreed with the different tendencies of painting since World War II onwards were indebted to the early Twentieth century. Both harbored a deep distrust in contemporary industrial society, whose production process was leveling and standardizing art research. Mafai<sup>53</sup>, moreover, in that time was moving to an abstract and matter painting, paradoxically emphasized that situation had its definitive decline in the Informel Art poetic.

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slikara, no što je to možda dopuštala klasična apstraktna umjetnost, te je dovela, tako reći, do mogućnosti da se svatko bavi takvom aktivnošću, u čemu se s aspekta određene demokratizacije umjetnosti može govoriti kako i pogledu proširenja pojma slikara i kipara na svakog čovjeka koji u tome nalazi veselje, tako i neograničenosti tematike pomo bestmatske slučajnosti» p.3.

<sup>51</sup> G.C.Argan, *Pier Luigi Nervi*, Editalia, Roma, 1969. «Lo spirito che nella architettura di Nervi si manifesta con efficacia non equivocabile è quello del mondo moderno, è quello di questa nostra civiltà [...] Una civiltà integralista [...] che si pone come redentrice e ordinatrice dell'intero orbe e, anzi, tenta audacemente la conoscenza, e dunque il dominio, extra-terrestre, può anche fallire, ma non può, nella sua vera essenza, interpretarsi come mera fatuità o come mero "gioco" di un visibilmente postulato "homo ludens"» p.14.

<sup>52</sup> R. C. Piccoli, *Una straordinaria avventura. Premio Lissone 1946/1967. Critica, cronaca, documenti*, Comune di Lissone, Mariani, Lissone, 1996.

<sup>53</sup> M. Mafai, *Artisti macchine e crisi*, «Civiltà delle Macchine», no. 3, May – June, Rome, 1961, pp. 37-42.

Mafai's speech was explained considering his evolution towards abstraction took place after years of figurative painting and was drawing near, also in that case, to Gino Severini's<sup>54</sup> judgment about new generations. Severini, in fact, considered important for younger artists to avoid starting directly from Informel Art, but maintaining as model the art produced before 1914, referring to Futurism and contemporary Paris exhibition *Les Sources du XXème Siècle*, which outlined guidelines of Twentieth-century avant-garde<sup>55</sup>. To the latter opinions, were opposed ones by Bruno Munari and Piero Dorazio about the investigation *Death of painting?*<sup>56</sup>, appeared on the «Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1961», published in November 1960.

Munari, whom had participated at the second Futurism, believed all the painting could not agree until with industrial society. The artist had to learn, instead, to make art by all means provided from trade and technology, getting closer to positions of the N and T groups. On the other hand, the younger Piero Dorazio, instead, stated the Informel painting had to be replaced by a more attentive to visual perceptual values and then had to undermine the interpretative habit inherited from the historical avant-garde.

The four positions showed that artists were also sensitive to the review was carrying in the historiography about the avant-garde and at the same time they claimed, as Dorazio and Munari, a greater focus on structures of the visual language. Dorazio and Munari, also represented two main artistic centers of the Italian art, respectively Rome and Milan.

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<sup>54</sup> G. Severini, *Macchine epoca industriale e arte*, «Civiltà delle Macchine», no. 1, January-February, Rome, 1961. «L'esposizione attualmente aperta a Parigi "Les Sources du XXème Siècle", nella quale tutte le opere devono essere anteriori al 1914, può essere un nuovo punto di partenza. Perché è in quel momento che abbiamo creato l'arte del XX secolo; poco o niente di essenziale si è aggiunto dopo. [...] Non a zero si deve tornare, il che è utopistico, ma al 1914[...]» p.42.

<sup>55</sup> Y. Brunhammer, *Le arti in Europa dal 1884 al 1914*, «Arte Figurativa», no.51, May – June, Milan, 1961. «Il titolo dell'esposizione è rivelatore delle preoccupazioni attuali e del divario tra creatore e pubblico. Necessità di giustificarsi con questa prodigiosa parentela, di riattaccarsi naturalmente ad una tradizione?», p.33; cf. R. Guttuso in «Il Contemporaneo», n.43, December, Rome, 1961. «Le mode arrivano e vanno, oggi, così rapidamente che è difficile dire se siamo all'inizio o alla fine del ritorno di gusto al "Nouveau style". Nel caso che fossimo alla fine, che cosa è rimasto fuori dalla "rimasticazione"? E perché? Non è rimasta fuori, per caso, l'arte moderna? [...] è facile dire che la gioventù, oggi, è conformista. Niente è mutato. Negli "anni dieci" era infatuata da D'Annunzio e da Gozzano, "i futuristi" si contavano sulle dita, ed erano derisi, in primo luogo, dai giovani. Anche oggi tutti sono per l'arte astratta, e quelli che si battono per l'arte moderna (non astratta) si contano anche oggi sulle dita, e sono derisi, in primo luogo, dai giovani» pp. 32-43.

<sup>56</sup> *Morte della pittura?*, editorial, «Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1961», Milano, 1960. Dorazio said: «Negli ultimi dieci anni la pittura non ha subito delle modifiche sostanziali ma soltanto delle modifiche apparenti. Cioè non vi è stata, come potrebbe sembrare, una rivoluzione o una sostituzione di quei valori percettivi della visualità dai quali dipende la rappresentazione dello spazio mediante il colore ovvero la materia pittorica. Mi pare che la lettura delle opere prodotte negli ultimi dieci anni sia possibile perché sempre e automaticamente, la pratichiamo mediante il linguaggio visivo stabilito nella tradizione moderna dal cubismo, dall'espressionismo, dal surrealismo, dal costruttivismo». Bruno Munari replied: «Le modifiche sostanziali subite dalla pittura dimostrano chiaramente che, come mezzo, non corrisponde più alla sensibilità di oggi: è limitato, lento, artigianale, vecchio, statico. Gli artisti più vivi, in tutto il mondo, seguono altre vie. Tutti i confini tra pittura, scultura, ecc., non hanno più alcun senso. Con la massima libertà oggi l'artista può scegliere il mezzo più adatto ad esprimersi: dal colore ricavato filtrando la luce in proiezione, al movimento ottenuto con motori, a molti altri mezzi. Il quadro a olio su tela è ormai soltanto un prodotto commerciale qualunque. La pittura potrà forse restare come hobby, allo stesso modo che un musicista elettronico può divertirsi a suonare Bach col mandolino. La pittura può anche sparire purché resti l'arte» pp. 271- 277.

The two centers, as French art critic Luce Hoctin<sup>57</sup> wrote in January 1961, were the poles on which gravitated major international awards since the strategies of critic militancy in Rome were directed by Giulio Carlo Argan and in Milan by the conservative Leonardo Borgese. In addition younger artists in Milan, from T Group to Castellani and Manzoni, had gathered around two main architects of the death of art, according to Hoctin, were Lucio Fontana and Bruno Munari.

Fontana decreed the end of the “easel painting”, while Munari maintained the identity between art and daily life by means of practical and aesthetic objects. Hoctin’s critic discourse was in parallel to what the Italian art critique would take to put younger artists in continuity with the avant-garde of the Twentieth century<sup>58</sup>. An example of that intention was the renovated 1961 Lissone Award<sup>59</sup> in the twelfth edition.

The Secretary General of the award was Guido Le Noci, the director of the Apollinaire Gallery, and the Committee was composed by Giulio Carlo Argan, Umbro Apollonio, Francesco Arcangeli, Guido Ballo, Gillo Dorfles, H.L.C. Jaffé, Michel Tapié and Marco Valsecchi. In the section devoted to Italian artists, emerged critic figures of Argan and Apollonio. The first used the term “representative values” to highlight the research of Burri, Capogrossi, Fontana and Vedova, the most important representatives of Informel current. The second, Apollonio – whom in a correspondence, dated between May and July, with Guido Le Noci revealed as a co-author of the exhibition<sup>60</sup> - carried out his critic and historian point of view to trace main lines of the non-figurative painting in Italy from 1945 to 1961.

Apollonio also affirmed the absolute continuity among the work of Munari, the rationalist abstraction and the art called “kinetic” - agreeing well with what is written by Dorfles on June 1961 - represented by artists of N and T groups. The latter participated in the section entitled *Sezione Informativo-Sperimentale giovani pittori italiani* (figs. 19-22) (Information and Experimental Section younger Italian painters) and edited collectively by the entire commission.

Among works presented were illustrated two polarities, from Milan and Rome, that were influenced, even according the Hoctin, respectively from Paris and New York. Milan artists -

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<sup>57</sup> L. Hoctin, *Où en est l'art italien d'aujourd'hui?*, «L'Oeil», no.61, January, Lausanne, 1961. «On assiste aujourd'hui en Italie à un foisonnement d'artistes et d'œuvres sans cesse croissant, à une frénésie de production qui n'ont rien à envier à celles des autres pays du monde: l'Allemagne, les U.S.A., le Japon, la France. D'aucuns considèrent la période actuelle comme l'une des plus féconde set des plus importantes que l'Italie ait vécue depuis longtemps dans le domaine de l'art. Il se peut. Il est en tout cas indéniable que le surgissement assez désordonné et protéiforme des divers mouvements, des groupes, des manifestations artistiques de tous ordres au cours des quinze dernières années contraste avec le calme relative de la vie artistique italienne du précédent demi-siècle» p. 57.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> *XII Premio Lissone, internazionale per la pittura*, catalogue, September 23<sup>rd</sup> – October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1961, Palazzo del Centro del Mobile, Lissone, Ente Comunale del Mobile di Lissone.

<sup>60</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 5, Folder 1. Premio Lissone 1960-1961. Correspondence Apollonio-Le Noci, from April to September 1961.



including Manzoni, Biasi, Massironi, Bonalumi and Dadamaino also exhibited in Rome in 1960 at the Trastevere Gallery<sup>61</sup> in the *Sculture tascabili, componibili, trasportabili, istantanee* exhibition (fig. 23) - marched through their works a closer attention to principles of the training and perception related to the Gestalt theory.

In addition, the Milan artistic area seemed to have found in operative modes of the team work - next to aforementioned N and T groups (fig. 24), Manzoni, Castellani, Bonalumi and Dadamaino exposed for the first and last time under the label of 'Gruppo Milano 61' - its own peculiarity (figs. 25, 26).

As for artists of the Rome area, Mario Schifano, Tano Festa, Francesco Lo Savio and Giuseppe Uncini, as Cesare Vivaldi wrote in the same year, these were surely influenced by the 'New York School'<sup>62</sup> and its evolution in the current Pop and New Abstraction (figs. 27-30).

However, they shared with their colleagues in Milan, the work in an intermediate zone among New Dadaism instances, New geometric abstraction and New Realism (within the meaning given by Pierre Restany in 1960)<sup>63</sup>. For example, Francesco Lo Savio<sup>64</sup>, whom was very attached to Schifano and Festa art forms, declined his research starting from positions of Mondrian and De Stijl to direct it to social and ideological purposes, close to claims by N Group.

Another example was represented by Giuseppe Uncini, whose works, beginning from New geometric premises, were classified in the so-called Gestalt research<sup>65</sup>. Consequently all of their proposals were not yet clearly defined and, despite obvious differences, all participated in a joint industrial landscape. The 12<sup>th</sup> Lissone Award, therefore, offered to new generations the place appropriate for a direct dialogue among them and mark deeply the distance from the Informel Art.

The works presented at Lissone, in fact, as stated by Marco Valsecchi<sup>66</sup>, were the answer to a situation that, arose within the industrial and mechanized company, was reported from the Informel Art but at the same time that was downgraded to simple academicism.

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<sup>61</sup> We should remember that on October 8th 1960, at the Trastevere Gallery in Rome, there was a group exhibition included Manzoni, Dada Maino, Bonalumi, Biasi and Massironi. These artists made a whole series of works entitled *Sculture da viaggio* (Sculptures by voyage) with boxed paper invitations, by an idea very similar to Duchamp's Dadaism. Cf. V. Feierabend, L. Meloni, op. cit., 2009, p. 44.

<sup>62</sup> C. Tedeschi, *La Scuola di New York*, ed. Vita e Pensiero Università, 2004, pp. 181-236.

<sup>63</sup> G. Celant, *Roma-New York 1948-1964*, in *Roma-New York 1948-1964*, catalogue, November 5<sup>th</sup> 1993 – January 15<sup>th</sup> 1994, Fondazione Murray and Isabella Rayburn, Edizioni Charta, Milan, 1993, p.36.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. «Nel '54 cominciai i miei studi sull'architettura contemporanea, europea ed americana, sentendo precisi interessi per l'esperienza di Gropius relativa alla Bauhaus, nei suoi rapporti col movimento De Stijl e in particolare con l'opera di Mondrian. L'interesse di questa esperienza era soprattutto ideologico e sociale» p.224.

<sup>65</sup> G. Gatt, *L'ipotesi gestaltica*, in *Roma anni '60. Al di là della pittura*, catalogue, December 20<sup>th</sup> 1990 – February 15<sup>th</sup> 1991, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Roma, Edizioni Carte Segrete, Rome, 1990, pp.39-41.

<sup>66</sup> M. Valsecchi, *Il Premio Lissone*, «Il Tempo», November 25<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1961. «Il nostro secolo, che è un secolo meccanizzato, industriale, di rigide economie e di irreggimentazioni di massa, fa dato corso, per rivolta o per compensazione, a [...] ricerche sprofondate nei regni dell'azzardo lirico[...]. Ma ciò non impedisce di riconoscere che molte volte questa ricerca è stata fine a se stessa [...] e molti pittori ripetono fino all'usura la loro cifra. [...] qui vi sono

In addition, Valsecchi felt that the original existence passion of the Informel Art - well represented at Lissone by Cy Twombly, Adolf Gottlieb, Antonio Saura, Mattia Moreni, Emilio Scanavino and others – gave up to the formal “frieze” or to “Dadaist Toy”, without mobilize a morality rescue.

According Valsecchi, works of the Rome, Milan and Padua artists, attended the same back to the ephemeral Dadaism and with him agreed the critic painter Luciano Lattanzi<sup>67</sup> whom felt that the experimental section, because groups defined “New-Dada”, was far from painting and from the most serious theorization of the historical avant-garde. However, these critics and others missed an episode related to the N Group, which posted at the entrance to the experimental hall a brief manifesto, which was immediately removed, because not fair to other participants<sup>68</sup>.

§. *N Group and GRAV towards a convergence of purposes.*

Padua artists hung up a manifesto whose opening words read:

*«the term 'enne' distinguishes a group of “experimental designer” united by the need to seek collectively»<sup>69</sup>.*

By that statement they claimed themselves no more artists but close to engineers or to industrial designers. In their intentions, rationalism and *Tachisme* as historical phenomena, accomplished their innovative role. Moreover, they hoped a synthesis among painting, sculpture, architecture and industrial product and also the refusal of the individual, as a crucial element of the History. These assertions, expressed by means of para-scientific terms, could be explained in light of reports that N Group entered with GRAV from Paris.

Both groups participated at the first edition of *Nove Tendencije* on previous August and, in fact, in texts of GRAV, reported in the Zagreb exhibition catalogue were reported similar

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molti esempi che si sono viziati di compiacimenti estetistici, dove ci si accorge che la passione per l'esistenza ha ceduto al fregio formale o al gingilla mento dadaista, senza più la violenza morale che pur nobilitava il vecchio Dada» p.47.

<sup>67</sup> L. Lattanzi, *Il XII Premio Lissone*, in *Arte Contemporanea in Galleria 1961-1964*, Edizioni D'Ars, Milano, 1966. «Il gruppo altrettanto numeroso dei più giovani artisti esposti con lo scopo di informarsi sulle loro attitudini etichettate dagli organizzatori come sperimentali. [...] si potrebbe dire che tutta l'arte moderna è sperimentale. Perciò se a detto attributo, anziché un vago connotato dispregiativo di benevola attesa, si dà il significato di “apportatore di nuova esperienza”, allora si è d'accordo. Perfino il gruppo Neo-Dada e quello del Nouveau Réalisme [...] s'affermano [...] come apportatori di nuove poetiche, in mancanza di più serie o, se si vuole, di più pittoriche» pp. 4-6.

<sup>68</sup> Based on an interview with Alberto Biasi that I made on Summer 2010.

<sup>69</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT found. Folder Umjetnici. Folder N Group. See appendix.

expressions<sup>70</sup>. For example, Julio Le Parc, François Morellet and Joel Stein used to describe their search terms like «neutralized form», «anonymous elements homogeneously divided», «changing every individualist intuitions and expressions», and finally «purely visual phenomenon» «impersonal elements » and «homogeneity»<sup>71</sup>.

Their works, in fact, than Padua artists' ones, were strictly made following patterns of design corresponding to the parallel scientific and technical industrial production (figs. 31-34). N Group for *Nove Tendencije* described its work in a simple and clear way but without specifying a theory as the one presented in Lissone, so there is no doubt that the transition from Zagreb contributed to the definition of their theory<sup>72</sup>.

GRAV, in addition, on the same September was not invited to the *Deuxieme Biennial et Internationale des Jeunes Artistes*, held in Paris and for *épater le bourgeoisie*, according to the rhetoric of the historical avant-garde, it distributed a manifesto against the Biennial. That event, as judged by Pierre Restany<sup>73</sup>, should have been an international comparison of the most advanced artistic pursuits.

However, that aim failed and were repeated same dynamics of previous events. GRAV entitled the manifesto *Assez des mystifications* in opposition also to participating artists, among which were Piero Dorazio and Otto Piene, whom also had been exhibited in Zagreb. The manifesto represented the intransigence of GRAV, but at the same time was a first recognition of *Nove Tendencije* outside of Croatia.

In fact, GRAV claimed the supreme artistic gesture that happened in Zagreb - which was quoted in French and in the singular “Nouvelle Tendance” - in which a tin can was presented containing «*Merde d'artiste, poids net 200 grammes*» (crap artist weighting 200 grams). That New Dadaist work has never been really presented in Zagreb<sup>74</sup>. Although, was a provocation

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<sup>70</sup> *Nove Tendencije*, op.cit, 1961.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. «la constitution matérielle de nos oeuvres est simplifiée au maximum, la forme est neutraliste, sans valeur en soi elle devient anonyme homogénéiquement réparti sur la base des lois simples dont les relations obéissent à un système rigoureux qui aboutit à une homogénéité totale. [...] que cela la raison et l'esprit de recherche systématique doivent remplacer l'intuition et l'expression individualiste. [...] un phénomène purement visuel [...] la forme [...] devient un élément anonyme, réparti uniformément sur la surface, la relation entre les éléments acquière une homogénéité et un anonymat[...]».

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. «per mezzo di stratificazioni ripetibili, costruisce superfici otticamente dinamiche e indeterminabili.[...] costruisce strutture ottiche rese evidenti dalla luce e che l'osservatore percepisce in maniera diversa a seconda dell'angolo visuale. [...] costruisce visioni dinamiche in deformazione a seconda dei punti di vista. [...] costruisce superfici ripetibili otticamente variabili alla luce. [...] costruisce oggetti ripetibili a profondità illimitata».

<sup>73</sup> M. Ragon, P. Restany, *Biennale de Paris 1961*, «Cimaise», no.56, November – December, Paris, 1961. «Une Biennale des Jeunes doit faire totalement confiance aux jeunes, elle implique une projection dans le future et une certaine part de risque dans le jugement, ce qui permet une ouverture sur l'avant-garde. Les critères d'objectivité classique ne doivent pas jouer dans ce cas précis, puisque les objectifs et la portée de cette Biennale ont été eux-mêmes fixes et limités arbitrairement dès le départ» p.42.

<sup>74</sup> *Strategies de participation. GRAV – Groupe de recherche d'art visuel 1960/1968*, op. cit.,1998. «Le seul aboutissement logique du courant officialisé de l'Art est désormais le Geste Superbe des Néo-dadaïstes. (le dernier en

related to the “crap artist” that Piero Manzoni made in May 1961, the Milan artist participated at *Nove Tendencije* with an *Achrome*.

Consequently, the importance of the Dadaist gesture, according to statements of GRAV, showed that the scientific and New-geometric breakthrough had not yet fully consumed and therefore N Group was experiencing a similar transition.

In the Paris exhibition, in addition, participated also the Yugoslavian artists Janez Bernik and Dužan Džamonja that at that time represented the development of Informel Art current between Slovenia and Croatia. For that reason, in Paris a direct witness of the event was Matko Meštrović<sup>75</sup>, whom in those years was a correspondent for several Croatian newspapers. He attacked the system of the Biennial and showed the decline of Western art system by younger artists were also devoid of a social and collective moral, because they were standardized to conventions of the trade. Meštrović in the same period begun to attend GRAV’s artists and shared with them an aesthetic and political commitment, aimed to make the artist active in society.

#### § *The Visual arts and industrial design with respect to the Bauhaus’s legacy.*

The merit of the manifesto by N Group at Lissone was to focus again the attention on the issue about the synthesis of arts and the relationship between art and industrial design as well as Meštrović<sup>76</sup> highlighted like a chronicler from Venice during the conference of I.C.S.I.D. (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design) held on September from 13 to 17<sup>th</sup> 1961 at the Cini Foundation.

The main topic of the conference was the appearance and function of industrial object, according to Meštrović, had a correct interpretation thanks to lecturers by Tomas Maldonado and Alberto Rosselli. Maldonado investigated the relationship between industrial designer, as a researcher of forms, and capitalist trade that commercialized those forms. In contrast to that report, Maldonado took as a good example what happened in Socialist Countries, where the industrial design had not only a commercial value but also social, because the business was managed by the State.

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date est l’envoi à l’Exposition “Nouvelle Tendance” de Zagreb d’une boîte de conserves étiquetée en 5 langues *Merde d’artiste, poids net 200 grammes*)» p.71.

<sup>75</sup> M. Meštrović, *Pariški bjenale mladih (1961)*, in *Od pojedinačnog općem*, Mladnost, Zagreb, 1967, pp. 155-158.

<sup>76</sup> M. Meštrović, *I.C.S.I.D. Venecija 1961. Sa međunarodnog kongresa dizajnera*, «Čovjek i prostor» nos.108-109, March - April, Zagreb, 1962, p.11.

In line with the position of Maldonado, also Alberto Rosselli<sup>77</sup> identified similar situation in Italy and put forward a solution by means of the creation of state institutions that were modeled on the examples of the Ulm Hochschule für Gestaltung and the Chicago Institute of Design. Within that debate, therefore, was justified the assertion contained in the manifesto of N Group, whose members called themselves “experimental design”.

In Italy, also in the same period of time, there was a flourishing of critical interventions concerning the relationship between art and industrial production system. For example, on March 1961 Filiberto Menna, referring to the essay *L'integrazione estetica* (The aesthetic integration) by Rosario Assunto<sup>78</sup>, suggested that the design represented

*«the most lively and intelligent attempt made by contemporary art to overcome the gap between art and technique, and art and social life, which occurred with the advent of industrial civilization»<sup>79</sup>.*

Another example was the reading by Umbro Apollonio<sup>80</sup> gave at the same questions. In a first article, on the «La Biennale di Venezia», Apollonio expressed a negative opinion about an artistic creation was too close to the method of industrial designers, because the constructive rationality was not combined with a sense of “Sublime irrational” as fundamental characteristic of art.

However, later Apollonio<sup>81</sup> pointed out pure art was an open work - in reference to the Informel Art - and applied arts - such as industrial design - realized closed and strict forms, but as much important as in contemporary culture. In addition, the teamwork and anonymity, in the

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<sup>77</sup> A. Rosselli, *Congresso dell'ICSID a Venezia*, «Stile Industria», no.34, October, Milan, 1961. «L'allievo non compirà il suo addestramento nel solo ambito della scuola, ma sarà messo in condizione di studiare problemi concreti presso l'industria [...]. Le condizioni di continua evoluzione, l'industria oggi manifesta, la rende contraria ad ogni fissazione in schemi definitivi e rende provvisoria ogni specializzazione[...]. Da qui la necessità che la scuola non sia ancorata ad ordinamenti statici» pp.1-49.

<sup>78</sup> R. Assunto, *L'integrazione estetica*, Comunità, Milano, 1959.

<sup>79</sup> F. Menna, *Industrial Design e integrazione estetica*, «Arte Oggi», no. 10, March- April, Rome, 1961, pp.20-23.

<sup>80</sup> U. Apollonio, *Del fattore cinetico nell'arte contemporanea*, «La Biennale di Venezia», n.42, Jan.-Mar., Venice, 1961. «Del resto la creazione artistica non può seguire lo stesso metodo impiegato dai progettatori di oggetti industriali, né sarà ammissibile che la razionalità costruttiva sul piano tecnico e meccanico sia convertita nella sublime irrazionalità dell'arte» p. 119-121.

<sup>81</sup> U. Apollonio, *Struttura e forma applicata*, «La Biennale di Venezia», no.43, April – June, Venice, 1961. «Uno dei problemi più dibattuti nella cultura contemporanea è costituito per certo dalla difformità esistente tra le opere cosiddette d'arte pura e quelle cosiddette d'arte applicata. Non si può smentire infatti che le une si formulano sulla apparenza di una forma aperta, non delimitata – si dicono appunto, oggi, informali – e le altre per converso sull'istituzione di una forma chiusa, rigorosa. [...] molti aspetti nell'orientamento della civiltà contemporanea inducono ad ammettere il predominio del lavoro di équipe – altra volta osservammo il passaggio da uno stadio tecnico a uno stadio scientifico – e la stessa ardua identificazione dell'autore in gran parte dell'odierna produzione figurativa sta a dimostrare la regressione dell'individuo in favore di una creatività anonima [...]. Da quanto esposto risulta, [...] che nella società in cui viviamo vi hanno due maniere direttive per far vivere l'esteticità [...]: da una parte l'espressione critica e aggressiva che pone l'uomo in cospetto di una situazione esistenziale [...] e dall'altra la sollecitudine di alcuni deliberata a istituire una bellezza utilitaria» p.254-256.

industrial production, were a deterrent to the exasperated identification between work and author, as occurred in the Informel painting.

That perspective, according to Apollonio, realized the utopia of Mondrian and De Stijl - the materialization of a universal beauty in everyday life – because fell the separation between visual arts and architecture. In fact, also the methodology of Bauhaus returned to its German heirs Heinz Mack and Otto Piene, whose works were accessible in public spaces, because they insisted on a research related to the visual perception according to scientific parameters.

Ultimately Apollonio took note of two possible artistic behaviors: the existential denunciation or the research for a useful beauty. That last consideration, which was close to N Group's theories, developed through a growing interest in the historical Bauhaus, which received at a European level a greater impetus from the birth of the Bauhaus Archive in Darmstadt in 1960.

The director Hans M. Wingler<sup>82</sup> collected works and documents relating to students of the Gropius's school, carrying out a fundamental operation of historical revision, never done before. In a correspondence - now preserved in the ASAC Archive of Venice - elapsed between Wingler and Apollonio<sup>83</sup>, from November 1960 to July 1961, emerged the keen involvement of Apollonio for Wingler's project. The Trieste art critic was interested in the consistency of the heritage raised, in its conservation and finally in the Darmstadt exhibition was inaugurated in April 1961, at the end of its possible representation in Italy, to set it in Milan or Venice up<sup>84</sup>.

In Milan, in fact, the exhibition of the Bauhaus, edited by Romans Clemens, was held on October 1961 at the Palazzo Reale and was moved from November to December, at the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Rome (fig. 35).

In Milan, on October 12<sup>th</sup>, the exhibition was inaugurated with a speech by Giulio Carlo Argan, whom made clear for the first time to the Italian public was offered the opportunity to learn directly - even if only by means of a photographic documentation - educational activities held at the Bauhaus. On «Stile industria», also was reported an excerpt from the introduction to the catalogue written by Walter Gropius<sup>85</sup>, which clarified that the Bauhaus was a international school but had not created a 'style', as the same Gropius since the Thirties had repeatedly reaffirmed. The ideology of the Bauhaus, however, over the years become a myth of modernity -

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<sup>82</sup> H.M. Wingler, *Das Bauhaus*, Verlag Gebr. Rasch & Co., Bramsche and M.Dumont Schauberg, Koln, 1962.

<sup>83</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Curators. Folder Umbro Apollonio. Units 5 and 7, correspondence Apollonio-Wingler, from November 9<sup>th</sup> 1960 to June 15<sup>th</sup> 1961.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> *Una mostra delle idee e della prassi delle tendenze della scuola del Bauhaus 1919-1928 e 1933*, editorial, «Stile Industria», no.34, October, Milan, 1961.

especially in Central European cultural sphere - considered as an example to find a renewed synergy between artistic and industrial production.

§ 3. *New Italian researches and first critic comparisons with the Informel Art tradition.*

In 1961 Herbert Read<sup>86</sup> published a revised and correct edition of the essay *Art and Industry*, published in 1936. In Italy that essay was published in 1962, thus entering into the debate, which emerged during the ICSID conference in Venice (1961), about the function and purpose of the industrial product as an artistic object. The fundamental question discussed by Read was concerning about the possibility by the side of the machine to produce works to account as art.

The design of the object turned the artist into designer and Read argued that the first encouragements towards that direction were detectable in Mondrian's abstraction, in the architecture by Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, and then in the pedagogy of the vision taught in the Bauhaus. The artist also should not be subjected to industry, but should contribute to the welfare of society. Consequently, the role of the designer was able to reach a decision inside the production.

That order of statements in Italy took place in the special issue of «Il Verri», dedicated to the poetry of Informel Art and published in June 1961. Among speeches worthy of note were included ones of Giulio Carlo Argan, Gillo Dorfles and Umberto Eco.

Argan<sup>87</sup>, whom had a profound respect of the Read's thought, in his speech by the symbolic title of *Salvezza e caduta dell'arte moderna* (Salvation and fall of modern art) claimed through the Informel poetry, painting and sculpture were distinguished not more for materials and techniques used. That difference was continuing to exist, on the contrary, between art form and industrial production, in which the Informel artist was no longer an heroic reaction to the disorder of the

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<sup>86</sup> H. Read, *Art and Industry*, Horizon Press, New York, 1961. «[...] a new category of painting – virtually a new plastic art – has developed out of cubism, and this art, as practiced by painters like Mondrian and Ben Nicholson, and by sculptors like Pevsner and Naum Gabo, is very valuable as a “pure” art controlling the development of formal art in general. It will occupy, in the future, a relationship to industrial design very similar to the relationship pure mathematics bears to the practical science. Probably such artists will be as rare and remote as pure mathematicians, but they will have an essential place in the aesthetic structure of the machine age. [...] The abstract artist (who may often be identical with the engineer or the technician) must be given a place in all industries in which he is not already established, and his decision on all questions of design must be final. [...] the artist must design in the actual materials of the factory, and in the full stream of the process of production. His power must be absolute in all matters of design, and, within the limits of functional efficiency, the factory must adopt itself to the artist, not the artist to the factory» pp. 40- 41.

<sup>87</sup> G.C. Argan, op. cit., 1961.

world but become dominated by his own reaction. In contrast, Constructivist line of new research gained in Italy and Europe - both of groups and individuals - offered a salvation to the whole art system, since the artist could fit again within the productive system of society.

The only limit to that approach, was the one Argan identified as the risk of a 'continuous planning', as Constructivism had historically demonstrated how – compared to the importance Informel Art gave to the direct relationship between experience and art - the project ended up with the relegation of the object to a mere demonstrative function. However, the Informel Art was considered reactionary because the artist did not recognized in the History - in the Hegelian meaning - the goal of his own research. Constructivist ideology, on the contrary, was an avant-garde that, through the programming of rigorous structures, allowed the artist's participation in certain historical events.

As a consequence, also the industrial design would have took the same chance. If designer had not controlled means of the production, since delegating to the technique the production phase - conditioned by materials and trade economy - they would have come to propose simple variants of the same project.

In contrast to sociological aesthetics of Argan, Gillo Dorfles<sup>88</sup> believed programs of the New Concretiste research in the Sixties had only revived the so-called “synthesis of arts” - as stated in *Ultime Tendenze dell'arte d'oggi* - just a decade earlier it proved unrealistic to integration, by means of the technique, between arts and their effective participation in society. Informel Art according to Dorfles<sup>89</sup>, had the merit to bring back artists to the nature and to preserve an authentic relationship between technology - as a recovery of the industrial detritus - and human existence. Consequently, the industrial design would not solve the dilemma between art and society, but could open up new dimensions through the reflection - borrowed from the Informel Art - on the relationship between man and nature.

Finally, Umberto Eco<sup>90</sup> moved the discussion on more strictly aesthetic basics, taking the definition - which he coined by himself earlier - of Informel Art as an “open work”. Eco came to such a reflection in continuity with the “formativeness theory”, set out years earlier by Luigi Pareyson<sup>91</sup>, his professor of the aesthetics at Turin. Pareyson in 1954 in his essay *Aesthetics* -

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<sup>88</sup> Dorfles, op.cit, 1961.

<sup>89</sup> G. Dorfles, *Pittura, architettura e disegno industriale di fronte all'Informale*, «Il Verri», no.3, June, Milan, 1961, pp.187-190.

<sup>90</sup> U. Eco, *L'oeuvre ouverte et la poetique de l'indetermination*, «Nouvelle Revue Française», no.91, July, Paris, 1960, pp.117-134, no.92, August, 1960, pp.313-320 ; U.Eco, *L'informale come opera aperta*, «Il Verri», no.3, June, Milan, 1961, pp. 98-127.

<sup>91</sup> L. Pareyson, *Estetica*, Edizioni di “Filosofia”, Torino, 1954.



revised and updated in 1960<sup>92</sup> - beginning from different sources, including John Dewey, Antonio Banfi and Galvano Della Volpe, suggested that in general the phenomenon of the object as a “form” had a dynamic character. It was the result of a process of forming at two levels. The first concerned the artist was forming and at the same time was formed by the object, that process enabled the artist to learn from achievements and use them for following objects.

At the second level, was the final user of the object-form which in turn was formed and at the same time gave his own interpretation. The object, therefore, had an opening on the basis of two criteria: the operation and programming. In the first case were works of art in which the poetic was supplemented by work and was modified depending on the change that was subject to the work itself. In the second, on the contrary, a precise plan preceded the work and anticipated results. According to Pareyson, the latter criterion was voted to infertility, as unable to evolve over time.

The “formativeness theory”, therefore, was lend to give aesthetic validity especially to Informel works and had its repercussions in the sphere of the contemporary art critique. Umberto Eco, however, modified the original thinking of Paryson, by mingling with the Theory of Information borrowed from Abraham Moles<sup>93</sup>. According to Eco<sup>94</sup>, visual Informel artworks and musical experimentation post-Weber, had three components that were essential to their degree of openness: the movement, the shape opening and the relationship between contemplation and using.

In visual arts, Eco identified specific structures, such as Naum Gabo and Richard Lippold ones which invited the viewer to an active movement. In Italian contemporary art, Eco argued that Bruno Munari, T Group and Enzo Mari, completed the poetics of the movement had just established with Futurism. Eco did not mention the N Group, probably because in June 1961 was still little-known or perhaps because their works had a virtual motion, as in the case of Massironi whom proposed formal solutions like, i.e., plots of Lippold (figs. 36,37).

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<sup>92</sup> L. Preyson, *Estetica*, Zanichelli, Bologna, 1960.

<sup>93</sup> A. Moles, op.cit.,1958. « L' « œuvre d'art » présente à ce titre un caractère d'autonomie, elle se laisse circonscrire dans des limites, isoler dans le champ de notre attention, elle est, à ce point de vue, plus facilement *objet d'étude* détachable de la complexité di réel. Mais il doit être bien évident, en arrêtant ce travail sur l'application de la Théorie de l'Information à la perception, que l'œuvre d'art n'est qu'un cas typique facile à définir du cycle perception réaction qui constitue le problème essentiel de la psychologie expérimentale, cas où la perception proprement dite prend le pas, et se manifeste plus objectivement que la réaction. [...] à ce titre, le travail de mise au point dogmatique ici présenté sur la dialectique originalité/intelligibilité doit déboucher normalement dans le cadre plus vaste des relations de l'être avec le monde, de la phénoménologie de la perception, qui en pratique est plus fluctuante, plus subjective, plus compliquée par des points de vue de l'individu régissant son attention et obscurcissant le problème le plus général. C'est pourquoi nous arrêterons provisoirement au cadre de l'esthétique scientifique, du message de l'art, cette étude sur la perception» p.188.

<sup>94</sup> U. Eco, *L'opera in movimento e la coscienza dell'epoca*, «Incontri musicali», no.3, 1959, in *Il Gruppo 63*, op. cit., 1976, pp. 242-261.

All researches of artists aforementioned were, according to Eco, epistemological metaphors, as in a society in which science was omnipresent, as Read suggested also, the art could find a new meaning when viewed as a metaphor for scientific research.

However, works were not intended as a revival of special visual results presented in the objects created by science, but they had to be compared with the scientific experimental method. For instance, a Pollock's painting could be read as a metaphor - by images of the discontinuity in the plot of cause-effect relationships in the physical world - of the uncertainty principle of quantum (1926) by Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976). It was necessary to use the Theory of Information to assess objectively if the artist reached an appropriate form or not. The art, therefore, needed a tool to verify its results and it was derived from the Theory of Information. Eco, in fact, knew essays of Abraham Moles and Norbert Wiener<sup>95</sup>, and indicated such a structure was ambiguous, messy and unpredictable as increased the amount of information transmitted, which ranged from a "minimum" - in which the message was clear - to a "maximum" noise - in which the message was canceled. That amount was extracted from the statistical calculation. Umberto Eco, identified, therefore, a "field of possibilities" in which the maximum noise was in the Informel painting that opposed the minimum noise in the constructivist art and industrial design.

§ *Munari and kinetic factors as the possibility of art to exist in the industry.*

The kinetic factor in art was highlighted by Umberto Apollonio<sup>96</sup> as a hallmark of European art, from Futurism to Cubism, to Dada experiences of Marcel Duchamp and Constructivism ones of Naum Gabo up to some cases of the Action Painting. In recent times, according to Apollonio,

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<sup>95</sup> N. Wiener, *Introduzione alla Cibernetica*, Einaudi, Torino, 1958.

<sup>96</sup> U. Apollonio, *Del fattore cinetico nell'arte contemporanea*, «La Biennale di Venezia», no.42, January-March, Venice, 1961. «[...] la mostra intitolata *Le mouvement dans l'art contemporain* (settembre) che Guy Weelen curò nel 1955 per il Museo cantonale di Bell Arti di Losanna, esemplava con valido criterio la ricerca, nel secolo predominante, di esprimere il movimento anche là dove essa si manifestava all'insaputa dell'artista stesso. Con ragione Weelen riportava un pensiero di Lewis Mumford: essere "probabile che il cambiamento più decisivo cagionato dalla tecnica moderna, in ogni caso più diffuso, fosse quello effettuato nei nostri concetti e nella nostra esperienza dello spazio, del tempo, dell'energia.[...]» E ancora riguardo alla mostra Parigina «La rassegna, quasi in polemica con altra dello stesso anno curata a Parigi da Denise René e dove si esponevano appunto soltanto esempi di arte cinetica (Marcel Duchamp, Calder, Jacobsen, Tinguely, Soto, Vasarely ecc.), comprendeva opere di Boccioni, Balla e altri futuristi e andava da Delaunay a Dufy, da Lèger a Picasso, da Villon a Kandinsky, da Klee a Mirò, da Baumeister a Bazaine, Estève, Vieira da Silva, da Soldati e Reggiani a Hartung, Riopelle, Soulages, fino a Wols. [...] Sul modello della mostra di Denise René invece si è tenuta recentemente una esposizione a Copenhagen, Stoccolma, Oslo, Amsterdam, a cura di Daniel Spoerri, la quale appunto si è prefissa di dare un amplissimo panorama dell'arte cinetica ovvero di oggetti semoventi, di oggetti mossi mediante appositi meccanismi, di composizioni animate per via dello spostamento dell'osservatore e dell'ingerenza di determinare virtualità percettive: [...] è un problema di ricerca sintattica prima che espressiva e quindi vale in quanto offre mezzi linguistici le cui possibilità d'impiego sono ancora in gran parte ignorate e inutilizzate[...]» p.120.

two exhibitions made visible the increase of kinetic art, both made in 1955 and in mutual dialogue: on the one hand the exhibition held in the Cantonal Museum in Lausanne entitled *Le mouvement dans l'art contemporain* (1955) by Guy Weelen that was inspired by writings of Lewis Mumford, and on the other hand the exhibition *Le Mouvement* (1955) at the Denise René Gallery in Paris, which demonstrated as from Boccioni to Jean Tinguely, we shifted from representation to presentation of the kinetic factor inside the work.

Finally, in the latest exhibition *Bewogen Beweging* of 1961 in Amsterdam, had gone to a common language that would bring new possibilities not yet fully exploited. The language was possible thanks to the ease for artists in obtaining materials directly available by certain industries.

In April 1961, in fact, an example of the relationship between art and industry and between open work and kinetic one came from the participation of Bruno Munari to the important Montecatini chemical industries pavilion. On the foreign press as the *Aujourd'hui Art et Architecture*<sup>97</sup>, was dedicated ample space to illustrate qualities of the pavilion where, in addition to Munari, worked Giò Ponti, Franco Albini, Giacomo Castiglioni, Belgiojoso, Peresutti and Rogers. Outside the pavilion Munari created a fountain whose movement followed a random program and the prototype<sup>98</sup> that, less sophisticated, was exhibited at the 1954 Venice Biennial and then at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)<sup>99</sup> in New York in 1955 (figs. 38-41). However, the fountain for the Milan Fair, than the one in '54, had a major innovation linked to the complexity of the movement, that the same Munari explained a few years later:

*«[...] Had a diameter of four meters and rested on the water of a bath a little wider. The fountain was made up of three major moving parts: the largest, a series of plastic plates in neutral colors from white to dark brown, held by a cylindrical metal frame, rotated by an electric motor driven and performed a lap every minute. The medium-sized inner cylinder, turned with the wind and was composed of transparent slabs of warm colors from yellow to red. The smaller*

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<sup>97</sup> R. Marchelli, *Le pavillon Montecatini à la XXXIXe Foire de Milan*, «Aujourd'hui Art et Architecture», no.32, July, Paris, 1961. «L'architecture italienne continue à s'illustrer brillamment de nos jours dans ce domaine, et le Pavillon Montecatini a suscité, de ce fait, très grand intérêt. [...] En de hors du Pavillon lui-même, le designer Bruno Munari a dessiné une grande affiche publicitaire et crée une fontaine en dalles de Vedral colore, dernière d'une série de "machine inutiles" du même autour, qui ont rencontré un très grand succès» p.80-85.

<sup>98</sup> B. Munari, op. cit., 1966, 1972(2<sup>e</sup>ed.). «una serie di scivoli d'acqua, appena inclinati, partivano da una altezza di circa due metri[...]l'acqua [...] cadeva aprendosi su piani di vetro simili a leggi ogni volta che cambiava direzione[...]. I piani inclinati erano di lamiera zincata dipinta di giallo, sostenuti da tubi conficcati semplicemente nel terreno uno di questi tubi portava l'acqua nel punto più alto. Il resto va da sé» pp.245-246.

<sup>99</sup> The Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Schedule of exhibition and events*, no. 81, for release: October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1955. Oct.19 – Nov. 17 GRAPHIC DESIGNERS – Alvin Lustig and Bruno Munari: This exhibition illustrates two different and highly individual approaches to graphic design. [...]. The Italian, Bruno Munari, is represented by posters, catalogues, books – including his [...] a model a fountain in Venice, [...]. Directed by Mildren Constantine.

*cylinder, composed of slabs of cool colors from light blue to green, turning propelled by a jet of water adjusted to suit [...]»<sup>100</sup>.*

Unfortunately, the fountain was an ephemeral work that was dismantled after the close of the fair, but that did not prevent it in 1962 being quoted by Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti<sup>101</sup> and a few years later being passed as an object had headed programmed art<sup>102</sup>.

Munari's importance and work was not only linked to their being a bridge between tradition and innovation, also because Munari was a mediator and an example for younger Milan artists. In addition to T Group, Munari signed an artistic partnership with N Group in February 1961 when he exhibited at the N Studio. His abstract images by polarized light were projected at the Ruzante Theatre in Padua, thanks to the technical assistance of the Film Center from the local University<sup>103</sup>. At the N Studio, Munari exhibited some of his works produced in series, while the invitation-brochure was designed by N Group. A lapidary phrase of Richard Neutra, taken away from his most famous essay *Survival Through Design*<sup>104</sup> of 1954, insisted on the importance of understanding the light inside a physical space-time<sup>105</sup> way.

The quotation had a specific intent to clarify not only Munari's line research but also to affirm N Group had interested in architecture and industrial design. Furthermore, in light of the fundamental cultural influence of Neutra, between U.S. and Europe, in Italy his work was promoted and popularized by Adriano Olivetti<sup>106</sup> and the publishing house Comunità.

Richard Neutra, in fact, had an innovative vision of the relationship between man and machine, because he considered on at an urban and architectural level relationships between human body and objects on the physiological base and retinal perception. These factors, therefore, easily agreed with N Group research and its instances of active participation in society. In

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<sup>100</sup> B. Munari, *Codice ovvio*, Einaudi, Torino, 1971, 80-81.

<sup>101</sup> C. L. Ragghianti, *Munari e la "fantasia esatta"*, «Comunità», no.100, June, Milan, 1962, p.92-102.

<sup>102</sup> P.C. Santini, *Forme di Munari*, «La Biennale di Venezia», no.55, December, Venice, 1964, pp.10-17.

<sup>103</sup> *Le proiezioni dirette di Munari*, editorial, «Domus», no.291, February, Milan, 1954, pp.46-47.

<sup>104</sup> R. Neutra, *Progettare per sopravvivere*, Edizioni Comunità, Milano, 1956, (1961).

<sup>105</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT archive. Folder Gruppo Enne. «La colorazione statica non può mai assicurare una soddisfazione psicologica duratura: è innaturale. I colori dovrebbero giocare l'uno sull'altro in modo vivo, non soltanto nello spazio, cioè fianco a fianco, ma anche nel tempo, come successione di stimoli. [...] La percezione del colore, come la percezione della forma, ha luogo nel continuum spazio-temporale, quindi trattarla soltanto in rapporto allo spazio costituisce in sé un approccio difettoso. (Richard Neutra)»

<sup>106</sup> A. Olivetti, *Città dell'uomo*, Edizioni Comunità, Milano, 1960. «Richard Neutra che combatte la nostra stessa battaglia e nel suo lavoro sociale ci ha dato uno dei più mirabili esempi di compiuta comunità, Channel Heights, scrive: 'L'umanità si dirige precariamente verso l'eventuale sopravvivenza a bordo di una zattera ancora improvvisata che spesso fa acqua: la pianificazione e l'urbanistica.[...] Ad onta del progresso tecnologico, o forse proprio a causa della sua irregolarità, il nostro ambiente di manifattura umana ha manifestato una sinistra tendenza a sfuggire sempre più al nostro controllo.[...] Usura e rovina del sistema nervoso si sono moltiplicate nell'ambiente metropolitano: [...]il nostro ambiente di fabbricazione umana, zeppo di ritrovati tecnici, è divenuto lo stampo del nostro destino – e una fonte di tensione nervosa inesauribile'» p.62.

addition, the example of Munari showed that if art wanted to exist in the industry, had to acquire a urban dimension and not only a technological one.

§ *The art at the time of Olivetti. Towards the definition of a 'programmed art' (Eco, 1962).*

The fountain like other works of Munari exercised, therefore, a big attraction for the research of artists such as Enzo Mari, N and T groups. Between 1960 and 1961 exhibition opportunities of a meeting between the latter and Munari allowed, therefore, the initial emergence of an artistic direction that increasingly moved away from the Informel Art legacy but at the same time also from the proposals of the *Nuova Concezione artistica*.

On November 1961, a new direction had its first critic role in Umberto Eco's<sup>107</sup> essay, entitled *The form of the disorder* and published on «Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1962». Although the Eco's intervention had a popular purpose – used less a philosophical and more poetic language than he did on «Il Verri» in 1961 - led to unprecedented consequences as stated in the previous months. Eco played with metaphors and parodied the technical-scientific universe until phonetic divertimento between “beatniks” – that at the time considered the poets and novelists as literary equivalent of the American Action Painting - and “Bit Generation” – bit as the unit of information in the binary system - as a new ecumenical aim of a futuristic industrial “Church”.

Eco, seriously, reasoned on the principle of Chaos and statistical probability within the panorama of visual arts, where artists were replaced with new “programmers” or “forms by planner” whom faced the chaos by means of a precise planning. These would be opposed to Abstract Expressionism, to romanticism of Action Painting and nihilism of New Dada.

Eco proceeded to bring together on the one hand Italian T Group, Bruno Munari, Enzo Mari, Enrico Castellani, on the other hand the Venezuelan Raphael Jesus Soto, the German Dieter Roth and the Swiss Karl Gerstner. Were reproduced graphic works based on the principle of redundancy of geometric patterns, according to a rigorous combinatorial program and reproductions of plastic works in motion, propelled or virtually kinetics.

Among works of Italians were *Superficie pulsante n.11* and *Rotoplastik* by Colombo, *Opera 527 SXA* and *Opera 305 SX10* by Mari, *Struttura Continua n.108* and *Perturbazione cibernetica* by Munari, *Superficie magnetica n.19* and a combinatorial graphics by Boriani, a graphic *Variazioni su di un reticolo fisso di punti* by Devecchi, *Superficie modulata* by Enrico Castellani,

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<sup>107</sup> U. Eco, *La forma del disordine*, «Almanacco Bompiani 1962», Bompiani, Milano, 1961, pp.175-188.

kinetic *Superficie* by Soto, *Sferisterio semidoppio* by Varisco, *Superficie a percorsi fluidi* by Anceschi and finally by Gerstner was reported rotation schemes of *Tangential Excentrum* that had been exhibited at the *Nove Tendencije* in Zagreb (figs. 42 - 50).

The works presented in many different cases ranged from the poetic appeal of Dadaist randomness to explicit reworking of Constructivist geometries, so there was not enough a formal homogeneity and poetic. However, the traditional artistic techniques (oil, wood, glass and metals) were replaced such as new materials like foam, plastics, aluminum and electric motors. The structural change also implied a transformation inside the conceptual line that more and more assimilated bodies-machines, for example in works by Anceschi or Boriani, to the emerging electronics industry ones (fig. 51).

A lot of pages on «Almanacco...», in fact, were dedicated to the specific theme: *The application of electronic computers to moral science and literature*, with particular reference to the new literary avant-garde, which would become the 63 Group, whose a main exponent was Nanni Balestrini.

The Milan poet created a combinatorial poem and combined by the machine that was one of points of highest tangency between programmed researches and Italian literary avant-garde. In both cases, however, persisted the playful character of artistic operations in the use of electronic computers and of the combinatorial calculus. An opposite feeling which was felt rather than the seriousness of high electrical engineering products by Olivetti or IBM companies. In fact, were praised aesthetic qualities of the control panel of the new *Elea 9003* by Olivetti<sup>108</sup>, designed by Ettore Sottsass jr., which showed a fundamental integration among the industrial design, visual arts and new technology<sup>109</sup> (fig. 52). That innovative aesthetic concept considered the artistic process, not as a complaint but as a cooperation with the utopia of technical-scientific universe<sup>110</sup>.

The view outlined by Eco, also, was finally a recognition to the research of artists whom for several months, as happened in Zagreb, worked in Europe to find a technical and formal cohesion. The main consequence was that, according to the testimony of the same artists, the advertising

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<sup>108</sup> P. Bricco, op. cit., 2005, p.161.

<sup>109</sup> E. Sottsass, *Paesaggio Elettronico*, editorial, «Domus», no.381, June, Milan, 1961, pp.39-45.

<sup>110</sup> U. Apollonio, op. cit, 1961. «[...] non di sicuro ignoto, infine, che oggi la figura del committente nel senso antico è talmente decaduta da essere pressoché inesistente, se persino le grandi autorità contemporanee, siano lo stato o l'industriale, non ordinano lavori di abbellimento o di carattere celebrativo. Il committente moderno è colui che adopera un certo utensile, e il potere dominante ne crea il bisogno non come lusso eccentrico, bensì proprio come normale necessità. Ecco perché il consumo non si indirizza verso la fruizione di oggetti da contemplare, ma ricorre all'acquisizione di oggetti da usare. [...] sicché nella progettazione dell'oggetto pratico si realizza un'esperienza estetica che fissa in modo permanente un modo di interpretare la realtà, [...]» p.255

office of Olivetti, directed by Riccardo Musatti, contacted Bruno Munari<sup>111</sup> to transpose in a public display what shown on «Almanacco...»: programmed art was born.

In the two-years period from 1960 to 1961, to conclude, the relationship between art and industry in Italy and in Croatia was analyzed by sociologists, philosophers and art scholars, whom affirmed that the art could not only be understood as faculties of the spirit, but art had to get in touch with technology and science in its methodology.

Three artistic events that illustrated that shift were the *Nove Tendencije* exhibition of Zagreb, the *Italia '61* show in Turin and the 12<sup>th</sup> Lissone Award. In that phase, the research of N and T groups and other single artists lived, then, a moment of transition, in which merged several references to the avant-garde tradition, without a definite direction.

In the Italian situation - until the decline of the economic boom around 1963 - the new industrial culture was centered on the question of work and the democratization of arts. Therefore, in that optimistic view, visual arts began to emancipate itself from the Informel Art current, according to two directions. In the first there was, for example, by N and T groups, an ideological commitment borrowed from avant-garde, to build its own line of descent to the origin of it there was Constructivism of the Twenties and Thirties.

The second direction was concretized in works whose original traits were manifesting a marked kinetic design, and a planned dimension. As a consequence, on the model of research that for years led Bruno Munari, were the boundaries among the painting, sculpture and industrial design fell down.

For instance, N Group shifted from a New Dadaist attitude towards technology – as showed in the baker Zorzon's exhibition – to more rigorous and constructive one - aftermath their participation at the *Nove Tendencije*. In that way, they assigned to their own works a metaphoric epistemological value, according to the definition borrowed from Umberto Eco.

Another consequence was the approach to the industry, from artists by a para-scientific theory and a planning practice related to industrial design, created the need for a new public. However, such a public, as in the case of the Olivetti company, would have led to a necessary correspondence with the trade. Similarly to what was happening in industrial design, artists would come to deal not only with the connoisseur but also with the consumer of aesthetic objects.

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<sup>111</sup> Munari (and like him Enzo Mari) whom worked a lot of time for Olivetti, was called by Giorgio Soavi to set up an exhibition of young emergent artists in Italy, according to Alberto Biasi said during an interview in June 2010.

#### Chapter 4<sup>th</sup>. The programming idea through works of GRAV, Italian and Croatian artists and the early new tendencies definition would become the *Nouvelle Tendance*.

In 1962 the scholar of primates Desmond Morris<sup>1</sup> did not claim to be as an art critic, but linked developmental stages of children's ability to represent the external world to different expressions of painting, from works of Paul Klee and Joan Mirò to ones of Ben Nicholson and Piet Mondrian (figs. 1,2). The former two artists brought back to early stages of the child of four-five years old, while the geometric abstraction of the latter had a similarity with combined forms by children under three years old. Furthermore, as regards *Tachisme* the scientist claimed that artistic expression was located in the evolutionary stage of a child of two years old, or found itself in the painting of apes. In primates as well as in *tachistes* painters that similarity was due to an advanced muscle control, which corresponded to an attention on visual core values.

Morris came to those conclusions after experiments conducted since the mid-Fifties on chimpanzees and gorillas. His research focused on how primates painted and felt an aesthetic pleasure in painting. By the popular press<sup>2</sup> paintings of apes were immediately compared with works of Jackson Pollock or Georges Mathieu, exploiting the apparent formal similarity between products of 'Congo' - one of the most famous apes of the time - and paintings of Informel artists. Supporters of the "death of art" found new topics to ridicule i.e. works as *Cathedral* (1947) by Pollock, *Fire* (1957) by Mattia Moreni and *Magnificence of the Good Duke of Burgundy to his feast* (1957) by Mathieu. Even in specialized fields, such as on «SeleArte», Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti<sup>3</sup> analyzed the rate of Morris, mainly attacking considerations that the scientist claimed in respect of the art in the history of the Western man.

Ragghianti and the popular press, however, had not considered that the rate of Morris was primarily a scientific text. His methodology was applied in a superficial way to human paint, so far away from usual places of man in the street or from idealistic principles of art critique.

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<sup>1</sup> D. Morris, *Biologia dell'arte*, Bompiani, Milano, 1969 (1st ed. 1962), p.179.

<sup>2</sup> C. Fenoglio, *Le scimmie sono pittrici astratte*, «Il Tempo», February 17<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1962. «Qual è la conclusione del dott. Desmond Morris? La pittura moderna, egli fa osservare, è indubbiamente arrivata al punto in cui esistono somiglianze, sia pure superficiali, fra le correnti estremiste e i disegni delle scimmie. [...] L'uomo pittore è giunto a uno stadio in cui i suoi interessi sono basicamente quelli della scimmia. Lo sviluppo della stampa, della fotografia, del cinema hanno liberato il pittore dalla tradizionale necessità della riproduzione, e ora, come lo scimpanzé, si dà alla creazione astratta» p.34.

<sup>3</sup> C. L. Ragghianti, *Congo l'artista*, «SeleArte», no.57, May-June, Florence, 1962. «[...] in moltissimi pesi del mondo, dunque, in questo ventesimo secolo, sia sta studiando il fenomeno dell'arte delle scimmie. Questo avviene, secondo il Morris, per la congiuntura tra lo stadio assai avanzato, ormai, delle ricerche sul comportamento degli animali da un lato, e il fatto che "la pittura umana è ritornata, motivatamente, allo stadio della pura sperimentazione estetica". [...] Morris[...] si augura che esso prosegua e raggiunga risultati tali da illuminare "il mistero del processo della creazione artistica". Pure augurandogli a nostra volta una felice prosecuzione delle sue ricerche, ci permettiamo però di esprimere qualche dubbio sulla possibilità di arrivare a quel risultato per questa via» p.5.



Morris's research, in general, were understood within a cultural exchange between humanism and science, but that match was dangerous because it eliminated the metaphysical or transcendental leading that had always been attributed to figurative arts. In the same time, for instance, Biasi, Massironi, Anceschi and Varisco pursued a para-scientific methodology upon basic principles of the visual perception. They confirmed what that Morris inferred from apes and also from studies on children's drawings.

In Italy, the relationship between art and childhood was read in the light of the essay by Herbert Read<sup>4</sup>, *Education through Art*, published by Comunità and translated by Giulio Carlo Argan. Read as Morris, moving from postulates of the Gestalt highlighted the importance of educating through art in its educational goals for childhood and social ones. Education through art would allow the critic and active participation in society. Read spoke of «integration» of the artist in the society through his works.

To avoid any transcendence, therefore, was required a new terminology, attentive to scientific data, with expressions such as «muscle control», «nervous tension», «somatic» and «perception». The terms were also shared by the contemporary essay by Rudolf Arnheim<sup>5</sup>, *Art and Visual Perception*, published in the United States in 1954, and translated by Gillo Dorfles in 1962. Dorfles through Arnheim, read the work of art not driven by the *purovisibilista* idea to find a style, but to trace original principles of the aesthetic creation (fig. 3). According to Dorfles, this path would have avoided falling into subjectivism abused by the artistic creation and critic interpretation.

By Morris, Read, and Arnheim was clear the attention of science to the art and in the same way artists had a profound awareness of the role played by the science and technology in their activities.

Thus, as seen above, on the one hand it witnessed the progressive impoverishment of the technique and content in the followers of Pollock, Moreni and Mathieu, whose painting was reduced to a mere mannerism gestures, on the other side Biasi and others were appropriating a

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<sup>4</sup> H. Read, *Educare con l'arte*, Comunità Milan, 1962. «L'esperienza prende forma e diviene riconoscibile e utilizzabile nella misura in cui diventa forma artistica. La coscienza è socialmente integrata solo nella misura in cui essa è l'apprensione estetica della realtà. Da un caos di sensazioni in coordinate noi isoliamo quel centro che è il sé o l'io; e dal più profondo caos che è l'inconscio, l'istintivo ed in certo senso il collettivo, vediamo emergere i simboli, e le astrazioni che eventualmente costruiscono il 'super-ego'. 'Ego' e 'super-ego' hanno efficacia e validità biologica solo in quanto essi raggiungono l'armonia e la stabilità di configurazioni estetiche, e le configurazioni più essenziali sono evidentemente quelle che dividiamo con altra gente, come parte del nostro essere comune o collettivo» p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> R. Arnheim, *Arte e percezione visiva*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1971 (1° ed. 1962). «L'importanza d'una simile affermazione è ovvia; proprio in un'epoca come la nostra dove il dilagare di esperimenti artistici sempre più eccezionali e soggettivi e quindi sempre più svincolati da un credo universale rischia di far considerare inesistente ogni regola e ogni possibilità di giudizio, è salutare poter credere che – al di là delle differenze stilistiche e culturali – e persino di talune differenze percettive instauratesi attraverso i tempi – esista tuttavia un principio formativo, comune all'uomo e alla natura, che viene a ripresentarsi ed a costituire la base significativa e veramente universale di ogni autentica opera d'arte» p. XV.

theoretical and scientific view, which would apply from 1962 into programmed works and merged in the second *Nove Tendenze*.

§ 1. 1962 *Arte programmata* exhibition: origin and development of the Italian New Tendency.

In May 1962, at Olivetti showroom at the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, was held the first Italian exhibition of *Arte programmata*. It was ordered with the advice of Bruno Munari and supervised by Giorgio Soavi and Riccardo Musatti<sup>6</sup>, at the time responsible for the advertising division of the company of Ivrea in Milan. According to Giorgio Soavi, Riccardo Musatti promoted the plan of an exhibition dedicated to artistic pursuits of N and T groups, as regarded their works, related to problems of the perception and mechanical motion, similar to the new trade aims of the company.

Olivetti in fact, conducted by Roberto Olivetti, whom succeeded his father Adriano, was opening to the trade of computers<sup>7</sup>. Artists invited by Munari were Enzo Mari and N and T groups, which now boasted fruitful collaborations: Munari exhibited with T Group<sup>8</sup> between 1960 and 1961 and was hosted in 1961 in Padua by N Group. In addition at the first months of 1962 dated two exhibitions held at the Studio N in Padua: the first was of T Group and the card of invitation carried a text written by Munari. There was emphasized that their research, building on examples of Futurism, Moholy-Nagy, Duchamp and Calder, gave up painting, sculpture and all preconceptions of the Informel and geometric abstract style.

The second exhibition was dedicated to Enzo Mari<sup>9</sup> and took place in March 1962 from 17<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>. The invitation made by N Group was influenced of their poetic and claimed that works of

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<sup>6</sup> G. Soavi, op.cit., 2001. «Musatti arrivò a Milano, come direttore dell'Ufficio Pubblicità nel palazzo di via Clerici. Un uomo pieno di charme che ci incoraggiò a fare, per dirne una, la prima mostra di *Arte programmata*. A Milano, Roma e New York e Zurigo mostre di *Arte programmata* con artisti scelti da Bruno Munari e catalogo con la prefazione di un giovane, Umberto Eco, allora redattore della Bompiani. Tutti bravi e italiani ai quali si aggiungono i francesi Morellet, Julio Le Parc, Vasarely e Ivaral figlio di Vasarley. Erano parenti del design, facevano l'arte con dei giocattoli molto attraenti, quelli inventati da Davide Boriani, Gianni Colombo, Enzo Mari e Grazia Varisco» p.42.

<sup>7</sup> V. Castronuovo, *Un modello imprenditoriale mai più eguagliato*, in *Un'azienda e un'utopia. Adriano Olivetti 1945-1960*, edited by S. Semplici, Società Editrice Il Mulino, Bologna, 2001. «Adriano e il figlio Roberto avevano infatti intuito in tutta la loro portata le potenzialità che sarebbero derivate col passaggio dai transistor ai circuiti integrati e ai semiconduttori. [...] avevano dato vita ad un'equipe di scienziati e specialisti, di concerto con l'Università di Pisa, la cui opera si era tradotta nella realizzazione nel 1959 dei primi calcolatori Elea. Senonché, dopo la scomparsa di Adriano, il gruppo d'intervento per il risanamento dell'Olivetti [...] giudicò i computer un sogno avveniristico.» pp. 55-64. Ibid. Ottorino Beltrami, *La difficile eredità di Adriano Olivetti*. «[...] Nel 1955, viene istituito il Centro Studi di Barbaricina in accordo con l'Università di Pisa. Il laboratorio viene trasferito a Borgolombardo alle porte di Milano: da esso esce nel 1959 il calcolatore Elea 9003» pp. 65-74.

<sup>8</sup> *Mostra Gruppo T – oggetti Miriorama*, February 17<sup>th</sup> - March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1962, Studio N, Padova, in V. Feierabend, L. Meloni, op. cit., 2009, p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> *Mostra Enzo Mari*, March 17<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>, 1962, Studio N, Padova, 1962, in V. Feierabend, L. Meloni, op. cit., 2009, p.57.

Mari were not painting or sculpture, but were experimental objects, everyday objects, light structures and games for children.

In both exhibitions was suggested to the public to regard works not as a painting or sculpture, but as objects whose purpose was to undermine the habitual visual perception.

To understand the innovation that was behind those assertions, exhibitions of Padua can be compared with a third in which Mari and Munari, whom boasted a collaboration since the time of MAC, exhibited in Florence at the new Strozzi Gallery (figs. 4,5).

The Florence exhibition in March 1962, was entitled *Ricerche visive strutture design* (visual Research design structures) and in linking together visual problems, the idea of structure and purpose of design, anticipated the Milan one of *Arte programmata*, which would have shown such research. The works of two artists (figs. 4,5), whom divided spaces of the Strozzi Gallery, were not perceived as a symptom of an impending change, but read in the light of the idealistic or *purovisibilista* tradition of Italian art criticism as did Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti<sup>10</sup> on «SeleArte» – a magazine was published by Olivetti.

Moreover Ragghianti<sup>11</sup> on «L'Espresso» in May 1962, admitted his critical embarrassment in defining works of Mari and Munari, and tracking them in a general adherence to the world of industrial design. That embarrassment could not be attributed to a critical failure of Ragghianti, but to the real problem derived from the final destination of works. However, Ragghianti preferred to leave open the question and fold on their common, albeit vague, humanistic roots.

A few of earlier days, on May the 15<sup>th</sup>, was opened the *Arte programmata*<sup>12</sup> exhibition and the embarrassment of Ragghianti was passed by the interpretation of the younger critic Umberto Eco. In the introductory essay by Eco which in agreement with Munari and Soavi established new artistic proposals as “programmed art”. However through such expression was not meant a

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<sup>10</sup> C. L. Ragghianti, *Fantasia esatta*, «SeleArte», nos. 5-6, March-April, Florence, 1962. «La galleria della “Strozzi” a Firenze, si è riaperta[...]. La mostra di apertura volge intorno a “ricerche visive strutture design” di Bruno Munari ed Ezno Mari, che appaiono a Firenze per la prima volta con un complesso di così vasto interesse. Le ricerche di Munari, che si riallacciano continuamente attualizzate, a quelle futuriste sul movimento in espansione si articolano [...]: dalle macchine inutili ai giocattoli in gomma piuma [...] alle strutture continue, ai collages mutevoli per rotazione del polaroid, alle lampade cubiche o pieghevoli, ai posacenere con contenitore estraibile [...] alle ambientazioni e agli allestimenti di sale di esposizione e vetrine. [...] C'è una disciplina costante che ricapitola in uno stile dominante il rigoglio delle emozioni, delle immagini, delle idee[...]. Ciò che trattandosi di oggetti con una funzione, è più difficilmente raggiungibile e perseguibile secondo una costante [...] l'aperta propensione alla prova sperimentale, l'interpretazione nel senso della funzione della realtà estetica è per Munari, il segno di una partecipazione umanissima alla vita del nostro tempo [...] senza mai abbandonarsi al dramma e alla negatività di tante espressioni d'arte odierne. La sua scelta si compie nel senso della destinazione pratica dell'oggetto che è fatto per l'uomo e per le sue necessità morali, intellettuali, estetiche[...]. Le opere di Enzo Mari, dalle strutture ai pezzi per la serie di applicazione pratica, si inquadrano secondo potenziali e prospettive aperte che [...] possono estendersi all'architettura, all'ambientazione, allo spettacolo automatico [...]. Il linguaggio di Mari, spontaneo e insieme mutuato da conferme e riviviscenze contemporanee, da Mondrian a Klee, da Bill a Munari, dai concretisti ai nipponici, è articolato [...] ha grande misura [...] ha profonda risonanza umana da chiudere nelle densità dell'immagine» pp.71-74.

<sup>11</sup> C. L. Ragghianti, *Due designers a Firenze*, «L'Espresso», May 27<sup>th</sup>, Milan 1962.

<sup>12</sup> *Arte programmata*, catalogue, May 15 - 30<sup>th</sup> 1962, Negozio Olivetti, Milano, Olivetti, Milan, 1962.

common poetic, as it was for the historical avant-garde, since works were interpreted according to the Theory of Information and the rising cybernetics science<sup>13</sup>.

Eco also associated with them the concept of “open work” (the homonymous essay would be published in next June) had just enucleated in 1961, which was accompanied by that of “multiplied works”, which referred to multiples exhibited at the Denise René and Bruno Danese Galleries between 1960 and 1961 (with works by Mari, Munari and T Group). Finally did not fail the definition “kinetic art” that attracted other exhibitions held in Europe in 1961 (such as *Bewogen Beweging* in Amsterdam at the Stedelijk Museum)<sup>14</sup>.

The Milan exhibition, therefore, finally put a full stop to different critic interpretations that works of artists had suffered during previous months. To confirm that direction, the invitation to the exhibition sought a direct confrontation with the international success of the *Bewogen Beweging*. However remained unclear what was the target of works such as *Superficie magnetica*, *Strutturazione fluida*, *Opera n.649* or *Rilievo ottico dinamico*. Eco wrote in regard to:

«So we can talk about programmed art: and admire kinetic sculptures that a man of the near future will take at home in place of old prints or contemporary masterpieces reproduced on canvas. [...]. This critic will recall with a smile as if they were common in houses of that era the quarrel between a mother and her son, the first claiming that she did not understand how you could read and listen to the radio at the same time, the second finding that fact very natural, because it was now educated at a gymnastics perception that enabled him to understand and appreciate the two gestalt balancing in a ductile way the attention»<sup>15</sup>.

Their destination, then, would be a near future where, dropped the distinction between works of art and its reproduction, they would be educated at the perception through a true mental and retinal exercise.

Moreover, works were machines like the radio and then aimed for a household, thus confirming the hypothesis of the democratization of the art and an aesthetic of the technological

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Adriano Olivetti Foundation archive, Ivrea. Folder Arte Programmata. Brochure, recto. «Nel 1961 le più importanti mostre di arte cinetica hanno avuto 50.000 visitatori allo Stedelijk Museum di Amsterdam 70.000 visitatori al Moderna Museum di Stoccolma 23000 visitatori al Luisiana Museum di Copenhagen. L'arte può essere programmata da una programmazione esatta nascono moltitudini di forme simili. Nella tradizione di ricerca di nuovi mezzi e nuove forme di comunicazione visiva e nell'intento di promuovere la conoscenza delle più recenti esperienze svolte in questo campo da Gruppi di giovani artisti in ogni parte del mondo, la Direzione pubblicità della Società Olivetti è lieta di presentare questa mostra organizzata da Bruno Munari e Giorgio Soavi»

<sup>15</sup> *Arte programmata*, op. cit., 1962

world. Eco claimed that, albeit fictionalized, probably due to the reading of Arnheim and Read, as evidenced by his published reviews on «Il Giorno» in May 1962.

Eco<sup>16</sup> from the essay *Art and visual perception* by Arnheim, highlighted the importance of a grammar of seeing («grammatica del vedere»), which would allow the public to analyze a work of art, not according to categories of the sublime, but according to the scientific rigor of psychology of the Gestalt. The second review related to *Art and Industry*, published by Comunità in 1962, by Read, in which Eco<sup>17</sup> argued that the result of the relationship between art and industry was to be found in the industrial design. There was a different function of the art and beauty, not in terms of works to put into a museum but to live in the everyday, as an aesthetic experience and at the same time as a consumption and enjoyment of objects and their forms.

Eco, in fact, in support of its interpretation quoted the typewriter *Letter 32* by Olivetti and preserved at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, as an example of a change in a positive sense of contemporary style to industrial forms and their tactile qualities. A new “muscular” interaction, as a result, between man and object to which Eco contrasted the Informel Art, because in agreement with Argan, was regarded as conservative and elitist than the “new nature” of the industrial art.

Eco thus entered into the heart of the debate on the industrial culture in Italy<sup>18</sup>, which occurred in previous two years, and which came to its conclusion in the summer issue of «Il Menabò» in 1962<sup>19</sup>. The magazine of Elio Vittorini, published also an intervention by Eco that, according to a letter from the author<sup>20</sup> to Italo Calvino of the previous May, was just written.

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<sup>16</sup> U. Eco, *Una grammatica del vedere*, «Il Giorno», May 16<sup>th</sup>, Milan, 1962. «[...] è certo che questo libro, che si presenta come “una nuova grammatica del vedere”, potrà indurre ad utili riflessioni molti lettori che si rifiutano di credere che un prodotto tanto “sublime” come un’opera d’arte possa anche essere analizzato in termini più rigorosi, propri delle discipline sperimentali» p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> U. Eco, *Siamo schiavi di miti visivi?*, «Il Giorno», May 30<sup>th</sup>, Milan, 1962. «[...] è stato proprio l’irruzione della macchina nella nostra vita quotidiana a riproporci il problema di un genere di bellezza che potesse integrarsi a tutti i nostri atti, esprimersi attraverso gli oggetti d’uso, investire ogni aspetto della nostra vita: una bellezza che non fosse solo un genere di consumo per persone abbienti o per i giorni di vacanza (quando si ha tempo di girare per i musei), ma fosse alla portata di tutti e – soprattutto – si potesse godere non indipendentemente dagli altri gesti che compiamo, ma proprio nel compierli. In altre parole quando oggi veniamo a sapere che un celebre museo di Nuova York ha esposto la macchina Olivetti disegnata da Nizzoli come un esempio di arte contemporanea [...] avvertiamo che qualcosa non funziona. [...] Invece la macchina di Nizzoli viene veramente apprezzata come bella nel momento in cui vi si posano le mani, quando le dita battono sui tasti, quando tutti i nostri muscoli partecipano al compimento di una data esperienza operativa, che risulta tanto più completa proprio se, insieme al senso di un’azione riuscita e piacevole, avvertiamo anche la presenza di una forma bella che aiuta e facilita la funzione, e nel contempo la sottolinea, la suggerisce a chiare lettere.[...] Per contrasto, allora, l’arte disinteressata, l’arte da galleria e da museo, che pareva una sopravvivenza conservatrice di fronte alla disponibilità democratica dell’arte industriale, l’arte informale, che anziché comporre oggetti armonici buca spezza e brucia materiali elementari spesso sgradevoli, apparirebbe come un’ultima espressione di libertà, l’unico aiuto che ‘arte ci porge per risalire all’autocoscienza e alla veglia. La contrapposizione[...] suona però falsa[...]. La realtà industriale non rappresenta un incidente passeggero ma la nuova “natura” nella quale viviamo[...]» p.12.

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 3rd, paragraph 1st.

<sup>19</sup> U. Eco, *Del modo di formare come impegno sulla realtà*, «Il Menabò», no.5., July, Turin, 1962. «In questo senso l’artista che protesta sulle forme ha compiuto una duplice operazione: ha rifiutato un sistema di forme, e tuttavia non lo ha annullato nel suo rifiuto, ma ha agito al di dentro di esso e quindi per sottrarsi a questo sistema e modificarlo ha tuttavia accettato di alienarsi parzialmente in esso, di accettarne le tendenze interne; d’altro canto, adottando una nuova

Highlighted the role of the artist in the society through a shaping («formativa») capacity as Pareyson said. The artist was charged by his own works to make visible and sensitive the industrial landscape, but to establish by himself as an avant-garde should not yield to blandishments of the trade. The idea of shaping («formare») and commitment into reality, reconciled with what in Spring 1962 Eco attributed to works and at the same time apprehended by N and T groups' theories.

Ideological commitments - N Group, Mari - met the artistic one - T Group, Munari - on the common principle of the movement, understood as the continuity of visual and temporal phenomena perceived by the retina and brain. Similarly, also, works exhibited in *Arte programmata* were in the formal continuity with the catalogue that, by a layout close to graphic works of Munari - but a more careful analysis recalled Neoplasticism by Van Doesburg (figs. 6,7) - and with photographs of Ugo Mulas, was by itself a "programmed object". In fact, covers were made by *moiré* pattern and stimulated retinal perception; catalogue assumed an autonomy that, as a multiple, served to demonstrate democratic demands proclaimed by the exhibition.

Furthermore, the shape of the square was at the base of works by Mari, Devecchi, Colombo, Varisco, Anceschi and N Group - that were proposed as a team-work - which was associated with the shape of the sphere or circle present in works by Munari, Boriani and N Group. Padua artists wrote a text for the catalogue that was similar to the manifesto of September 1961 (for the Twelfth Lissone Award):

*«The words "n" distinguishes a group of 'experimental designers' who use a method of collective inquiry and add several practical and theoretical experience»<sup>21</sup>.*

That looked like another text - inserted into the corpus "written N", whose original typewritten is preserved at the NT found in Zagreb - and dated on December 1961. That confirms,

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grammatica fatta non tanto di moduli d'ordine quanto di un progetto permanente di disordine, ha accettato proprio il mondo in cui vive nei termini di crisi in cui esso si trova.[...] Non c'è più una distinzione tra tradizione rinnegata e avanguardia che pone un nuovo ordine; di fatto ogni avanguardia nega un'altra avanguardia la cui contemporaneità le impedisce di essere già tradizione rispetto a quello che la nega. Di qui il sospetto che[...]si sia generata una maniera dell'avanguardia e di fare avanguardia sia oggi l'unico modo di rientrare nella tradizione. è la situazione che viene sospettata da varie parti come la conversione neocapitalistica delle ribellioni artistiche: l'artista si ribella perché così gli richiede il mercato, e la sua ribellione non ha più alcun valore reale, perché si attua ormai nell'ordine di una convenzione» p.217.

<sup>20</sup> I. Calvino, *Lettere 1940-1985*, Mondadori, Milano, 2000, pp. 705-706. Correspondence between Eco and Calvino; Letter from Calvino of May 9th 1962. Calvino analyzed the Eco's essay and highlighted some of its merits and defects.

<sup>21</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found. Section Umjetnici. Folder N Group.

as testified by Alberto Biasi, within December 1961 they had just been contacted by Munari for the Olivetti exhibition.

§ *First considerations by Italian art critics on the programmed art.*

A first evidence of the Milan exhibition was given by Marco Valsecchi<sup>22</sup> on the newspaper «Il Giorno», in which he compared the exhibition to above-mentioned one in Amsterdam. Valsecchi, whom had visited the same exhibition in Stockholm - the second and final stage of *Bewogen Beweging* – in August 1961, remembered that in the first room was a quotation from 1909 Futurist Manifesto.

Marinetti extolled the beauty and speed - exemplified by the presence of a Bugatti's spider – and from Futurism was traced a genealogy that from Balla came to Duchamp, Calder and Munari. As in *Arte programmata*, in Stockholm all the works had in common the factor of movement.

According to the art critic the Milan exhibition, however, became boring, because the psychological analysis oppressed every aspect of the lyricism and experimentalism - as a mere formal academic game – had replaced the artistic creativity. Valsecchi showed the scientific attitude of N Group, reflecting in optical illusionist works, compared to T Group whom were interested in the kinetics without exceeding the “divertissement” of the intelligence game.

The article, to emphasize Valsecchi's words, was accompanied by a photograph that showed Lucio Fontana<sup>23</sup> whom, forked glasses and under the watchful eye of Boriani, investigated perplexed the *Colonna a sfere rotanti* (Column with revolving spheres) by Munari (fig. 8). Fountain, as well as Munari with “useless machines”, regarded machines as a means to free art from the limits of tradition, but without becoming its end because the romantic idea of creative genius was ever part of Argentinean artist. Valsecchi, Fontana and Munari eluded that T Group, and especially N Group and Mari were not interested in the machine but were trying to assimilate the artistic practice to the scientific methodology.

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<sup>22</sup> M. Valsecchi, *L'elettronica ispira i giovani*, «Il Giorno», May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1962. «[...]una mostra del genere, e intitolata 'arte programmata', si è aperta a Milano[...] ne sono interpreti alcuni giovani milanesi noti come 'Gruppo Miriorama' e altri giovani padovani, disegnatori sperimentali, denominati “gruppo enne”. [...] Questi ultimi, rispetto agli altri sfruttano con metodo più scientifico l'illusionismo ottico delle forme geometriche sovrapposte o scomposte. Gli altri, cioè i milanesi, sfruttano meglio gli effetti cinetici[...]. Questi giovani si attengono ad uno sperimentalismo alieno da complicazioni torbide o allusioni angosciose.[...] Ma si può parlare propriamente di creazioni artistiche [...]?» p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> I. Mussa, op. cit., 1976. In April 1961 Lucio Fontana wrote the introduction for the catalogue of T Group's exhibition *Miriorama 10*, at the Galleria la Salita in Rome. «La pittura e la scultura non rispondono più alla sensibilità dell'uomo d'oggi. [...] La scienza, la nozione del rapido e del mutevole determinano nell'uomo un modo più intenso di percepire il flusso del tempo.[...] La macchina è riconosciuta come mezzo atto a dare sequenze di immagini, ed esclusivamente come mezzo; usata [...] non per esaltarla ingenuamente e nemmeno per farne oggetto di ironia negativa» p. 62.

However it was clear that works shown in *Arte programmata* were close to formal solutions of the historical avant-garde and that factor - that approached to what Eco asserted on «Il Menabò» of July 1962 - on the one hand was tied to the willingness of artists to participate in the real world and on the other hand could be read as a mannerism or follower renovation.

The suspicion was endorsed in the catalogue by means of a chronologic line, from 1914 to 1960, where works by Balla, Duchamp, Moholy-Nagy, Vasarely, Tinguely, Bury, Roth and Soto were placed as antecedents to ones of Mari, Munari and N and T groups and GRAV. Similarly a second chronology listed exhibitions that, from 1952 to 1961, hosted works in motion were ahead of exhibited ones. It began with one of MAC, held at the Gallery Annunciata in Milan in 1952, to go to *Le Mouvement*, held at Galerie Denise René in 1955, and to come to exhibitions of multiples, at the Danese Gallery in 1960, and *Bewogen Bewegung* of 1961.

Therefore, that “myth-graphy” in the following years would serve to justify adherence to a historical continuity but also the judgment, by their detractors, about the obsolescence of N and T groups’ works.

To understand, therefore, how in *Arte programmata* works were perceived by the first public, a testimony was offered in 1963 by the homonymous film<sup>24</sup>, directed by Enzo Monachesi, with the subject by Munari and screenplay by Marcello Piccardo, produced at the Studios of Monte Olimpino (Como) and by Olivetti<sup>25</sup>. By means of frames it was possible to understand the actual capabilities of *Superficie Magnetica* or *Colonna a sfere rotanti* and their interaction with the public. Clearly, at a conceptual and formal level half of exhibits were based on the principle of randomness that was affected by the legacy of Tinguely, although through a mechanical clockwork which was opposite to that self-destructive of the Swiss (figs. 9-16). The other half of works was structured according to programmed geometry, showing ambivalence of research that had just been illustrated during the *Nove tendencije* in Zagreb (figs. 17 - 21).

For example, N Group’s *Visione dinamica* (Dynamic Vision) – that Toni Costa exhibited in Zagreb and at 12<sup>th</sup> Lissone Award – on the base of the Gestalt Theory, was a view of the relationship between sequence of PVC slats and perception of their virtual movement.

Its novelty was not identified only with the use of Gestalt, as for example Anton Pevsner in 1958 Venice Biennial exhibited a sculpture that had a similar principle of view (figs. 22,23).

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<sup>24</sup> Private archive of Ennio Chiggio, Padua. Adriano Olivetti Foundation archive, Ivrea. Also see a short version on the website [www.nuke.monteolimpino.it](http://www.nuke.monteolimpino.it).

<sup>25</sup> B. Munari, *La progettazione grafica*, «Almanacco Bompiani 1963», Milano, 1962. Probably, the film-making had just been in 1962 while final cutting and production had been in 1963, as closing credits showed. In fact, on «Almanacco Bompiani 1963», edited on November 1962, were reproduced frames with the following caption: «Ricerche di comunicazione visiva di immagini in movimento, fatte su opere cinetiche della mostra Olivetti a Milano. Le opere sono del gruppo T di Milano, del gruppo N di Padova, di Munari e di Mari» pp. 34-35.



Although Pevsner's work was a sculpture in its traditional meaning - made by bronze - designed based on geometric and mathematical principles, *Dynamic Vision*, as we had just seen for the exhibitions of Munari, T Group and Mari held in Padua between 1961 and 1962, was neither painting nor sculpture. It compounded the two-dimensionality of painting with the sculptural reliefs, was not designed but engineered and finally the PVC was an industrial material. However what made it more like a product of the industrial design was its no contemplative purpose but of use for a retinal "gym".

The public in Milan probably looked at the works as it looked at the sculptures of Pevsner or Naum Gabo, not realizing then to be in face not of made works of art but of prototypes, which then would continue to live in small size multiples. That misunderstanding also was caused by works were shown as a unique art pieces in the Olivetti Store rooms.

A final fact that - perhaps intentionally wanted - the film illustrated was the working environment of Anceschi and Boriani, which was far from the imagination of an aseptic and industrial technologic laboratory. Spaces were similar to the iconography affirmed of the atelier of the avant-garde painter and often outsiders, which contradicted what the N and T groups or Mari claimed (figs. 24-26).

Unfortunately we do not know how was the fortune movie but to assume its minimal disclosure would justify because Filiberto Menna<sup>26</sup> published in 1963 on the journal «Film Selezione», a review of the *Arte programmata* exhibited in Rome in October 1962 at the Olivetti Store in Piazza Barberini. Menna, noting also the influence of the *Bewogen Bewegung*, called upon to read works by Futurist, Constructivist and Neoplasticism roots within their connection with technology and industry.

Menna<sup>27</sup>, also, a similar argument developed on «Letteratura», between Summer and Autumn 1962, returning to the concept of "open work" by Eco and affirming the absolute actuality of Mondrian in artists such as Dorazio, Klein and Mack, because in their works was a dialectical relationship between shape - as a moment of closure - and space - as "openness".

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<sup>26</sup> F. Menna, *Attualità e utopia dell'arte programmata*, «Film Selezione», nos.15-16, January- April, Rome, 1963. «I giovani artisti milanesi [...]intendono[...] rifiutare il solito quadro e la solita scultura che ornano le dimore della borghesia aggiornata, per proporre un'arte aperta, tale cioè da richiedere la collaborazione attiva dello spettatore[...]. Forse il senso per noi più interessante dell'*objet* mobile teorizzato e attuato dai futuristi consiste [...] nel fatto cioè che esso racchiude una struttura trasferibile in un ambito più vasto, in un architettura appunto o addirittura in una città [...] con queste premesse non è forse azzardato pensare che i principi formativi dell'arte programmata [...] possano inserirsi attivamente anche in ambiti più vasti[...]: intendo dire l'industrial design e la progettazione urbanistica. E non è certo un caso che, nel momento stesso in cui si sta procedendo ad un esame spregiudicato dei fondamenti ideologici del costruttivismo storico [...] che si avverta sempre più la necessità di recuperare in architettura e in urbanistica il carattere "aperto" dell'opera informale» pp.79-87.

<sup>27</sup> F. Menna, *Arte Astratta e arte informale*, «Letteratura», nos.58-59, July- October, Rome, 1962, pp.42-50.

Furthermore, they had no existentialist attitude and instead referred to the outside world through a process of knowledge of object structures. It means according to Menna, the true connection with Futurism, Neoplasticism and Vasarely, was not given only by “objet mobile” but from the technical capacity of Mari’s objects and others to be transferred to an architectural and urban planning.

Therefore, in similar way Fontana whom had just supported towards T Group, the works exhibited in the *Arte programmata* were interpreted according to parameters of the industrial design. Their communicative factor was compounded with their playfulness that, as well as Read had stated as the purpose of art, educated without going into the tragic daily life.

A similar appearance was also warned by «Il Mondo»’s<sup>28</sup> correspondent whom, reviewing the exhibition in Rome, noticed the involuntary dialogue between a large mural painting by Guttuso - an integral part of the store - and works of artists. Furthermore, the reporter recalled the ironic comments by art critics attended the inauguration, among whom was Libero de Libero, but also the interest by an important gallery director like Gaspero Del Corso. Also, the article was ahead of the cool reception that in Rome area programmed works had met over the following years, nevertheless the support by Del Corso and its L’Obelisco Gallery.

§ *Arte programmata and L’instabilité: towards an artistic convergence between GRAV and N Group (1962-63).*

In Rome *Arte programmata* exhibition had also taken part in members of GRAV including Francois Morellet whom is mentioned by Filiberto Menna for a text of French artist that had been published in the journal «Ulm» of the Hochschule für Gestaltung.

Published in October 1962, the text was been presented on previous April 4<sup>th</sup> at the Paris exhibition of GRAV. *L’instabilité* was organized under the aegis of the Denise René Gallery (figs. 27,28) and on the catalogue the Morellet’s<sup>29</sup> text - the full version - entitled *Pour une peinture expérimentale programmée*, anticipating the successful Eco’s terms.

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<sup>28</sup> *Arte programmata*, editorial, «Il Mondo», October 16th, Milan, 1962, p.24.

<sup>29</sup> F. Morellet, *Pour une peinture expérimentale programmée*, in *Groupe de recherché d’art visual Paris 1962*, G. Habasque (edited by), ed. Galerie Denise René, April, Paris,1962. «On peut ce pendant seulement s’étonner de l’absence presque totale d’une peinture réellement expérimentale dans ces kilomètres de chefs-d’œuvre[...]. Leurs auteurs, soit s’identifient à elles, les considérant comme une manifestation incontrôlable de leur personnalité soit, suivant un processus plus modern attachement une valeur primordial à la découverte d’un nouveau procédé dont, [...] ils répètent quelques variantes choisies arbitrairement. Une expérience véritable doit par contre être menée à partir d’éléments contrôlables en progressant systématiquement suivant un programme. [...] Prenons un exemple: si l’on superpose des formes très simples (bonnes formes suivant la Gestalt-théorie) et que l’on fasse varier les angles de superposition, toute une série de structures apparaissent. Ces structures parfaitement contrôlées et facilement recréables

Morellet agreed with Max Bense and his Theory of Information studies applied to the aesthetics. To assert the need of works to be programmable, anonymous and made into industrial materials, to emancipate themselves from individualism exhibited by painters such as Jean Dubuffet and Jean Fautrier, whom at the time represented the “École de Paris”.

Like Morellet also N Group corroborated the hypothesis of anonymous works that was directly shared between Italian and French artists with two exhibitions held, respectively in Padua in May from 12 to 26<sup>th</sup> at the N Studio and in Milan in June from 9 to 20<sup>th</sup> at the Danese Gallery (figs. 29,30).

Both were titled *L'instabilità* and occurred in the same period of the *Arte programmata*, whose catalogue was a direct reference to GRAV. As a consequence, three exhibitions might be considered closely integrated with each others by affinity of theory and formal appeals from exhibited works.

Also in GRAV's exhibitions in Paris, Padua and Milan to visitors was asked to complete a questionnaire that replicated the type one used for the statistical, psychological and sociological analysis. In that case, it wanted to file reactions of the public calling, for example:

«1) How do you consider works in this exhibition? 2) What do you think is the ideal destination for these works? 3) Which connection is established between you and these works?»<sup>30</sup>

In that way the scientific method invoked by GRAV and N Group, according to studies on the Gestalt, including works and the audience, came to a double fruition level: their direct experience and a critic statement on what had been their perception.

Another reason to consider the *L'instabilité/L'instabilità* decisive exhibitions in regard to Zagreb's one, was given by a GRAV's<sup>31</sup> collective text entitled *Nouvelle Tendance*.

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sont un matériau de choix pour des expériences esthétiques, matériau, évidemment bien plus approprié qu'une quelconque œuvre intuitive, unique, ou même que des tests fabriqués par des psychologues. Des programmes d'expériences d'un même esprit sont également applicable à la couleur et au mouvement par exemple» p.8.

<sup>30</sup> *Stratégies de participation. Grav – groupe de recherche d'art visuel. 1960/1968*, op. cit., 1998.

<sup>31</sup> GRAV, *Nouvelle Tendance*, in *Groupe de recherche d'art visuel Paris 1962*, op.cit. «Nous employons ce terme qui a été utilisé à l'occasion de l'exposition “Nove Tendencije” de Zagreb en 1961. [...] Manifestations internationales et contacts partiels commencent à lui donner un caractère plus homogène. [...] La nouvelle tendance n' pas un caractère définitive. Son évolution justement apporter de nouvelles façons de concevoir l'œuvre, de l'apprécier et de la placer dans la société. [...] Sur le plan des réalisations, une réaction naturelle se fait jour d'une part, contre la situation stérile qui a fait suite à de légitimes révoltes et qui produit maintenant jour après jour des milliers d'œuvres qualifiées comme: abstraction lyrique, art informel, tachisme etc. et d'autre part, contre l'infructueuse prolongation d'un maniérisme attardé sur le formes géométriques et qui ne fait que répéter maintenant dans la plupart des cas, les propositions d'un Malévitch, d'un Mondrian. Considérons à part le courant actuel, néo-dada ou nouveau réalisme, qui provoque une certain sympathie mais oblige à une analyse sévère. [...]. Évidemment, la nouvelle tendance bien que réagissant contre ces courants, englobe encore certaines nuances qui proviennent. On voit d'un côté une production nuance d'art concret ou constructiviste, d'autre part une certain trace de tachisme et quelques parentés avec le néo-dadaïsme. Cependant, la

It hinted at the *Nove tendencije* of Zagreb, as had just happened in 1961, and was defined as an embryonic stage of an international art movement that, born from different shared tendencies, assumed an homogeneous character. It was stated that their art form research reached a degree of clarity as well as N Group represented that.

Moreover, GRAV compiled a list of artists whom belonged to the *Nouvelle Tendance*: at the top were GRAV, N and T groups, followed by Castellani, Von Graevenitz and Lippold. A first subgroup, however, was called “Concrete-Constructivist” consisting in Knifer, Mari, Mavignier, Picelj and Roth. Then a second group followed, indicated as “neo-dada”, in which there were Mack, Uecker and Piene (Zero Group), and finally the last were *tachistes* painters including Dorazio.

The division was the first attempt to define the artistic situation was developing since 1961. It allowed to read the *Arte programmata* exhibition as a internal passage to the evolution of the *Nouvelle Tendance*, especially in its second stage in Venice in Summer 1962. Also joined in GRAV and a young Italian painter, Getulio Alviani, whom by himself had just been in contact with Zagreb, French artists, N and T groups.

## § 2. *Arte programmata* in Venice, GRAV and the *Nouvelle Tendance*.

The importance of the Venice *Arte programmata* exhibition was immediately realized by the scholar of “Konkrete Kunst”, Margit Staber<sup>32</sup> on «La Biennale di Venezia». She greeted with enthusiasm the artists whom, without falling in the same utopia of the historical avant-garde, become a process of contamination between new technologies and human sciences, in order to overcome the gap occurred between art and technology.

According to Staber their work reconfirmed the absolute freedom of the artist to the exact shaping of forms. The scenery was still an Olivetti showroom, in the prestigious Piazza San Marco, but in that case, compared to Milan and Rome, the exhibition represented the ideal meeting place with the architecture by Carlo Scarpa<sup>33</sup>. Venetian architect renovated the store in

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nouvelle tendance est surtout la recherché de clarté. [...]la transformation de l'activité plastique en recherché continuelle sans autre préoccupation que mettre en évidence les premiers éléments pour une tout autre considération du phénomène artistique» p.16.

<sup>32</sup> M. Staber, *Arte programmata*, «La Biennale di Venezia», nos.46-47, December, Venice, 1962, p.88.

<sup>33</sup> F. Dal Co, L. Borromeo Dina (edited by) *Negozi Olivetti : piazza San Marco 101 Venezia*, In Edibus, Venezia, 2011.

1958 according to a modulation of interior spaces reminiscent of Wright's "geometric games"<sup>34</sup>, but at the same time evoking the severe spirituality of Mondrian<sup>35</sup>.

Movable, programmed and optical objects by Munari, Mari, GRAV, N and T groups, and Alviani in Venice had just had a direct confrontation with the design of Olivetti's typewriters. However the architecture of Scarpa - whose Neoplasticism root was evident in the coloration of the floors in yellow, red and blue<sup>36</sup> - was proving a real place where there was no continuity between shapes of works and areas of the store.

In addition, the catalogue of Milan had been replaced to illustrate works by GRAV and Alviani by a brochure, whose graphics had been entrusted to the technical expertise of Mari<sup>37</sup>. The photographs and captions, carefully presented by the Eco's introduction, were formatted in a grid of squares inscribed in rectangles, according to the formal arrangements just in use by Mari (fig. 30). The Venice exhibition, therefore, showed a new phase after Milan, where the internationalism and the homogeneity of the research confirmed to move in the direction had just indicated by GRAV in previous April.

Photographic proof of the exhibition in the day of its inauguration are preserved in the Olivetti's archive<sup>38</sup> and are a testimony of that event. The exhibition was organized on two floors, the public input was received from the existing sculpture *Nudo* (Nude, 1958) by Alberto Viani on the one hand, from the *Colonna a sfere mobili* (Column with revolving spheres) by Munari<sup>39</sup> on the other, while other works were scattered in different settings.

Viani and Munari represented two visions of the art, that along the Twentieth century, were compared and contrasted (figs. 32,33). On the one hand a sculpture divided into pure forms<sup>40</sup>, to be contemplated in the synthesis of tactile, visual and bright values, by the molded brass, on the other a sculpture assembled with new materials, the transparency of Plexiglas, the electric motor and the rigid spherical-geometrical configuration, which were the means for a playful interaction between object and viewer.

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<sup>34</sup> M. Tafuri, *Carlo Scarpa e Giuseppe Samonà*, in *Storia dell'architettura italiana 1944-1985*, Einaudi, Torino, 1986 (1982), pp. 139-145.

<sup>35</sup> G. Scarpa, *Un negozio in Piazza San Marco, a Venezia*, «L'Architettura. Cronache e storia.», no. 43, May, Rome, 1959, pp. 18-28.

<sup>36</sup> *Negozi Olivetti. Piazza San Marco, Venezia 1957-58. ...una volta era così...*, editorial, «Casabella», no. 742, March, Milan, 2006, pp. 4-5.

<sup>37</sup> Adriano Olivetti Foundation archive, Ivrea. Folder Arte Programmata. General information on *Arte programmata* exhibition in Milan and Düsseldorf 1962-1963. Introduction brochure/exhibition by Umberto Eco. Layout Enzo Mari. Foto by Ugo Mulas. Curated by Bruno Munari and Giorgio Soavi.

<sup>38</sup> Adriano Olivetti Foundation archive, Ivrea. Folder Zorzi. Art and Artists. Folder on verso: *Arte Programmata - Varie. Proveni.* Contents: 12 b/n proofs of the exhibition *Arte Programmata* in Venezia, printed by A.F.I. - Agenzia Fotografica Industriale - directed Nuova Editoriale Sol.pa, Venice, San Marco, 5238.

<sup>39</sup> B. Munari, op.cit., 1966. «nove sfere di materia plastica trasparente sono tenute in colonna da tre cristalli verticali. All'interno delle sfere c'è un segno grafico bianco. La prima sfera in basso poggia sulla puleggia di un motore lentissimo: tutte le sfere girano lentamente, per attrito, cambiando continuamente posizione ai segni bianchi» p.246.

<sup>40</sup> Orietta Lanzarini, *Spazio Nudo: Carlo Scarpa interpreta Alberto Viani*, in F. Dal Co, L. Borromeo Dina ( edited by), op. cit. 2011.

Munari's sculpture and works of younger artists were similar to typewriters and functional to the advertising that the company of Ivrea showed of its image (figs. 34-39). Moreover, in the same period, its Lombard laboratory designed and patented the first Italian computer, called *Program 101*<sup>41</sup>.

However, the combination of GRAV, N Group and Olivetti was not without contradictions, since artists whom fought against the trade and art galleries, on their manifestos, in which there were a lot of Marxists and anti-capitalist inflections – but also subtly presents in the Adriano Olivetti's<sup>42</sup> speeches - clashed with the shift of company policy, that after 1963, would autonomously run acquired works.

A first relapse of the exhibition in Venice was in the text by Julio Le Parc<sup>43</sup>, published in September 1962, in which the artist stated in *Nouvelle Tendance* the overwhelming presence of programmed works.

A second consequence, thanks to Olivetti, was that the research of groups and individual artists began interacting in an international scene, in which persevered the Informel Art current. Besides those, however, were rapidly climbing charts of the trade, the research defined “neo-Dada” - borrowed from the American *new-dadaism* or “novorealista” from the French *nouveau réalisme* - which looked at works of Rauschenberg, Baj or Arman and ones returned on painting even figurative looked at Sergio Vacchi and Asger Jorn.

For instance Gillo Dorfles<sup>44</sup> on «Aut Aut», considering the contemporary Venice Biennial, analyzed the situation of the Italian and international art, in which the weakening of the *tachiste*, material and gestural painting, was claiming an interest in artists like the German Zero Group, Dorazio and De Luigi - and implicitly participants to the *Arte programmata* - toward a

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<sup>41</sup> P. Bricco, op.cit., 2005. Gastone Garziera, an Olivetti's engineer, told about *Programma 101*: «L'elaborazione del Programma 101 è stata lunga, laboriosa ed entusiasmante. Nell'aprile del 1962, Roberto Olivetti commissionò a Perotto e al suo stretto collaboratore Giovanni De Sandre, un progetto particolare. Eravamo ancora a Borgolombardo[...]: il primo studio, che avrebbe poi originato di stadio in stadio la Programma 101, fu concluso prima del Natale di quell'anno» p.106

<sup>42</sup> A. Olivetti, op. cit., 1960.

<sup>43</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found. Folder 37. There is a brochure that is written by Julio Le Parc on September 1962, with also an handmade dedication – probably by Le Parc himself - to Matko Meštrović. «Du point de vue de la conception, la notion de programmation (souvent dans la Nouvelle Tendance) englobe la façon de concevoir réaliser et présente des œuvres instables. Il s'agit de prévoir à l'avance toutes clarté ses modalités pour pouvoir la laisser se réaliser dans l'espace et le temps, soumises à des contingences prévues de caractère déterminé ou indéterminé provenant du milieu ou elle se déroule et de la participation activée ou active du spectateur. Une multitude d'aspects similaires en découlera, le spectateur appréhendera une partialité, laquelle inclura toujours des visualisations suffisant pour faire percevoir la totalité instable».

<sup>44</sup> G. Dorfles, *Formativo e informale alla XXXI Biennale*, «Aut Aut», September, Milan, 1962. «[...] notando l'esistenza (seppur non sufficientemente documentata) d'una corrente neo-figurativa, di una neo-dadaista (Nevelson), e di una neoconcretista (a Venezia praticamente assente), accanto ad una quasi totale declino delle posizioni post-cubiste (presenti in una triste sala di Chiti), informali e dell'astrattismo geometrico (scarsamente e fiaccamente rappresentato da Reggiani e Davico), nonché il cosiddetto neo-naturalismo (qui rappresentato dalle opache sale di Ajmone, Morlotti, Mandelli)» p.414.

production called “New Concrete Art”. Dorfles or younger art critics such as Alberto Boatto<sup>45</sup>, then felt the need of change to implement in an institution like the Venice Biennial where they could no longer resort to traditional divisions between painting and sculpture.

Works by Mari and groups - as was stated above – wanted to focus on such overcome and their example anticipated an integration with the industrial design. But they were not alone.

In March 1961, minutes were written by Biennial Experts Committee<sup>46</sup>, and Dorfles probably did not know that, recorded the intention of scholars like Giulio Carlo Argan, Sergio Bettini and Marco Valsecchi, to organize a Bauhaus retrospective. The interest justified by the opening of the Bauhaus Archives in Darmstadt, also had in order to show a direct continuity between the school of Gropius and industrial design.

Argan<sup>47</sup>, in fact, on «Il Messaggero» argued with the reactionary position of the Biennial which had not selected exponents of the most representative artistic currents that the critic from Turin defined as ranging from the so-called “Informel” and “New Constructivism”, and between the latter, the “New Figuration” current.

Consequently began to loom up the possibility of a formal and conceptual similarities between programmed works and the industrial design, such as supported by Dorfles<sup>48</sup> on the essay *Il disegno industriale e la sua estetica* (The industrial design and its aesthetics), published in November 1963.

The essay, along the lines of the most famous *Art and Industry* by Read, was important to read as it was considered the industrial design in the Italian situation. Dorfles distinguished three

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<sup>45</sup> A. Boatto, *Nuove proposte in una confusa biennale*, «Letteratura», nos.58-59, July – October, Rome, 1962. «Su questa strada di 'nuova figurazione', di recupero del simbolo e di ipotesi neodadaiste, in cui, pur con differenti ed anche opposti strumenti, ci si propone di attingere il mondo ad un livello più circoscritto e determinato di quanto non avvenga nelle opere più risolutamente estremiste dell'informale (dove forme e figure risultano cancellate), l'odierna Biennale non sembra presentare nessun'altra notevole indicazione» pp. 3-12.

<sup>46</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Visual arts series. Unit 114. XXXI Biennale 1962. Regolamento Comitato Esperti Sottocommissione per l'arte figurativa. Varie. Schede artisti. Cartella Comitato Esperti. Verbale del 25/03/1961. The minutes said that an Bauhaus exhibition could gives «l'opportunità di far conoscere in Biennale artisti come Moholy Nagy, non mai precedentemente rappresentati, e di documentare, anche in relazione ad un problema attuale come quello dell'Industrial Design, il tentativo operato nell'ambiente del Bauhaus, di avvicinare l'arte d'avanguardia al mondo della tecnica e della produzione industriale. il tema consentirebbe, infine, di illustrare, in una sua eminente configurazione storica, il rapporto di integrazione tra le singole arti, che già da tempo e da più parti si viene proponendo come di specifico interesse per la Biennale[...]».

<sup>47</sup> G. C. Argan, *La Biennale delle retrovie*, «Il Messaggero», June 18<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1962, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> G. Dorfles, *Il disegno industriale e la sua estetica*, Cappelli Editore, Bologna, 1963. «[...] ne sono un esempio dal lato delle 'arti pure' la frequente inclusione in esse di elementi presi a prestito dal mondo dell'industria e del disegno industriale (come si può constatare in parecchi artisti, di solito battezzato come neodadaisti, tra i quali ricorderò Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Jim Dine, Arman, Raisse, Baj, De Pezzo, ecc.), e dall'altro canto il progressivo svilupparsi ed affermarsi in diversi paesi di un genere di produzione 'industriale' (o quanto meno eseguita con sistemi industriali e di serie) dedicata alla creazione di oggetti 'non utilitari' ossia di oggetti che hanno l'unico fine di essere 'piacevoli', di soddisfare l'esigenza estetica del pubblico. Alcune di tali opere, come quelle create dal gruppo francese delle Recherches visuelles (Morellet, Le Parc, Sobrino, Yvaral, Stein), o da quelli italiani, Gruppo T (Anceschi, Boriani, Colombo, Devecchi, e Gruppo N di Padova o da altri artisti come i tedeschi Rot, Pohl, Mack, Piene, gli italiani Munari e Mari, e altri ancora, stanno a dimostrare la possibilità di concepire anche il disegno industriale in funzione d'una creazione di opere 'artistiche' non utilitarie e con ogni probabilità troveranno in futuro ampie applicazioni nel settore della pubblicità, dell'arredamento, della segnaletica e in genere in tutto quanto il lay out della moderna civiltà meccanizzata» pp.22-24.

phases of the “type”, i.e. the prototype, its transformation into a serial object and finally the definition of a quality standard of the series.

Objects produced entertain a relationship with visual arts on two levels: in the first the industrial object was transferred from the real world into painting or sculpture for its symbolic and formal qualities, as it happened in New-Dada works by Rauschenberg and Baj. In the second level, the formal and technical similarity with the industrial object was produced in works that – as Dorfles said – were only designed for an aesthetic pleasure.

There were reminded groups like Grav, T and N, Zero and the single Alviani, and were reproductions from works by Mari – Danese’s objects of 1960 - and Munari - *Colonna a sfere mobili* of 1962. The argument of Dorfles finally - as he had mentioned in the previous essay *Simbolo comunicazione consumo* (Symbol Communication Consumption) of 1962 - proceeded to analyze the new industrial landscape by means of the Theory of Information by Max Bense, Abraham Moles and the Cybernetic Theory by Norbert Weiner.

A position close to Dorfles, was by Umbro Apollonio during the IV Corso Internazionale di Alta Cultura (4<sup>th</sup> International Course of the High Culture), held in Venice at the Cini Foundation. On September 18<sup>th</sup> 1962, Apollonio<sup>49</sup> held a lecture entitled *Ipotesi su nuove modalità creative* (Assumptions of new creative ways) in which identified works of groups like GRAV, N and T, singles like Mari, Dorazio and Alviani as a “New Concrete Art” tendency.

That trend had its origins in Futurism, Constructivism and Neoplasticism, but his innovation was to have passed the idea of the artist as a separated individual from society, to work in an art dimension as collective as the technological society was. A critical hypothesis that Apollonio had just expressed during the *X Congresso di critici e studiosi d’arte di San Marino* (10<sup>th</sup> Congress of Critics and art scholars of San Marino) on September 1961 and reaffirmed by means of the article *Struttura e forma applicata (structure and shape applied)* in Spring of the same year<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> U. Apollonio, *Ipotesi su nuove modalità creative*, in *Quaderni di San Giorgio*, Fondazione Cini, Venezia, 1964, pp. 641-657. That essay has the following history: it is made at a lecture for the 4<sup>th</sup> International Course of High Culture, held in Venice at the Cini Foundation. After the September 1962, was published on the Summer 1963 on «Quadrum» no.14. We have different editing of it, because Apollonio increased and edited the text for publishing. Unfortunately, as confirmed by the secretariat of Cini Foundation Archive in Venice, there is not an original typewritten and an audio recording probably is missed or definitely lost. As a consequence, we adhere to the above-mentioned editions, to which we can join a third one published by Apollonio in 1979 in *Le occasioni del tempo* [op. cit., 1979].

<sup>50</sup> U. Apollonio, *Quesiti sulla ricerca estetica contemporanea*, in *Testimonianze' dagli atti VIII-IX-X-XI convegno internazionale artisti-critici studiosi d’arte, Rimini – Verrucchio S.Marino, 1959-1960-1961-1962*, Edizioni dell’Ateneo, Roma, 1963?. «[...] Il concetto che anima l’artista contemporaneo è proprio quello di comunicare con tutti, di coinvolgere tutti nella visuale di tante possibili relazioni intrecciate. Ma è anche una sorta di tendenza a non premere sul lato del personalismo, a condurre le proprie ricerche in una direzione di gruppo. [...] la situazione del mondo sta subendo un altro spostamento: dalla fase di un’era tecnica e quindi industriale si sta incamminando con inaspettata rapidità verso un’era scientifica. [...]L’arte allora, nel circolo di simile esperienza, non può seguire un procedimento meccanico, essere esecuzione stilistica, ma soltanto adeguarsi ad una maniera di ricerca che si orienti nella stessa direzione ed esprima quelle stesse emozioni in cui si imbatte l’operatore scientifico», pp.55-61. U. Apollonio, *Struttura e forma applicata*, in *Le occasioni del tempo*, op. cit., 1979. That article was published the first time on «La Biennale di Venezia», no. 43 (April-June) 1961. «Uno dei problemi più dibattuti nella cultura



Apollonio claimed the teamwork as a new operative method in the world of visual arts, but claimed that it was necessary the absolute creative freedom, not to fall in the industrial production rigors. The interest of Apollonio for the works shown in the *Arte programmata* became a reality, in fact, in an homonymous exhibition held in December 1962 at the Gallery La Cavana in Trieste (figs. 40,41)<sup>51</sup>.

In addition to N and T groups, singles Alviani, Mari and Munari, participated Dada Maino, a painter whom had been close to Manzoni, Castellani and Bonalumi. Her works in 1959 had free and organic forms, mindful of the “holes” of Fontana and irregular bodies of Jean Arp, but after an exhibition at the N Studio in 1961<sup>52</sup>, were declined in more organized, programmable structures, and modifiable by spectator (figs. 42,43).

The presence of Dada Maino, since then not involved in *Arte programmata* exhibitions, would seem us, motivated by the involvement of N Group and perhaps of Apollonio<sup>53</sup>. The exhibition, with less works and authors, was sponsored by the Soroptimist International Association Club<sup>54</sup> and it was accompanied, for the first time in Italy, by a public debate.

It was attended by Apollonio and Dorfles whom supported opposing positions: Apollonio argued that the demystification of romantic individualism - by means of anonymous and programmed works - would have renewed traditional visual arts, while Dorfles indicated that the painting could not be reformed by programmed ones.

The painting as a visual art, therefore, would continue to act in the real world, regardless of the phenomenon alleged “programmed art” which should be reduced to the industrial design field<sup>55</sup>. Both positions, however, still considered visual arts as a spiritual investigation field and not as scientific disciplines: as a consequence Apollonio and Dorfles were closer than it seemed

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contemporanea è costituito per certo dalla difformità esistente tra le opere cosiddette d'arte pura e quelle cosiddette d'arte applicata.[...] [...] non siamo i primi o i soli a considerare simile distacco, e ci rendiamo perfettamente conto che esso può essere interpretato come uno spacco preoccupante nell'assolutezza dell'operatività spirituale, ma nemmeno vi scorgiamo quella minaccia così grave cui a prima vista ci si può sentire esposti. [...] molti aspetti nell'orientamento della civiltà contemporanea inducono ad ammettere il predominio del lavoro di équipe – altra volta osservammo il passaggio da uno stadio tecnico a uno stadio scientifico – e la stessa ardua identificazione dell'autore in gran parte dell'odierna produzione figurativa sta a dimostrare la regressione dell'individuo in favore di una creatività anonima[...]» pp.254-256.

<sup>51</sup> *Anni fantastici. Arte a Trieste dal 1948 al 1972*, catalogue, December 16<sup>th</sup> 1994 – March 13<sup>th</sup> 1995, Civico Museo Revoltella, Comune di Trieste, Trieste, 1994.

<sup>52</sup> W. Feierabend, L. Meloni, op. cit., 2009, p. 54.

<sup>53</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Conservative Found. Folder Umbro Apollonio. Unit 5. Letter from Marianna Küchler to Apollonio of December 9th 1962, on headed paper SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION Club of Trieste. «Egregio professore, mi è grato poterle confermare definitivamente, che il giorno 19 corr. Avrà luogo nella sala Convegnoi della Camera dei Commercio in via S.Nicolò 5, alle ore 18, il dibattito su 'L'Arte programmata'. Desidero ringraziarla caldamente; anche a nome del Consiglio Direttivo del Soroptimist Club di Trieste per la sua viva collaborazione e per l'apporto della sua così qualificata competenza, che ci hanno permesso di realizzare la suddetta manifestazione».

<sup>54</sup> Italian State Archive, Section Friuli Venezia-Giulia, office of Trieste. Soroptimist Found, 1950-2001. Folder Rugliano. Notiziari 1960-1978. Anno sociale 1962/1963, 19 dicembre – Arte programmata, in «Notiziario Sorpotimist», nos.3-4, May, Venice, 1963, p. 69.

<sup>55</sup> *L'Arte Programmata a Trieste. Piccola anatomia delle “macchine inutili”*, editorial, «Il Piccolo», December 20<sup>th</sup> 1962, p.6

to Hegelian idealism - in the elaboration made by Benedetto Croce<sup>56</sup> - than to assumptions of Max Bense and Matko Meštrović.

§ *Artist and Industry: Alviani's fortune in Yugoslavia.*

Italian artists, however, were not enough familiar with philosophical issues than critics, had an empirical approach to the relationship between art and science. Getulio Alviani (Udine, 1939), for instance, in that case had an important role since his works had been, and continue to be today, among recognized expressions of the programmed research. Although nowadays Alviani<sup>57</sup> is considered one of the most important character of *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions and one of the most famous artist in Yugoslavia, he got that acknowledgement in a few time, between 1961 and 1962.

He lived among Udine, Venice and Milan; despite the irregularity of his art studies, he worked in certain industries and architectural studios, being the first to represent the new Italian industrial landscape. In Milan, between 1960 and 1961 he met Lucio Fontana, Almir Mavignier and N and T groups and in February 1961 had a little unlucky exhibition at the Montenapoleone Gallery<sup>58</sup>, in which he presented some works by the matter and Informel way (fig. 44).

His official debut was not in Italy, but in Ljubljana on following September<sup>59</sup>. At the Mala Galerija, directed by Zoran Krzisnik, Alviani exhibited his first *Linee-luce*<sup>60</sup>: plates of aluminum or steel, wherein he experienced a process of scratching of the epidermal layer of chromed aluminum that, by the action painting way, revealed the luminescent metal soul, while the remaining surface retained its reflective capacity (fig. 45).

Their use was done by three stages: firstly, receiving the reflected light. Secondly, the brightness of vivid metal. And thirdly, was possible by means of the formers, the observer changing his position, felt light variations and ambiguities in the dynamics between bottom and scratches. Alviani sourced for materials directly from industries he worked for, while the process of scratching the metal was placed in direct dialogue with Fontana and Mack (figs. 46-48). Two artists, by different ways, around 1961 attack the uniform light reflection of the metal by means

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<sup>56</sup> B. Croce, *Breviario di estetica*, Laterza, Bari, 1969. «Un'altra negazione è implicita nella definizione dell'arte come intuizione: cioè, che, se essa è intuizione, e se intuizione vale teoria nel senso originario di contemplazione, l'arte non può essere un atto utilitario; e, poiché un atto utilitario mira sempre a raggiungere un piacere e perciò ad allontanare un dolore, l'arte, considerata nella propria sua natura, non ha nulla da vedere con l'utile, e col piacere e col dolore, in quanto tali» p.19.

<sup>57</sup> *Getulio Alviani*, op. cit., 2004.

<sup>58</sup> *Getulio*, catalogue, February 1961, Galleria Montenapoleone, Milan, 1961.

<sup>59</sup> *Getulio*, catalogue, September 1961, Mala Galerija, Ljubljana, Delo, Ljubljana, 1961.

<sup>60</sup> *Getulio*, editorial, «Likovna Revija», no.2, December, Ljubljana, 1961, p. X., 60.

of scratches and brutal punctures in the case of Fontana, by superposition of thin metal foils in rhythmic articulation in the case of Mack.

In September 1961, while the exhibition in Ljubljana was still running, Boris Kelemen<sup>61</sup> was very interested in the Alviani's research and when on «Telegram» reviewed the *Nove Tendencije*, began his article in the belief that his works could participate in the exhibition in Zagreb.

A few months later, Alviani exhibited in Novi Sad and in February 1962 had his first exhibition in Croatia in Rijeka / Fiume at the Moderna Galerija<sup>62</sup>, at the time directed by the painter Boris Vižintin.

In addition, the gallery also was a key place for the Croatian and Yugoslav contemporary art. There held the *Salon* exhibition by which young artists had a national and international showcase, as happened to Picelj in 1956<sup>63</sup>, Srnc in 1959<sup>64</sup>, Kristl and Knifer in 1961<sup>65</sup>.

After exhibiting in several of the most important cities of Yugoslavia, Alviani in March 1962 exhibited for the first time in Venice at the Gallery 22, associated with Hayes Galleries in New York. However, the decisive meeting with Italian and Croatian artists and critics associated with *Nove Tendencije*, appeared in May 1962, when Božo Bek, thanks to recommendations of Kržišnik, Mavignier and Picelj, persuaded Vera Horvat-Pintarić to organize an exhibition of Alviani at the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti of Zagreb<sup>66</sup>.

Exhibited the *Linee-luce* (light-lines), but several among them showed a major change: the surface was not composed by a single lamina of milled aluminum, but it was structured by a combination of modules, were sized fourteen by fourteen centimeters, always in aluminum and milled (figs. 51). The module became the minimum unit he used to weave complex surfaces according to a principle of combinatorial series borrowed from industrial design and achieved by means of a programmable machine.

As a consequence Alviani shifted his own art from random scratches to a rigorous geometrical articulating plans, which led him to investigate the inheritance of Concrete and Neoplasticism painting (fig.52). The exhibition was a great success<sup>67</sup> and benevolent critiques on

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<sup>61</sup> B. Kelemen, op. cit., 1961.

<sup>62</sup> *Getulio*, catalogue, February 1<sup>st</sup> -13<sup>rd</sup> 1961, Moderna Galerija, Rijeka, 1961.

<sup>63</sup> R. Putar, *Salon 56 u Rijeci. Vrlo široka panorama pruža se gledatelju u dvoranama riječke Galerije likovnih umjetnosti*, «Narodni List», October 31<sup>st</sup>, Zagreb, 1956, p.6.

<sup>64</sup> R. Putar, *Riječki Salon u krizi*, «Književna tribina», no.8, August 19<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1959, pp.1.6.

<sup>65</sup> G. Gamulin, *Salon 61 i njegovi problemi*, «Telegram», September 22<sup>nd</sup>, Zagreb, 1961; B. Vižintin, *Salon '61*, «Likovna Revija», no.1, September 15<sup>th</sup>, Ljubljana, 1961, p.9-12.

<sup>66</sup> *Getulio Alviani*, catalogue, May 26<sup>th</sup> – June 10<sup>th</sup> 1962, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1962.

<sup>67</sup> MSU archive. Found Božo Bek. Folder Alviani. It includes some pictures of Alviani's works, a taken page away from the catalogue, in which there is the works list and on whose left-hand margin were written their quotations, that fluctuated, on base their size, between 45.000 and 140.000 dinars (?), respectively 150 and 460 American dollars c. (in 1962). The highlighted works are *Linee Luce D 803* (100x100cm, 1961), *Linee Luce 807* (100x100cm, 1961), *Linee Luce uno* (125x70cm, 1962), *Linee Luce L4* (25x25cm, 1962), *Linee Luce TLA* (50x50cm, 1962).

«Čovjek i Prostor»<sup>68</sup> and on «Telegram». The curator Horvat-Pintarić<sup>69</sup> wrote an article dedicated to Alviani, accompanied by reproductions of the *Linee-luce*, where in addition to the “bright lyricism”, the Croatian critic foresaw his future developments towards the creation of architectural structures. By that technical evolution Alviani became close to N and T groups and Mari, and, after his participation to the *Arte programmata* in Venice, Umbro Apollonio in November 1962 took care of his exhibition at the La Cavana Gallery<sup>70</sup> in Trieste.

Apollonio wrote on the catalog that the *Linee-luce* represented the renewed alliance between art and technique, while acknowledging their debt to the casual, would open new dimensions in architecture - a striking parallel with Horvat-Pintarić - in which the viewer had to “penetrate, pass through, enjoy”<sup>71</sup>. The local press<sup>72</sup> praised the exhibition as a direct offshoot of the Venice *Arte programmata* exhibition and as a first example of the new programmed research in Trieste.

§ *Yugoslav Art in the early '60s and the relationship between Umbro Apollonio and Matko Meštrović.*

The Alviani's fortune in Yugoslavia was due to a broader system of cultural relations between the two nations, which from 1961 to 1962 was becoming more pressing. For instance, at the Congress of Verucchio, Rimini and San Marino were a Yugoslav delegation composed among others by Kržišnik Zoran and Vera Horvat-Pintarić, whom participated at the 10<sup>th</sup> of 1961 and 11<sup>th</sup> of 1962 editions, where they met Italian artists and critics as Giulio Carlo Argan and Umbro Apollonio.

In addition, the true fundamental centre for knowledge of Yugoslav contemporary art was Venice, on special occasions, such as the Biennial was the principal. In 1962, in fact, the Yugoslav pavilion for the 31<sup>st</sup> Venice Biennial<sup>73</sup> was a turning point in the fortunes of Yugoslav

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<sup>68</sup> Ž. Koščević, *Getulio Alviani (GGSU)*, «Čovjek i prostor», no. 111, June, Zagreb, 1962, p.8; B. Istranin, *U traženju novog... proviruje staro!*, «Čovjek I Prostor», no. 113, August, Zagreb, 1962, p.3.

<sup>69</sup> V. Horvat-Pintarić, *Crtač svjetla. Izložba talijanskog slikara Getulija u Galeriji suvremene umjetnosti u Zagrebu*, «Telegram», June 8<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1962. «[...]ove metalne površine, projektirane u velikim dimenzijama, u mogućnosti su da svojim purificiranim i bogatim luminoznim supstancama, preuzmu srodnu ulogu u suvremenim arhitektonskim ansamblima. U tome je vjerojatno i njihova budućnost. Na taj je način prvotna igra nadmašila samu sebe. Ozbiljnost i snaga discipline u razvijanju jednog novog metrico sistema, metodološka su osnova i okviru koje je Getulio uspio otkriti novi oblik odmjerenog luminoznog lirizma» p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> *Getulio*, catalogue, November 22<sup>nd</sup> – December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1962, Galleria La Cavana, Trieste, 1962.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Vice, *Mostre d'arte. Getulio Alviani alla "Cavana"*, «Il Piccolo», November 24<sup>th</sup>, Trieste, 1962, p.6.

<sup>73</sup> L. Trucchi, *Dal 1948, quest'anno, la Biennale peggiore*, «L'Europa Letteraria», October 17<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1962. «Mai forse come quest'anno si è avvertito il bisogno di un criterio selettivo [...] le nazioni che si sono orientate verso questo criterio qualitativo», continua citando espressamente la Jugoslavia, “sono quelle che hanno riscosso maggiori consensi. Mentre l'Italia [...] è ricaduta in un assurdo eccesso di presenze [...] cedendo sempre più sfacciatamente alle pressioni mercantili che oggi, purtroppo, si compongono in modo parentorio anche nelle assegnazioni di premi, si è fatto posto a molti falsi prodotti del gusto internazionale [...]» p. 108.

contemporary painting. The hall of the Slovenian painter Janez Bernik, curated by Kržišnik, received a quite success which was accompanied to a lesser extent of the Croatian Oton Gliha. The relevance of Informel, matter and gesture in Yugoslav painting was illustrated by the art piece as *XXVIII 1962* by Bernik or on the side of a neo-naturalism - as pointed Radoslav Putar<sup>74</sup> with regard to Italian Morlotti - as *Gromače - 4 -62* by Gliha.

As artists were intimate to matters of a renewal of painting, so even critics like Horvat-Pintarić<sup>75</sup>, whom exalting in the Biennial the advent of modern Yugoslavia, became interested in the issues raised by authoritative judgments of Argan, and concerning on a Biennial colluded with the trade and reforming through new boards.

She did not fail to observe there were alternatives to the Biennial, such as *Alternative Attuali*<sup>76</sup> (Current Alternative) in L'Aquila, the author visited and praised for the organization commissioned by Enrico Crispolti. Yugoslav intellectuals seemed to have a certain ease in moving in the Italian North-East and also there were relations with Rome, which, unlike Venice, were more strictly political.

In May 1962, in fact, at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni (Exhibition Palace) in Rome held a great exhibition entitled *L'arte contemporanea in Jugoslavia*<sup>77</sup> (Contemporary Art in Yugoslavia). The exhibition was divided into three sections - painting, sculpture and applied arts - to present developments of arts in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia according to the will of the organizing committee, consisting respectively in Zorna Kržišnik, Božo Bek and Oto Bihalj Merin. Among the exhibitors were the aforementioned Bernik and Gliha and near their artistic production, the sculptor Duzan Džamonja.

The line of the Concrete abstraction was represented by Picelj and the sculptor Voijn Bakić (figs. 53-56). The Body the Quadrennial of Rome, in the person of Fortunato Bellonzi, greeted Yugoslav works as clever fusion of legacies of different national cultures and their involvement with changes in the international art scene. Observations of Bellonzi supplemented the introduction by Kržišnik whom identified three main factors in Yugoslav art: a Mediterranean culture "formally accomplished". The influence of Northern Europe «cooler, with a strong

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<sup>74</sup> R. Putar, *XXXI Bienale u Veneciji*, «Čovjek i prostor», no.112, June, Zagreb, 1962. «Tim činjenicama nije izmakla ni izložba u jugoslavenskom paviljonu. [...] Upravo nasuprot njemu stoji prerano dozrela manira Bernikova, koja se u svojoj vrsti razvila do razine srodnih i nerijetkih pa čak i vrlo tipičnih pojava u suvremenom slikarstvu. Bernikove su kompozicije dobri primjeri rafinirane osjetljivosti za slikarsku materiju. [...] Serija Glihnih "Gromače" predstavlja također "konsekventni" korak u razvitku autorova načina. Taj je korak Glihu doveo do dopadljive rutine, koju bismo mogli usporediti sa mondenim, fingiranim fašizmom jednog Mandellija ili Morlottija u talijanskom paviljonu» p.7.

<sup>75</sup> V. Horvat-Pintarić, *XXXI Bijenale u Veneciji, Istinitost i igra vrijednosti*, «Telegram», July 13<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1962, p.3.

<sup>76</sup> V. Horvat-Pintarić, *Suvremene Likovne Alternative*, «Telegram», November 14<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1962, p.4.

<sup>77</sup> *L'arte contemporanea in Jugoslavia*, catalogue, May-June, 1962, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Roma, Ente Quadriennale di Roma, De Luca, Roma, 1962.

*ideological commitment*» - as could they read the works of Picelj. And, finally, the splendor «*still alive in Byzantine culture*»<sup>78</sup>.

These critical expressions resented of the event officialdom which was the mirror of a partial representation of the Yugoslav art, as for example the work *Homage to Lizisky* of 1956, which Picelj had just exhibited in Italy in 1959<sup>79</sup> was back from to ones of Bernik, by whose paintings the Yugoslav culture showed its modernity. In fact, Picelj edited the graphic of the catalogue which reminded the rigid geometry of Josef Albers, but without examples of that kind of artistic endeavor (fig. 57). Therefore there seemed to exist a strict separation between official and unofficial art, but unlike the Soviet regime, Yugoslav system was determined to acquire a living space in Western art scene.

A further confirmation of the idea, 1962 was the year of Yugoslav art, after Rome and the Biennial, in September still in Venice held a small collective titled *25 artisti jugoslavi*<sup>80</sup> (25 Yugoslav artists). Among organizers and exhibitors were still Božo Bek, Gliha and Bakić, but that was important because it marked a profound cooperation between Venetian and Yugoslav cultural institutions. As a consequence, Venice was a frank place for a web of relationships centered in the basin of the Adriatic Sea.

In fact, Yugoslav artists began to have its own trade in Venetian galleries, such as it emerged from the correspondence among Apollonio, Horvat-Pintarić and Gliha<sup>81</sup>, to exhibit him in galleries nearby Apollonio.

Moreover, Zagreb painter Ivo Gattin in 1959 had his first Italian solo exhibition in Venice, at the Galleria S. Vidal<sup>82</sup>. His works, which broke with the official status of Croatian painting, were an example for the Zagreb artistic milieu and Gattin reached heights of his research between 1963 and 1967, when after Venice, he moved to Milan (figs. 58,59 ). He met Lucio Fontana and abandoned material painting of torn images, to propose perforated surface, whose shape became irregular<sup>83</sup>. That example showed how the artistic culture between Venice and Milan represented to the Yugoslav artists a constant engine of renewal.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> *Mostra nazionale dell'incisione jugoslava*, op. cit., 1959.

<sup>80</sup> *25 artisti jugoslavi*, catalogue, September 1<sup>st</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> 1962, Galleria dell'Opera Bevilacqua La Masa, Comune di Venezia, 1962.

<sup>81</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Found Curators. Folder Apollonio. Unit 4. Correspondence Apollonio – Gliha, September 1960. Unit 5. Correspondence Apollonio – Pintarić, from April 24<sup>th</sup> to May 13<sup>th</sup> 1963.

<sup>82</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. Božo Bek Found. Folder Ivo Gattin. Several articles taken away from: «Il Gazzettino», March 9<sup>th</sup>, Venice, 1959, «Il Gazzettino-Sera», April 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, Venice, 1959 and «La Voce di San Marco», April 4<sup>th</sup>, Venice, 1959.

<sup>83</sup> *Ivo Gattin*, op. cit., 1992.

In that period, indeed, Apollonio grew his own influence on Croatian intellectuals. A correspondence between Apollonio and Matko Meštrović<sup>84</sup> revealed that the above-mentioned seminar, held by the critic in Venice at the Cini Foundation in September '62, was followed by Meštrović whom was extremely impressed by him, asking for permission to translate it into Croatian and to read it at the Zagreb Radio on following December the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Therefore, the Apollonio's discourse on new operative ways of the art, could also encourage the theoretical development of Meštrović and have had repercussions on the definition of the second *Nove Tendencije*. Relations between them continued through following months and probably still due to Apollonio, whom in June of 1963 was in Zagreb<sup>85</sup>, Matko Meštrović participated at the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of San Marino in October 1963<sup>86</sup>.

That conference was remembered as the climax of N and T groups, Mari and others' fortune, and at the same time marked the beginning of a long controversy in the Italian press. Directly referred to the 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial of San Marino, Meštrović, therefore, impressed by that fierce attack, which artists, supported by the experience of *Nove Tendencije 2*, had soured and wrote a commentary on «Čovjek i Prostor»<sup>87</sup>, illustrated by reproductions of *UMRNT* (1961) by Gabriele Devecchi and *Cinereticolo spettrale* (1963) by Alberto Biasi - both works exhibited in San Marino and in Zagreb. Meštrović's position was ambiguous in judging the role of Argan, but also took the opportunity for a long tirade against the capitalist trade of the art, whose decline occurred in San Marino.

That, then, was the situation of Yugoslav art in Italy and how Croatian critics looked to what happened to Italian art. We can reverse our point of observation to describe how Italian art was upheld in Zagreb. Should be pointed out that the city offered an art exhibition geography focused on the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, which was followed by the Muzej za umjetnost i

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<sup>84</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Curators. Folder Apollonio. Unit 5. Correspondence Apollonio-Meštrović from November 1962 – January 1963. [See appendix](#).

<sup>85</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Curators. Folder Apollonio. Unit 5. Letter from Apollonio to Lara Vinca Masini, of May 8<sup>th</sup> 1963. «Cara Masini, mi rincresco molto ma devo rinunciare all'invito per Arezzo. È escluso che io possa trovare i tre giorni reati il 10 e il 17 giugno, avendo quel periodo occupato con un viaggio prima in Jugoslavia e poi in Germania». Correspondence Apollonio-Pintarić 1963-1964. Letter from Pintarić to Apollonio on June 26<sup>th</sup> 1963. «[...] Sono stata molto contenta di vederti a Zagabria, solo peccato che siete stati pochissimo tempo qui. Abbiamo tante cose da dire, spero che l'anno prossimo, nella nostra casa sul mare avremo più tempo di parlare».

<sup>86</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Curators. Folder Apollonio. Unit 4. Correspondence Apollonio – Dasi 1963-1964. Letter from Apollonio to Gerardo Dasi, secretary of meetings at Verucchio, Rimini, San Marino, of June 10<sup>th</sup> 1963. «Caro Dasi, le ho scritto da Zagabria ricordandole l'invito alla Vera Horvat. Vorrei pregarla ora di inviare l'invito anche a Matko Meštrović. Si tratta in questo caso soprattutto di un invito che possa facilitare al Meštrović il visto per l'Italia e la concessione della valuta».

<sup>87</sup> M. Meštrović, Presedan-za sad bez presedana, «Čovjek i prostor», no. 128, November, Zagreb, 1963. «Odlučnim zahvatom u aktuelnu likovnu situaciju u svijetu Giulio Carlo Argan pokazao je što u njoj postoji kao klica novoga i kao mogućnost prevazitazenja jedne historijske faze. Izložba bijennala u San Marinu pod naslovom "S onu stranu infornela" pokazala je da su grupe, ekipe u kojima vlada duh zajedna kog rada i istraživanja, nov i značajan fenomen historijskog momenta. Argan i žiri koji je pod njegovim rukovadstvom i po njegovom prijedlogu zasjedao i diskutirao javno bez kulisa i bez intriga, pred javnošću i kritičarima iz čitavog svijeta, imao je hrabrosti da taj fenomen prizna i da izrazi svoje puno povjerenje u njegov historijski zračaj. Presedan koji po smislu historijskog kretanja neće moći ostati bez presedana!» p.4.

obrt (Museum of arts and crafts)<sup>88</sup> and finally, the only alternative reality, which hosted the “unofficial” artistic research, was the G Studio, private space and managed by the aforementioned Gorgona Group<sup>89</sup>.

At the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti in December 1962 was held *40 Suvremenih venecijanskih slikara* (40 contemporary Venetian painters)<sup>90</sup>, direct response to the Venice exhibition of Yugoslav artists<sup>91</sup>, quoted above, as stated by Božo Bek in the catalogue. Also Horvat-Pintarić was an organizer. Italian officers were Peter Zampetti, Italo Siciliano and Mario De Biasi, whom invited among forty painters, Mario De Luigi, Virgilio Guidi, Carmelo Zotti, Albino Lucatello, Armando Pizzinato, Giuseppe Santomaso and Emilio Vedova.

A group that had relations with Carlo Cardazzo and del Cavallino Gallery, with his presence showed the relationship between Zagreb and Venetian galleries, a sales network which of course was on the opposite side of the ideology professed by Meštrović and applied in the *Nove tendencije*. In fact, Bek in the catalogue stated the exhibition would present an Italian landscape different from in Zagreb had been represented by Manzoni, Alviani and N Group.

In addition, after Alviani, the second Italian was Enzo Mari whom had a solo exhibition in Zagreb, in October 1962 at the Muzej za umjetnost i obrt<sup>92</sup>, which was recognized in Croatia as an official showcase for applied arts in collaboration with the nearby Institute for Industrial Design. The exhibition was very successful because favored by Zagreb art critics whom read Mari’s works as an art was able to integrate with the industrial culture in the manner and form produced according to a precise planning.

The layout of the catalog was by Picelj (figs. 60-61); Putar, whom taught Art History at the Institute for Industrial Design, oversaw the editing and Meštrović prepared the critic apparatus. His text outlining the different facets of the Mari’s activity whose work were related to a collective dimension of society. Also was preceded by another text by Max Bill, whom had prepared for Mari’s exhibition at the Danese Gallery in 1959<sup>93</sup>.

Bill, at the time, claimed Mari as a representative of Concrete Art, because in his works discerned the basics of rhythm, progression, polarity and compositional logic. Modular structures

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<sup>88</sup> *Pedesete godine u hrvatskoj umjetnosti/The Fifties in Croatian Art*, catalogue, October 24<sup>th</sup> – December 7<sup>th</sup> 2004, Dom hrvatskih likovnih umjetnika, HDLU (Hrvatsko društvo likovnih umjetnika), Zagreb, 2004.

<sup>89</sup> M. Gattin, *Gorgona: Protocol of submitting thoughts*, MSU, Zagreb, 2002.

<sup>90</sup> *40 suvremenih venecijanskih slikara*, catalogue, December 4 – 25<sup>th</sup> 1962, Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1962.

<sup>91</sup> J. Depolo, *Gosti iz Venecije*, «Vjesnik», December 20<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1962. «Panorama suvremenog venecijanskog slikarstva u zagrebačkoj Galeriji suvremene umjetnosti u velikom rasponu obuhvaća gotovo sve aktuelne ideje i tendencije; upravo mnogobrojne struje, često međusobno tako suprotne, pružaju onu cjelovitu sliku interesa u ovom gradu koji je, preko svog Bijenala, aktivno žarište suvremene umjetnosti u svijetu» p. 6.

<sup>92</sup> *Enzo Mari*, catalogue, October 19<sup>th</sup> – November 4<sup>th</sup> 1962, Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb, 1962.

<sup>93</sup> A. d’Avossa, F. Picchi, *Enzo Mari, il lavoro al centro*, Ente Autonomo Triennale di Milano, Electa, Milano, 1999, p. 72-74, 151



Mari presented in Zagreb in 1962 were a further development of the early research and had been accepted as the work of an Italian artist was heir of the Bauhaus's tradition.

The exhibition marked a milestone for the success of Mari in Croatia<sup>94</sup> and especially in the circle of the *Nove Tendencije* and - although the Milan designer had not participated in 1961 - would help to reformulate critic parameters of its second edition. Moreover, as in the biography of Mari was remembered his participation in the *Arte programmata* exhibitions, was a significant fact that in Zagreb Italian artists' programmed works began to receive increasing attention.

In fact, the Venetian stage of the Olivetti's exhibitions was reviewed by Radoslav Putar<sup>95</sup> whom showed how exhibited works, among which was reproduced *Strutturazione fluida* by Gianni Colombo, had been carried out by Italian pioneers of new tendencies. Then explained the meanings of "programmed art", "open work", "kinetic art" and "multiple works", and reported them to a close poetic and operational continuity with the *Nove Tendencije*, but began to manifest a different critic orientation than in 1961.

Until then Putar had been very close to the research of the Gorgona Group that represented the other soul of the *Nove tendencije*, materialized in the recovery of historical Dadaism by Knifer, Kožarić, Vaništa, Ješovar and others. Their G Studio, then, was a laboratory where banned any rigid planning on the model of EXAT51 Group, were experimented different languages which included the monochrome, the New Dada assemblage and studies on visual perception, close to the early stages of the Zero and N groups and GRAV. The greatest exponent was Julie Knifer<sup>96</sup> whom in February 1962 exhibited his *meanders* and that Putar pointed as a pure Gestalt research, for their ability to unify the temporal and spatial dimension, with logic simplicity, in an organic synthesis (fig. 62).

Along the same lines, the following May, François Morellet<sup>97</sup> exhibited his grids were defined by Putar as research of the vitality and dynamism through the visual perception (fig. 63). As a consequence, in the early part of 1962 was still possible the coexistence of the two opposing tendencies, but in progress of months exponents of Gorgona would have taken the distance from the critic setting tending to contamination between visual and industrial design research.

In fact, Gorgona's members - demonstrating a precise search - formed a deep friendship with Piero Manzoni and they planned the creation of several artist's books<sup>98</sup>, which were diametrically

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<sup>94</sup> J. Depolo, *Prema novoj senzibilnosti*, «Vjesnik», October 30<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1962. «taj mladi plasticar, kao direktni duhovni potomak Bauhauusa, nastavlja i krilu mlade talijanske generacije tradiciju i praksu bez kojih su nezamislive estetske pozicije modernog covkejka» p. 6.

<sup>95</sup> R. Putar, *Arte Programmata*, «Čovjek i prostor», no.115, October, Zagreb, 1962. «pioniri smjerova koji se mogu povezati sa duhom i orijentacijom 'novih tendencija'» p. 15.

<sup>96</sup> R. Putar, *Julije Knifer*, «Čovjek i prostor», nos.108-109, February-March, Zagreb, 1962, p.15.

<sup>97</sup> R. Putar, *François Morellet*, ibid.

<sup>98</sup> *Gorgona*, op. cit. 1977.

opposed to multiples of artists such as Mari or Picelj<sup>99</sup>. Thus, also in Zagreb among the groups of Croatian vanguard was beginning a slow splitting that would push Knifer to exhibit for the last time at the *Nove Tendencije 2* in 1963.

### § 3. *The organization, aims and results of the Nove Tendencije 2 in 1963.*

After the first *Nove Tendencije* the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti of Zagreb acquired some of the most significant works that had been exhibited<sup>100</sup>. From September 1961 to January 1962, the Galerija obtained - in some cases after brief negotiations with artists who rejected the trade but not museums - *Superficie Ottico Dinamica* (Optical Surface Dynamics 1960) by Alberto Biasi, *Visione Dinamica* (Dynamic Vision 1961) by Toni Costa, *Object (Oggetto)* 1960) by Manfredo Massironi<sup>101</sup> and *Esmeralda III* (1960) by Piero Dorazio<sup>102</sup>.

Among the foreign participants were acquired works by Marc Adrian (*Serie Delta -Delta* Series no. 4, 1961), Heinz Mack (*Rilievo in alluminio - Relief of aluminum*, 1961), Almir Mavignier (*Rettangolo - Row*, 1961)<sup>103</sup>, François Morellet (*Tre coppie di schermi 0° 30° 60° -*

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<sup>99</sup> F. Battino, L. Palazzoli, op. cit., 1991. Letter from Manzoni to Meštrović, April 6<sup>th</sup> 1961 c. «Grazie infinite e dell'invito a preparare un numero di Gorgona e della gentilissima lettera. L'idea di Gorgona mi pare magnifica. Ho subito preparato tre progetti di cui si potrà eseguire il migliore o il più pratico da realizzare: ti mando parte del materiale in questa stessa busta, altro in due rotoli a parte. Tutti e tre i progetti portano questo titolo "Tavole di accertamento". Conto di vedere Fontana e di parlarne anche a lui» p. 120.

<sup>100</sup> MSU Archive. Found NT. Folder NT1 br. 1\_1961.1961 nt1. No signed note to purchase several works by: Mavignier, 60,000 dinars; Le Parc, 1,000 France Francs; Talman, 3,000 Swiss Francs, Mack, 500 Deutsche Mark, Diter Rot, 50,000 dinars, Piene, 1,200 Deutsche Mark, Dorazio, 480,000 Italian lire, Biasi, 30,000 Italian lire, Uli Pohl, 1000 Deutsche Mark, Adrian, 80,000 dinars and Morellet, 50,000 dinars.

<sup>101</sup> MSU Archive. Found NT. Folder NT1 br. 1\_1961.1961 nt1. Letter from the director Božo Bek to Massironi of January 10<sup>th</sup> 1962. «Egregio signor Massironi. Il Museo ha spedito oggi al Vostro indirizzo – secondo le nostre prescrizioni doganali – le opere dei membri di gruppo 'enne'. Abbiamo ritenuto solamente le opere che abbiamo avuto proposto per l'acquisizione nella nostra lettera del 26 ottobre 1961. Se siete d'accordo, preghiamovi di farci pervenire la fattura con tutte specificazioni, e noi depositeremo la somma al Vostro conto nella Banca nazionale a Zagreb». Letter from Bek to Massironi of October 26<sup>th</sup> 1961. «La nostra galleria s'interessa d'acquistare: una vostra opera per 35,000 dinari, un quadro di Biasi per 35,000 dinari, un quadro di Costa per 35,000 dinari. Secondo le nostre prescrizioni non possiamo pagare gli acquisti che nei dinari jugoslavi»

<sup>102</sup> MSU Archive. Found NT. Folder NT1 br. 1\_1961.1961 nt1. Letter from the director Božo Bek to Dorazio of January 10<sup>th</sup> 1962. «Egregio signore. In risposta alla vostra lettera Vi avverto che il nostro Museo ha comprato il Vostro quadro "Esmeralda III" per il prezzo di 80,000 dinari jugoslavi. Il Museo ha depositato questa somma al Vostro conto nella Banca nazionale a Zagreb. Abbiamo spedito oggi la vostra seconda opera al Vostro indirizzo. Molte grazie per Vostro accorgimento e compiacenza, perché questo prezzo sicuramente non è adeguato al valore di Vostro quadro». Letter from Dorazio to Bek, of November 21<sup>st</sup> 1961. «Caro prof. Beck, la ringrazio dell'offerta d'acquistare il mio quadro *Esmeralda III* esposto questa estate nella sua galleria. Le accludo la fattura [omossis] richiesta. In attesa di avere il piacere di incontrarla, la prego di gradire i miei sinceri ringraziamenti».

<sup>103</sup> MSU Archive. Found NT. Folder NT1 br. 1\_1961.1961 nt1. Letter from the director Božo Bek to Mavignier, of October 28<sup>th</sup> 1961. «Sehr geehrter Herr Mavignier! Unsere Galerie hat Interesse euer Werk (kleine rot) zu kaufen für 60,000 dinar. Unseren Devisenvorschriften nach können wir das Gekaufte nur in jugoslawischer Valuta bezahlen.». Letter from Mavignier to Bek, of January 5<sup>th</sup> 1962. «[...] avec grand plaisir j'ai reçu votre demande d'acquisition ou d'achat de mon tableau rouge. Malheureusement le prix de 60,000 dinars que correspond à d.m. 300. – est trop bas en rapport aux prix de ce tableau à d.m. 800 – je vous propose alors la somme par laquelle je serai d'accord de le vendre: 120.000 dinar».

Three pairs of screens 0 ° 30 ° 60°, 1960)<sup>104</sup>, Julio Le Parc (*Probabilità del nero come del bianco n. 4 - Probability of black as white n. 4*, 1961) Otto Piene (*Pittura squadrata - squared Painting*, 1961) and finally Paul Talman (K36 B, 1960). The acquisitions were added to *Linee Luce FM-113* (1961) by Getulio Alviani which, exhibited in 1962<sup>105</sup>, was considered akin to works of the *Nove Tendencije*, consideration that guaranteed the participation of him to the second edition.

Thus the Galerija was, for the first time in Europe, a collection of works that began to be known as new tendencies, whose Italian artists (Dorazio excluded) had the opportunity to appear in a public museum collection. Acquisitions were exhibited from August to September 1962<sup>106</sup> and showed the cultural establishment of Zagreb aspired to transform the Galerija into a vital center of European contemporary art, by means of the *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions. That was a valid reason to continue along the path taken.

From the point of view of the internal evolution to the artistic research in Croatia, two exhibitions had a particular meaning, by which Vlado Kristl and Ivan Picelj were able to define the future *Nove Tendencije 2*.

In August 1962, Kristl<sup>107</sup> laid out a series of objects that had succeeded in its first period of matter and monochromatic painting. The artist come to his own reworking of the constructivist matrix through structures with geometric reticules, modifiable by the viewer (fig. 64). Furthermore, it was clear his adherence to the rational and programmed line of new tendencies.

The catalogue text was made by Vjenceslav Richter<sup>108</sup> whom showed how the application of a visual system with three-dimensional objects brought an interaction between viewer and work, even at a level of gaming and entertainment. The exhibition was important also for Richter, as allowed him to come near issues that the *Nove Tendencije* raised among the artists in Zagreb and in a short time to present himself as a sculptor in dialogue with different art forms of European groups, but especially with the architectural dimension of Enzo Mari.

The second exhibition was the great solo anthology of Picelj in September 1962 at the Muzej za umjetnost i obrt<sup>109</sup>. The works presented covered ten years of activity and were illustrated by his friend Michel Seuphor whom indicated in Picelj a direct continuator of geometric abstraction

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<sup>104</sup> MSU Archive. Found NT. Folder NT1 br. 1\_1961.1961 nt1. Letter from the director Božo Bek to Morellet, of October 28<sup>th</sup> 1961. «Cher Monsiuer Morellet! Nous sommes intéressés à faire l'acquisition de votre oeuvre (Catalogue No. 55) à 50,000 Dinar etc».

<sup>105</sup> *Getulio*, op. cit. (Zagreb) 1962.

<sup>106</sup> *Nove akvizicije*, catalogue, August – September 1962, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1962.

<sup>107</sup> *Kristl*, catalogue, July 20<sup>th</sup> – August 5<sup>th</sup> 1962, Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1962.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*. «možda je danas teže nego ikada i isto toliko neophodnije nego ikada odrenje problema, fiksacije vlastitog svijeta vlastitog koordinatnog sistema u osami ničega, [...] Kristl razapinje svoj sistem, svoju pročišćenu lapidarnost provjerava je u svim situacijama, [...], gradi na njoj trodimenzijonalne variablie u kojima raste život i igra iz jedne nihilističke ukočenosi skače u svijet beskonačno promjenjivog, [...]»

<sup>109</sup> *Ivan Picelj*, catalogue, September 14 – 29<sup>th</sup> 1962, Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb, 1962.

on the line of Malevitch, Mondrian and Moholy-Nagy (figs. 65,66). The local press<sup>110</sup> called Picelj author of international fame - among the few to have exhibited in Paris (1952) and New York (1960) - and the main figure of new tendencies in Croatia and Europe.

In fact, the art critic Josip Depolo<sup>111</sup> specified in last solutions of Picelj was evident a planning that made his works, regardless of the method used, participants of the same social function. Posters, paintings and objects were stimuli for a new sensibility in everyday life of socialist and industrial society. Consequently in works and poetic of Kristl and Picelj some fundamental characteristics would influence organizers of the *Nove Tendencije*, were the resumption of the Constructivism tradition, the socialist ideological commitment and the approach to industrial design.

In fact in November 1962 Božo Bek, Matko Meštrović, Radoslav Putar and Boris Kelemen, whom formed the organizing committee of the *Nove Tendencije 2*, sent the invitation to European artists to participate at the Zagreb exhibition, established as a Biennial, and would be held from May 10<sup>th</sup> to June 10<sup>th</sup>.

Furthermore, that edition would coincide directly with the second Festival of Contemporary Music, in which electronic and serial music represented another example of the programming in art<sup>112</sup>. The first edition of the festival, organized by the musician Milko Kelemen, Boris's brother, preceded in 1961 the exhibition of visual arts, but in 1963 the two surveys were added up, both for financial reasons and to boost the international fame of Zagreb, thanks to the presence of personalities such as Karlheinz Stockhausen<sup>113</sup>.

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<sup>110</sup> E. Cvetkova, *Dostojno, ali određeno mjesto*, «Vecernji list», September 21<sup>st</sup> Zagreb, 1962. «Novi moment u Piceljevu stvaranju su reljefi u kojima se također obnavljaju ideje konstruktivista. Te tvorevine pojavile su se u Piceljevoj umjetnosti nakon izložbe "Novih tendencija", pod utjecajem najsuvremenijih kretanja u svijetu» p. 6.

<sup>111</sup> J. Depolo, *Slikarstvo i dnevna praksa*, «Vjesnik», September 28<sup>th</sup> Zagreb, 1962. «Ova izložba predstavlja prema tome s programatskog stanovišta "nivelaciju" i egaliziranje raznih područija umjetnosti, naglašavanja, društvene funkcije slikarstva, isticanje potrebe organske vezanosti umjetnosti uz dnevnu praksu, a artistici pobjedu jednog ukusa i stimuliranje jedne nove senzibilnosti» p. 5.

<sup>112</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT2 73.1963nt2. Type letter signed by Bek, Meštrović and Putar «La direction du Musée d'art contemporain de Zagreb a le plaisir de porter à votre connaissance qu'elle se propose d'organiser, au mois de mai 1963, une manifestation artistique qui se déroulera sous le nom de "Nouvelles tendances II"». Cette manifestation culturelle sous forme d'exposition, se chargera de poursuivre l'initiative et l'attitude d'idées de l'exposition "Nouvelles tendances"[...]. Cette fois-ci l'exposition coïncidera avec la manifestation du 2<sup>o</sup> Festival de musique contemporaine qui fera rassembler les musiciens le plus progressés de tout le monde. L'exposition aura le caractère d'une manifestation biennale qui cherchera à démontrer, dans sa structure, le développement successif des courants artistiques susmentionnés et ne cessant de s'affirmer chaque jour de plus en plus». Ibid. Folder NT2 Nt2\_1963 Uputnik. «[...]Ove će godine izložba koincidirati s održavanjem II festivala suvremene muzike na kojemu se okupljaju najnapredniji muzičari svijeta danas. Izložba "Nove tendencije II" ima zadatak da okupi i pokaže što veći broj onih pojava na području moderne likovne umjetnosti koje sadrže elemente najnaprednijih pravaca. To su elementi principa oblikovanja, materialnog sastava djela i funkcije djela».

<sup>113</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT2 Prijedlog za publikaciju Nt2. «Pripremajući međunarodni izložbu "Nove tendencije" koja će se po drugi put održati, u Zagrebu od 10 maja do 10 juna slijedeće godine u Gradskoj galeriji suvremene umjetnosti[...], za upostavljanje novih shvaćanja i vrijednosti zasnovanih na najpozitivnijim spoznajama suvremene socijalne i naučne misli i postignućima u usmjerenjima moderne civilizacije. Tako je Zagreb danas kad se te ideje u svijetu počinju već jače širiti postao grad koji se sve češće spominje [...] a održavat će se svake druge godine zajedno s također već afirmiranim Zagrebačkim muzičkim bjenalom».

The activities of organizers in Zagreb coincided with an incident happened in Paris on November 3<sup>th</sup>, when the GRAV hosted several artists, including Ivan Picelj, but no Italian ones, to decide a common action strategy of an artistic movement was called “*Nouvelle Tendance*”. That meeting did not produce significant theoretical manifestos, but assured to French GRAV the paternity of a movement that began to diverge from exhibitions of the *Nove Tendencije* and would have its clout in the second event of 1963.

A last preliminary issue in the organization of the *Nove Tendencije 2*, covered the role of Almir Mavignier<sup>114</sup>, which was not among the participants of the meeting in Paris, and in 1961 had just shown to not like the interference of the Croatian Committee.

In fact, when deciding which critical direction to provide at the exhibition, Matko Meštrović suggested to Mavignier to contact Max Bense, but the artist was in disagreement because he believed the academicism of Bense was incompatible with original anti-academic and anti-mercantile instances of the *Nove Tendencije*. Mavignier also warned of possible dangers that the Bense’s theory probably would have given, since his aesthetics reduced the understanding of art works to mere communication factors. His claimed scientific attitude, indulged in the GRAV’s entourage, risked to relegate the artist to the simple role of vision technician.

Even in Italy, Bense’s aesthetics was regarded with suspicion as in the case of Umbro Apollonio<sup>115</sup>, whom knew him personally in Leverkusen in May 1961, during the event *Morsbroicher Kunsttage 1961*, organized by Udo Kultermann. According to Apollonio, Bense forgot the historical matrix that was subject to every work of art, to flatten its meaning on a conceptual horizon technically flawless but limited and partial. However, Meštrović, his colleagues and *Nouvelle Tendance* artists would, after 1963, increasingly close ties with Bense and the Theory of Information.

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<sup>114</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder Umjetnici\_m. Mavignier. Letter from Mavignier to Matko Meštrović of July 5<sup>th</sup> 1961. «[...] pour le catalogue je trouve qu’il y a un point à discuter. Vous avez accepte de laisser faire une ex position à charge de quelqu’un inconnu comme moi et maintenant vous voulez pour le catalogue pas un article de moi mais, de quelqu’un vraiment très importante t très connu! Tu ne crois pas qu’il y une contradiction? La pro position de Max Bense ou n’importe qui, que ni a rien à voir avec cette ex position est très discutabile et, si tu permets, même absurde»

<sup>115</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Curators. Folder Umbro Apollonio. Unit 5. Letter from Apollonio to Kultermann of May 15<sup>th</sup> 1961. «Non ho alcun preconcetto, e lei lo sa, contro le esperienze contemporanee, ma ritengo che giovi guardale anche storicamente: e nessuno può negare, io penso, che molte, almeno quelle presentate a Leverkusen trovano radice negli esempi citati: dalla Bauhaus a Dadaisti e così via. [...] Bisogna passare ad un dato momento ad una valutazione, per lo meno ad un tentativo di valutazione dei singoli fenomeni, e non basta, come ha fatto Bense, dichiarare di prescindere da questioni di valore e di significato. la sua è sempre un’analisi puntuale del fenomeno, ma che non si sposta al di là di simile minuziosa indagine»

§ *From Nove Tendencije 2 to the planning an artistic movement.*

The Committee of the second *Nove Tendencije* in December 1962, as appears from the correspondence between secretariat and exhibitors<sup>116</sup>, invited at the first Italian N Group - even as a collective - Dorazio and Alviani. In February 1963 Matko Meštrović, thanks to Božo Bek, asked the permission to the consulate of Italian Republic for enter in Italy<sup>117</sup>, as the organizer of the Italian section in the *Nove Tendencije 2*.

Shortly after arrived the Gianni Colombo's participation whom would have exhibited *Strutturazione pulsante* (beating Structuring), in March Gabriele Devecchi's one whom wanted to bring *Superficie in vibrazione* (a vibrating surface). But then came a setback. Causes may have been financial and administrative, or of opportunities whereas the 4<sup>th</sup> International Biennial of San Marino would be inaugurated in July 1963 and therefore could have a fruitful dialogue with Zagreb.

In fact in San Marino would have attend the Zero, GRAV, N and T groups, singles Alviani, Mari and Croatian Picelj, Bakić and Richter. As a consequence, the exhibition was postponed for four months. On May 25<sup>th</sup> 1963, with a letter sent to all participants, Božo Bek passed the final dates, from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 15<sup>th</sup> September, and was abandoned the purpose to present it with the Music Biennial.

However, it raised the possibility that the exhibition would be transferred, without specifying where, in Venice<sup>118</sup>. Italian participation was immediate, N Group joined individually as Toni Costa had voluntarily removed from the group. Between June and July, as well as Castellani and Dorazio, joined T Group (decided to show the same works from the *Arte programmata*), Alviani, Mari and Dada Maino.

Alviani, by means of his knowledge of the Yugoslavia, was a courier between Milan and Zagreb, carrying his own works and ones of Colombo, while Henk Peeters's and JJ Schoonhoven's works were taken from the La Cavana Gallery of Trieste away. Zero Group, Marc Adrian, Karl Gerstner, Spanish Equipo 57 (Jorge Oteiza, Luis Aguilera, Angel Duarte, Jose

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<sup>116</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT 2. 73.1963 nt2, Secretariat Correspondence form December 1962 to July 1963.

<sup>117</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT 2. 73.1963 nt2. Application form of February 8th 1963, signed by Božo Bek. «Konzulatu Republike Italije, Zagreb. Ljepo Vas molimo da matku Meštroviću suradniku naše Galerije, koji putuje un Italiju sa svrhom da organizira sudjelovanje talijanskih umjetnika ma međunarodnoj izložbi "Nove Tendencije II" koja će se u okviru Zagrebačkog muzičkog Bienale održati u našoj Galeriji, izdate potrebu vizu».

<sup>118</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT 2. 73.1963 nt2. Model letter fo May 25<sup>th</sup> 1963. «Nous avons plaisir de vous communiquer que nous nous trouvons de nouveau en condition de pouvoir reprendre le travail d'organiser l'Exposition "Nouvelle Tendence II" qui, par suite de difficultés inattendues, a été remise. Maintenant, tous les problème resolu, nous vous prions de bien vouloir nous prêter votre confiance et de reconfirmer votre participation, sous les mêmes conditions comme précédemment, l'Exposition 'Nouvelle Tendences II' qui tiendra du 1 août au 15 septembre et qui probablement au mois d'octobre sera transporté a Venise ».

Duarte, Juan Serrano and Agustín Ibarrola), Almir Mavignier and Paul Talman joined GRAV. Yugoslav artists were Kristl, Knifer, Richter, Picelj, Šutej, Srnec and the sculptor Voijn Bakić.

Considering various European backgrounds, the event finally took an international appearance, and as a result the future promised to be across European borders. In the pursuit of international fame, according to organizers should have been involved, as well as artists, major European art critics, including Giulio Carlo Argan, Guy Habasque and Jean Cassou, but the project was soon shelved<sup>119</sup>.

At the international opening corresponded, however, a surprising uniformity in works would have been exhibited. The works, rather than for their own forms - ranging from a rigid geometry and a free compositional research - would be considered through experiments which would display.

Some isolated cases were Dorazio, Castellani and Knifer, whom represented the most heterogeneous situation. Dorazio, in fact, by *Ad personam 2* (1962) continued the series of paintings whose grid had thickened. Castellani was in the process of abandoning the single surface of the canvas for structures involved the environment of the viewer. Knifer, finally, varied his *Meander* in compositions just more rarefied just more dilated (figs. 67-69).

In other cases, however, works showed experiments did not transcended the science and objects were programmed to make perceptual effects quantitatively measurable. The aim, for example, had Mari, Alviani, N and T groups, GRAV, Picelj, Kristl, Richter, Srnec, Šutej and Bakić, was to objectify problems of optical-illusionist, kinetic and optical order. The spherical structures or flat, intermittent pulses of light, and different texture gradients in groups of geometric flat and in relief elements (Figs. 70-74). Clear and simple forms were originated from serial compositions and iterations of the same modules, in the transition from unity to multiplicity (figs.75-87).

Underlying works a mathematical order which was exportable at an architectural and urban level, as evidenced by the Yugoslav press<sup>120</sup>. That new architectural dimension was explained also by Vjenceslav Richter's participation, and as seen above, because he was the most popular Croatian architect appreciated abroad.

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<sup>119</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder Prijedlog za publikaciju Nt2. No dated typewritten communication from the *Nove Tendencije II*'s secretariat «[...]o čemu vodi brigu grupa Recherche d'art visuel u Parizu, [...]. Pozivi s upitnicima već su razaslani više od šezdesetorici pripadnika novih tendencija 15 različitih nacionalnost koji djeluju grupno ili pojedinačno u Milanu, Padovi, Rimu, [...] New Yorku [...] i Zagreb[...]. Od stranih stručnjaka predvinjaju se prilozi Dr. Giulio Carla Argana, [...] bez sumnja najboljeg i najdalekovidnijeg među talijanskim teoretika rima, zatim Guya Habasquesa, [...] urednika časopisa L'Oeil[...], i još eventualno Jeana Cassua[...].»

<sup>120</sup> D. Đorđević, *Nove Tendencije 2*, «Borba», September 21<sup>st</sup>, Zagreb, 1963. «Ako se uvjetno prihvate ove nove forme umjetničkog izražavanja, ili nazovimo ih kako hoćemo, onda njihovim budućnost treba tražiti u njihovoj sintezi s arhitekturom, jer se po svojim fizičkim i vizuelnim svojstvima i funkcijama najviše približavaju željenoj sintezi plastičnih umjetnosti» p. 5.

In August 1963 works were displayed in rooms of the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti without any significant difference to the quality of the previous setting (figs. 89-91). A novelty was Meštrović prepared a series of encounters among artists, critics and audiences that were held a few days after the inauguration, at the Muzej za umjetnost i obrt.

*Nove Tendencije 2*<sup>121</sup>, consequently extended to other areas and these meetings were supplemented by art films, including ones produced by Alexander Srnec and Dieter Roth. Meštrović, also contacted Giorgio Soavi<sup>122</sup>, from the advertising department of Olivetti, to ask for a copy of the film *Arte programmata* which, as art films and documentaries at the same time, would allow an ideal connection with the *Nove Tendencije*. From Olivetti he got any response and much less the permission for the screening, therefore Colombo assumed the responsibility to circulate a copy of the film without permission<sup>123</sup>.

According to Meštrović, in similar way to Putar had just highlighted, the *Arte programmata* had been a common example both for Croatian and Italian art. The press of Zagreb<sup>124</sup> became interested in the meetings took place in Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, as in an editorial accompanying the reproduction of Colombo's *Strutturazione Fluida* (Fluid Structure). That was important twice, because the public could observe it both in the movie *Arte programmata*, with in background a Luciano Berio's composition, and live in Galerija. The reporter was interested in that work made by industrial materials, as in the case of Colombo, which involved the movement and participation of the viewer.

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<sup>121</sup> *Nove Tendencije 2*, catalogue, August 1<sup>st</sup> - September 15<sup>th</sup> 1963, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1963.

<sup>122</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT2\_163. Letter from Meštrović a Giorgion Soavi of July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1963. «Carissimo Soavi, tin prego per un grande favore. Il 1 agosto si apre la mostra internazionale "Nuove Tendenze II" con circa sessanta partecipanti. Per il 2 e 3 agosto abbiamo previsto un programma di discussioni e di proiezioni dei film sperimentali di Diter Rot, Manfred Kage e Aleksander Srnec. Ho pensato che sarebbe bene vedere in questa occasione anche il film che la Olivetti ha fatto sulla mostra d'arte programmata. Se questo è possibile ti prego calorosamente di mandarci una copia per Boriani o Colombo».

<sup>123</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT2\_163. Letter from Gianni Colombo to Meštrović of August 9<sup>th</sup> 1963. «Caro Matko, appena arrivato a Milano ho cercato di mettermi in contatto con la Olivetti per il films, ma ho trovato tutti gli uffici chiusi per ferie fino al primo di settembre. Ho deciso allora di assumermi la responsabilità, senza autorizzazione, di spedirti il films che mi è rimasto, dato che sino a settembre nessuno, probabilmente, lo cercherà. Comprendi quindi la mia posizione e ti prego di assumerti a tua volta l'incarico di curare la conservazione della pellicola, al rispedizione a Milano il giorno stesso che non ti servirà più nel modo più rapido e sicuro perché qualsiasi danno sarebbe a mio e quindi nostro carico. Ti prego anche di scrivermi due righe, magari a nome della Vostra galleria, se hai ricevuto il films e le ragioni delle proiezioni affinché possa presentarle all'olivetti nel caso che si facessero vivi». Reply letter from Meštrović to Colombo of August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1963. «Caro Colombo, scusami per il ritardo[...] appena adesso posso confermarti la ricevuta del film per cui ti ringrazio moltissimo. Non c'era nessuna alla galleria che poteva farlo prima. non preoccuparti per la conservazione della pellicola. Le proiezioni si fanno ogni tanto nel Museo d'Arte decorativa in occasione dell'attuale mostra "Architettura visionaria"».

<sup>124</sup> T.I., *Izložba i rasprava. Izložba 'nove tendencije 2' u galeriji suvremene umjetnosti i rasprava o tome u Muzej za umjetnost i obrt*, «Večerni list», August 1<sup>st</sup> Zagreb, 1963. «Radovi koje ćemo vidjeti pretežno su eksperimentalnog karaktera i u njima su najčešće upotrijebljeni suvremene industrijski materiali i sredstva. [...] Gladalac aktivno sudjeluje u "dogadanju" djela, koje je stalno promjenljivo, bilo zbog kretanja gledaoca bilo zbog vlastitog mehanizam koji ga održava u stalnom gibanju i mijeni. [...] Osim izložbe o "Novim tendencijama" održat će se i rasprava u Muzeju za umjetnost i obrt, a bit će prikazani i ekesperimentalni filmovi» p. 5.



Even Boris Kelemen<sup>125</sup> wrote a short article devoted to extemporaneous meetings and to the presence of Picelj, Srnec, Kristl and Bakić - but forgot Knifer - whose works represented the new experimental dimension of Croatian art. The main interest of the press, of course, was for the works exhibited in the Galerija. As witnessed by a photograph of the exhibition (fig. 92). Josip Depolo<sup>126</sup> on «Vjesnik» brought back the sarcastic impressions of the public, accompanying the article with a reproduction of *Linee-luce* by Alviani.

On «Telegram», the critic Boris Istranin<sup>127</sup> expressed a negative judgment on works - including several reproductions by Morellet's and Šutej's ones - which got too close to industrial design, as if they were simply works which were multiplied and spread like printing. That socialization of art, according to Istranin was directed to a visual education more than to an aesthetic pleasure, and he preferred the paintings "restrained and elegant" by Dorazio than works by GRAV, N and T groups; because of Dorazio recognize a beauty just failed to attain creative perfection.

Therefore in that second edition, also in Zagreb was difficult to accept certain experimental proposals compared to soothing abstract painting. Comments of the popular press were benevolent or malevolent, but were ever superficial; to detractors Radoslav Putar<sup>128</sup> on «Čovjek i prostor» replied with a short but acute critic analysis. Putar argued his position in favor of the *Nove Tendencije* following reflections – which Putar had translated in the previous February on the same magazine – by the art critic Jürgen Mörschel<sup>129</sup> on the works of Gerhard von Graevenitz.

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<sup>125</sup> B. Kelemen, 'Nove Tendencije' drugi put u Zagrebu, «Večerni list», August, 2<sup>nd</sup> Zagreb, 1963. «Autori izloženih radova nastoje da upotrebom suvremenih industrijskih materijala, tehničkih dostignuća i znatim korištenjem svjetlosnih efekata djeluju na gledaoca. [...] Za danas i sutra predviđeno je iznošenje stavomova i diskusija. Taj drugi dio ove svojevrsne likovne manifestacije održat će se u Muzej za umjetnost i obrt» p.5.

<sup>126</sup> J. Depolo, *Traženje novih mogućnost*, «Vjesnik», August 2<sup>nd</sup> Zagreb, 1963. «Neodlučna, pat-pozicija, u kojoj se našla evropska umjetnost posljednjih godina, izazvala je nervozu, oživjela je s izvjesnom oštrinom staru polemiku o sudbini nefigurativne umjetnosti, mobilizirala umjetnike i galeriste na nova traženja i rješenja, uznemirila je tržište, dovela je u pitanje čitavu jednu (još do jučer) avangardu, a među publiku unijela je umor, skepsu i rezerviranost» p.6.

<sup>127</sup> B. Istranin, *Ipak je tako*, «Telegram», September 20<sup>th</sup> Zagreb 1963 «Program Novih tendencija predviđa industrijsko umnožavanje djela kako bi svakom bila dostupna poput mogućnost s grafici listovima. Području umjetnosti je tako utrt put pred skupim radovima današnjih velikana. [...] Opis ovih djela treba često puta poistovetiti s tematskim motivom, koji je na sadašnjem stupnju razvoja društveno vrlo angažiran ispitivanjem naučno-matematsko-estetskih principa. [...] Ako se radi o profinjenoj akvarelnoj strukturi (Dorazio) treba priznati da je naslikana mreža-mreža. [...] Spomenuta struktura (Dorazio) ukrštenih akvarelnih traka, vrlo je pregledna i zanimljiva po naoko nehanjnim grupacijama ukrštenja, tako je izbjegnuta kruta geometrija u korist čitilnosti. Korišćenje boje pokazuje suzdržljivost i otmjenost u izražaju. To su vrijednost ljepote, pa i nove ljepote. Takva su i mnoga ostala djela. Njihov doseg nije genijalan, ali nije ni daleko od njega» p.5.

<sup>128</sup> R. Putar, *Nove Tendencije (2)*, «Čovjek i prostor», no.163, September, Zagreb, 1963. «Direktni paterniter "novih tendencija" za sada ne može još ustanoviti i po svojoj će prilici jednom jasno pokazati da ga u vidu individualnih utjecala i nije bilo. Svakako sa pri tome imena Vasarely, Moholy-Nagy, Tinguelyja, Munarija i još nekog ne mogu posve zaboravati i ne može im se odreći svako značenje za pojavu "novih tendencija [è difficile stabilire la diretta paternità delle nuove tendenze, ma si può sostenere che ogni singola ricerca abbia certamente antecedenti in Vasarely, Moholy-Nagy, Tinguely, Munari ma non si possono dimenticare i valori propri alle 'nuove tendenze']» pp.5,10.

<sup>129</sup> J. Mörschel, *Gerhard von Graevenitz*, «Čovjek i prostor», no.119, February, Zagreb, 1963, pp. 7,8,9.

According to Putar was still difficult to establish a precise authorship of new tendencies - and intended the term “new tendencies” as an artistic movement - despite the fact works had formal appeals with ones of Vasarely, Moholy-Nagy and Munari. Putar also considered useless to put the new tendencies in contrast with other movements such as *Tachisme*, New Realism and New Dadaism, contrary to what Meštrović and his European colleagues claimed. Putar was interested to isolate technical components peculiar to works of new tendencies, whom indicated in the space, time, materials and functionality.

The space and time were directly linked, as in works of Grazia Varisco, and materials could be traditional, as in Dorazio and Šutej, or industrial. The industrial materials were “colorless” and that quality was to support the theory of anonymity, proclaimed by N Group and GRAV. Indeed, the absence of color, which was understood by *tachistes* painters as an expressive element of the personality of the author, was the real new brought by groups’ work. Finally, Putar considered crucial for new tendencies the social work, which allowed them to consider themselves heirs of the historical Bauhaus and not followers.

However, he did not silence a latent contradiction in new tendencies and indicated in the commercial relationship with galleries, because many of artists began to exhibit and sell following trade demand. In fact, according to Putar, N Group - less Costa - and Richter<sup>130</sup> had handled the issue in the *Nove Tendencije 2*. If the former questioned the way to achieve full artistic freedom and social commitment, the latter, Richter, radicalized the contradiction of the trade, offering the ideological artist commitment and the application on urban large-scale of new tendencies’ works, by a plastic and technical homogeneity in order to create “a new visual world”.

§ *The risk of the Nouvelle Tendence: from the orthodoxy to the dogmatism.*

During the *Nove Tendencije 2* was clear, therefore, that the role of Italian, Croat, and French was so far greater than the participation of Mavignier and German Zero Group’s artists. To the homogeneity found in the most part of works corresponded the exhibition poster, which was designed by Picelj, whom drew inspiration from a silkscreen by Edoardo Landi.

In addition, Putar and Meštrović<sup>131</sup> wrote the introduction to the catalogue. Putar pointed out the perceptive instability pursued by GRAV’s theory. And the indeterminacy or formal opening

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<sup>130</sup> *Nove Tendencije 2*, op. cit., 1963.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

of programmed works were artistic insights originated from physical factors such as light changes. The inconsistent variability in the work was an antidote to the illusion of eternity passed down from traditional art and, according to Putar, was the fundamental difference between new tendencies' works and Mondrian's ones. The movement then borrowed its form from one side by means of geometric structures which were subjected to the "charm of chance", from the other to the "technical purity". The central focus of that speech was the variability of the work was felt only within the real space of the observer and thus predicting the future success of environmental structures.

Meštrović, in his speech, reconstructed the genealogical line of new tendencies, identifying the rational legacy of Bauhaus and Neoplasticism and to which associated the technical evolution, favored by the report between capital and industry. The machine, therefore, was a product of a humanist thought which nevertheless had to become scientific by means of the Marxist ideology. In that way the work of the artist would transform the artistic action in social action.

Meštrović, then receded more and more from the original intentions shared with Mavignier, and his vision of art would assume a specific address that he had just outlined at the end of 1962 in *Nove spoznaje u likovnoj umjetnosti* (New directions in the arts)<sup>132</sup>. The text - is also in Italian version corrected by Umbro Apollonio – by Meštrović was proposed to Umbro Apollonio for publication<sup>133</sup>.

New Tendencies, Meštrović claimed, had a clear theoretical formulation in September 1962 during the Second Biennial of Young Artists in Paris. GRAV wrote and distributed a manifesto in which asserted that for the art democratization was refused the single artist, the material reality of the work was alien to feelings of its creator or its audience, the motion and the reproducibility had to replace the stasis and the single piece. Meštrović argued in addition to GRAV, only N Group in Padua had just reached similar theorizations in March 1961 during the Biasi's exhibition, whose quoted the manifesto.

Meštrović also shared the GRAV's operational methodology, whom had distributed a questionnaire during the *L'instabilité* (the instability) exhibitions, when the same printed in

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<sup>132</sup> M. Meštrović, op. cit. 1969; pp. 159-167.

<sup>133</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Curators. Folder Umbro Apollonio. Unit 5. Letter from Apollonio to Meštrović, of January 8<sup>th</sup> 1963. «Caro Meštrović, ho rivisto il suo articolo ed ho cercato di darvi una forma italiana più adeguata rispettando il suo pensiero secondo l'interpretazione che ne ricavavo. le restituisco il testo sia perché controlli che il suo pensiero fondamentale non sia stato falsato, sia perché voglia chiarirmi alcuni dubbi segnati con un punto interrogativo. [...] non è formulata soltanto una nuova estetica nella serie delle preesistenti; si tratta infatti di un generale spostamento dei problemi fondamentali dell'arte dai vicoli ciechi nei quali si dibatteva finora[...] è chiaro che in questo quadro la dimensione individualistica dell'uomo, sia quella romantica che quella tragica, verrà ridotta ad una misura reale che sarà ugualmente applicabile ad ogni individualità umana[...] citiamo l'esempio molto caratteristico e significativo del gruppo dei giovani artisti padovani (Gruppo N)[...] L'attuale realtà sociale nonché la coscienza collettiva, si trovano esse veramente a poca distanza da simili modi di concepire?».

Croatian translation, happening *Nove Tendencije 2*, was distributed to the public in Zagreb<sup>134</sup>. The public involvement, according to Putar and Meštrović, therefore was the new frontier would tend *Nove tendencije 2*.

Even on an ideological level to visitors was offered a pamphlet written<sup>135</sup> by François Morellet and François Molnar<sup>136</sup>. It was entitled *Pour un art abstrait progressif* and was attached to the catalogue. That was the ultimate theoretical act of *Nouvelle Tendence*, which then led new tendencies towards a uniform appearance would be translated into Italian “Nuova Tendenza”. Morellet and Molnar, as Marxist socialists, railed against the traditional abstract art in favor of one they showed as “progressive”, writing in the second paragraph, that:

«Le spectateur ne doit donc pas ‘comprendre’ l’œuvre d’art. non parce qu’il y a quelque ‘mystère’ que l’artiste doit cacher devant le spectateur (bien au contraire, la Nouvelle Tendence estime qu’il ne faut rien cacher au public, que l’œuvre d’art doit agir par ses qualités intrinsèques et non par quelque mystification) mais, parce que dans l’œuvre plastique, il n’y a rien à comprendre dans le sens strict du mot. [...]. L’art abstrait ne veut rien dire. C’est un système des signes, qui ne renvoie à rien d’autre, qu’à lui-même»<sup>137</sup>.

The third section was devoted to the relationship between abstract art and Marxism, overturned the Andrei Zhdanov’s (1896-1948) theory to demonstrate the scientific apparatus of Marxism was combined with abstraction. The realism by Zhdanov’s aesthetics was overcome by scientific experimentation, in the field of *Gestaltpsychologie*, implemented by abstract works. Furthermore, the abstraction of *Nouvelle Tendence* belonged to history and as Marxist thought had its theoretical roots in Hegelian historicism:

« Nous sommes arrivés à l’art abstrait par un chemin historique, et l’histoire ne puet pas se tromper: weltgeschichte=weltgericht (Hegel)»<sup>138</sup>.

Therefore they accepted and affirmed the affiliation to a specific historical situation and, as had just happened - and almost its direct shoot – for the *Arte programmata* exhibition in the *Nove tendencije 2*’s catalogue was traced a genealogy by works and exhibitions that the historical

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<sup>134</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT2 NT2\_1963 Upitnik.

<sup>135</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT2 Morellet-Molnar tekst. Original eighteen typewritten pages, illustrated by handmade drawings.

<sup>136</sup>F. Molnar, F. Morellet, *Pour un art abstrait progressif*, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1963.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 6

avant-garde in 1963 marked the progressive path of New Tendency. In an earlier typed version, drafted by May 1963, the chronology began with Giacomo Balla and ended at the *Arte programmata* exhibitions:

«1962 - Milan, Venecija, Rim, Dusseldorf izložba: Programtska umjetnost»<sup>139</sup>.

On the one hand *Nove Tendencije* was put within a historical dimension, on the other hand was in contrast with authors as Mavignier and Manzoni had argued in 1961: did not have to recourse to the historical approach. The break with Mavignier happened on another face, was consumed within the same *Nove Tendencije*.

Also in August, a few days after the inauguration circulated the first bulletin of *Nouvelle Tendence - Recherche continue*<sup>140</sup>. Following a series of meetings which were attended by Castellani, Costa, Alviani, Mari, Picelj, representatives of GRAV (Le Parc, Morellet), N (Biasi, Landi, Massironi), T (Anceschi, Boriani Colombo) groups and Meštrović and Putar, on the Bulletin they proceeded from the “NT” international movement to the exclusion of Marc Adrian, Vojin Bakić, Marta Boto, Carlos Cruz Diez, Piero Dorazio, Garcia Miranda, Rudolf Kammer, Julije Knifer, Heinz Mack, Herbert Oehm, Henk Peeters, Otto Piene, Aleksandar Srnec, Helge Sommerrock, Miroslav Šutej and Günter Uecker.

They had been temporarily removed - pending their “self-criticism” according to a custom of the Communist Party - because their works and poetics did not correspond to the *Nouvelle Tendence* movement, whose basic principles were: 1) primacy of research, 2) depersonalization, 3) open communication, 4) collective work, 5) development of collective ideas technical and theoretical for the production of anonymous works. The committee reserved the ability to readmitted, in the next time, the artists if they aligned with principles of the *Nouvelle Tendence*.

Almir Mavignier<sup>141</sup>, whom was neither among the excluded nor among the committee members, felt the paradoxical situation in which had placed his colleagues. In December 1963, as creator and promoter of the *Nove Tendencije*, Mavignier sent a *memorandum* to Božo Bek. The

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<sup>139</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT2 Katalog radna verzija.

<sup>140</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT2 73.1963 nt2. Nouvelle Tendence – Recherche continue mouvement International art visuel Bulletin n°1 Août 1963. See appendix.

<sup>141</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. Found NT. Folder NT2 Umjetnici\_m Mavignier. Letter form Mavignier to Božo Beck of December 12<sup>th</sup> 1963. «[...] et finalement, la liste des 'expulse' de 'n.t.r.c.' [...] voilà le résultat catastrophique de l'intention de quelques artistes de transformer les 'n.t.' en un 'syndicat' dont les règlements doivent classifier, orienter et limite les groupes ou les artistes indépendants, en les contrôlant dans la divulgation de leurs œuvres et indirectement dans la création de leurs travaux. Si on pense que l'artiste, avant ou après de finir son œuvre, doit considérer si la 'clarté de sa position' est en accord avec l'avis des 'coordinateurs', nous ne sommes alors pas loin du réalisme social. Il est d'ailleurs malheureux que la jeune critique ait fait à Zagreb des rapports entre marxisme et 'n.t.'. Les 'n.t.' ne se compromettent pas politiquement. [...] nous sommes dans un moment décisive. Si les – 'n.t.' devaient évoluer dans le sens “syndicat” du bulletin de paris, je serai obligé de faire cesser toute forme de collaboration au 'n.t.r.c.'».

invective of Mavignier against authors of the report reiterated the absolute freedom for the artist and the not politicization of the *Nove Tendencije*.

The artist also hinted his voluntary withdrawal from the event. Consequently, that episode would forced to consider one side the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti behaved like other similar institutions and then turned to the art trade without any hesitation, the other the group of artists proclaimed only in words their freedom and intransigence towards the trade, so far as to purge whom were not faithful to the *Nouvelle Tendence* line.

All that occurred when exhibitions in Zagreb began to receive the international recognition, while the severity of the episode would cast a shadow over the real strength of the movement.

Finally, in the early Sixties, the science, by its psychological and neurological applications, discovered the abstract and Informel painting could have helped to understand the aesthetic and emotional activities of primates, children and the mentally insane. On the artistic side, N group and his colleagues re-established a new relationship with technological and industrial society, setting as vision technicians and experimenters of the Gestalt.

In the particular Italian situation the bond between N and T groups, Munari and Mari became even more solid and artists, after the 12<sup>th</sup> Lissone Award in 1961, sought acclaim from critic and audience. The opportunity was given to them by Olivetti Company from Ivrea, which opened its stores across Italy and Europe, by several traveling exhibitions which named *Arte programmata*, as was written by Umberto Eco. Works of Mari and others were put off from usual artistic canons and were similar in operational technique and planning phase to industrial design way.

However, artists realized the relationship with the industry could only be subordinated. At the same time, was made clear that their work relegated Informel to ideally embraced the avant-gardes from Futurism to Constructivism. In that way artists by exhibitions of programmed art, reached finally an audience, also the use of their works was not yet understood.

The critic operation to take advantage of the tradition to justify the new would not just reach a impact positive. And when *Arte programmata* increased with the presence of GRAV, Getulio Alviani and Dada Maino their climb to success assumed an international importance.

Artists understood the need to come together in a unified, homogeneous movement, which found in the second *Nove Tendencije* in Zagreb the perfect place to learn. On that occasion, original intentions supported by Almir Mavignier, were replaced by a vision aiming to a dangerous dogmatism was born from the fusion among the para-scientific theories of GRAV, the

collective work professed by N Group and the ideological contribution from the Yugoslav socialism of Meštrović and Richter.

On the technical level, *Nouvelle Tendance* has been stated by a small group of artists, including GRAV, N and T Groups, pointed the direction of their own artistic research aimed at the production of programmed works. They insisted on geometric rigidity that balances the instability of perception, and in a direct relationship with the public. But their contradictory attitude was unsolved in regard to the trade and the Croatian, Italian and international cultural establishment.

## **Chapter 5<sup>th</sup>. To define an united artistic movement. New Tendency between Venice, Paris and Zagreb.**

In December 1963, the art critic Italo Tomassoni<sup>1</sup> published the essay *Per un'ipotesi barocca* (For a Baroque hypothesis), in which analyzed Italian artistic events which, from the mid-Fifties to 1962, has been influenced by new working ways of artists. Tomassoni reached the main conclusion – also thanks to the advice of Umbro Apollonio<sup>2</sup> - that the Baroque had not exhausted as art movement historicized by critics, but pervaded the research of contemporary art. The continuity between Baroque and Informel Art was in the objectified reality of “open forms” in works of artists such as Lucio Fontana.

According to Tomassoni, the Italian art from Baroque onwards insisted on the dialectic between open and closed forms - according to Umberto Eco - between improvisation and planning. The artistic categories of “new realism”, “new figuration” and “Gestalt art” that art criticism between 1962 and 1963 imposed to the works of artists like Rotella, Vacchi and Mari were all variations of the same Baroque style that consisted in the research by those artists in surprising the perceptive habit of viewers.

The essay by Tomassoni turned a critical debate that took place between 1962 and 1963 and involved both Italian and Croatian culture. The major question was about the interpretative way to use to read and understand different fields of artistic research that explicitly declared themselves in opposition or as the overcoming of the Informel current.

The fortune of Informel forms, as seen above, consisted in their international spread. For example, in Italy and Croatia, despite obvious differences in style, artists believed them could objectify on the canvas their personal relationship with the world. Similarly a range of works, which were based on direct sampling of images from mass media, ones continued in the figurative tradition of the historic European Expressionism, and finally, which ones materialized the movement intended as the main character of the industrial world, had an international circulation.

Art critique, therefore, agreed with the idea to considerate post-Informel tendencies because if the extreme subjectivism was the feature of that current, new research showed a return to forms more or less codified by tradition or borrowed from a common visual panorama.

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<sup>1</sup> I. Tomassoni, *Per un'ipotesi barocca*, Edizioni Ateneo, Roma, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Curators. Folder Apollonio. Unit 7, Letter from Italo Massoni to Apollonio of December 12<sup>th</sup> 1962, asking for information about essays on relationship between Baroque and contemporary painting. Also, see Unit 4. Correspondence Apollonio-Tomassoni, Letter from Italo Tomassoni to Apollonio of January 8<sup>th</sup> 1963. Apollonio gave him a list of documents preserved in the Biennial Archive.



Consequently, in Italy, on the one hand there were art scholars, as Giulio Carlo Argan, Italo Tomassoni, Maurizio Calvesi who sought a synthesis between various aspects of that post-Informel scene, on the other hand supporters of any particular research, as the critic Pierre Restany for “new realism”, Enrico Crispolti for “new figuration” and Umbro Apollonio for “programmed art”, were divided in three main fronts, which according to occasions, received other art critics.

As for the specific relations between Umbro Apollonio and Croatian critics Vera Horvat-Pintarić and Matko Meštrović, intensified between 1963 and 1965. *Nove tendencije 2* exhibition in 1963 assumed an appearance militant demonstration in favor of programmed works, and consequently began to spread the idea of a joint artistic movement formed by Italian and Croatian artists.

The name “Nouvelle Tendence” which was suggested by GRAV found credit in Italy as “Nuova Tendenza”, in the homonymous exhibition in Venice in December 1963. That movement in fact was inspired by works had common operational and formal rules - programming, geometry, electrical mechanism, industrial materials - to the point that it had his moments of international recognition in 1964 Venice Biennial and in Zagreb with the 1965 *Nova Tendencija 3* exhibition.

§ 1. *Programmed works and Informel Art: continuity and transformation in 1962 Nuove prospettive della pittura italiana and Alternative Attuali and in 1963 L'Informale in Italia fino al 1957 exhibitions.*

In June 1962, finished the first exhibition of the *Arte programmata* in Milan, in Bologna – where the influence of “new naturalism” painting theorized by Francesco Arcangeli was strong - younger art critics Renato Barilli, Maurizio Calvesi and Enrico Crispolti organized the exhibition *Nuove prospettive della pittura italiana*<sup>3</sup>(new perspectives of Italian painting), with the theoretical contribution by Umberto Eco.

The group exhibition joined together a large number of painters whom, according to the organizers, proposed solutions alternative to Informel. In paintings made mostly between 1961 and 1962 as *Richiesta di leaders* (Request for leaders) by Valerio Adami (1935), *La porta* (The door), by Rodolfo Aricò (1930), *'Underground'. Corridoi*, ('Underground'. Corridors) by Aldo Bergolli (1931), *Nel verde della sera* ( In the green of the evening), by Enzo Brunori (1924), *Specchio magico* (Magic Mirror),by Lucio Del Pezzo (1933), perpetuated Informel elements, as

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<sup>3</sup> *Nuove prospettive della pittura italiana*, catalogue, June 1962, Palazzo di Re Enzo, Galleria Comunale di Arte Moderna, Bologna, Edizioni Alfa, Bologna, 1962.

the gesture, the matter, the overlapping colors and amoeboid forms or the assemblage according to a Dadaist attitude (figs. 1-5).

In the first phase, the novelty factor consisted in the attitude of many young painters whom in different ways abandoned the expressive paroxysm Informel in favor of a less shared relationship between the work and creator and more attentive to the formal and painterly values.

The extremism of such behavior was for example in other authors as Tano Festa (1938) with *Finestra 1: omaggio a Veermer* (Window 1: Homage to Vermeer), Francesco Lo Savio (1935) with *Parabolico verso ellissoide* (parabolic towards ellipsoid) and finally Giuseppe Uncini (1929) with *Cementoarmato no.31* (reinforced concrete n.31) (figs. 6-8).

Calvesi called those works empty surfaces, marked by schematic forms or covered by minimal changes<sup>4</sup> («*superfici vuote, scandite da forme schematiche o percorse da minime variazioni*») because they did not represent, like the other paintings mentioned above, an ideal space, but they presented their own forms to the visual perception of the viewer. Were made with materials and techniques only partly borrowed from the tradition, as in the case of Festa, but mostly “found” in the real world as the iron plate in Lo Savio or reinforced concrete in Uncini.

As in another occasion Alberto Boatto<sup>5</sup> said about Festa and Lo Savio, their works did not have a precise location but added up Dadaist reminiscent on the one hand - “fake windows” of Festa - on the other hand constructivist – geometric forms by Lo Savio and Uncini.

The fundamental question involved that type of work, was tied to their relationship with the painting, since thereto were assigned visual strictly painterly qualities as illusionistic space, frontal and flatness vision.

However, the statement, which would be contradicted if in Bologna would have attended T Group, as was hoped by Crispolti<sup>6</sup>, was balanced by Umberto Eco<sup>7</sup>. His essay focused on the phenomenology of perception by Merleau Ponty - whose thought in France had just captivated GRAV which had artistically reworked in the exhibitions *L'instabilité* between 1962 and 1963 - and was ranked due to its theoretical capacity for the introductory test of the *Arte programmata* and the essay *Opera aperta*.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.23.

<sup>5</sup>A. Boatto, *Cronache. Arte.*, «Letteratura», no.55, January- February, Rome, 1962. «L'oggetto ostentato – grandi fogli neri variamente piegati in Lo Savio; superfici monocrome delimitate da cornici in rilievo in Festa – nel loro estremo realismo mimetico non arrivano a distinguersi ma raggiungono l'anonimo, la serie quantitativa dei manufatti prodotti dall'industria. Comunque questi oggetti rientrano in un'area culturale ed espressiva dai confini oramai abbastanza ben precisati, dove si assiste alla riproposta di istanze geometriche, anche meramente di ascendenza neoplastica, contaminate e come contraddette da invenzioni di tipo dadaista e da suggestioni magiche» p. 132.

<sup>6</sup>*Nuove prospettive della pittura italiana*, op. cit., Bologna, 1962, p.28.

<sup>7</sup>U. Eco, *Funzione progressiva della pittura moderna*, in *Nuove prospettive della pittura italiana*, op. cit. Bologna, 1962, pp. 116-119.

The dialectical process between stability and infringement of visual habit, identified by Merleau Ponty<sup>8</sup>, cyclically passed from its infraction to stabilization, which lasted until a new infringement. In that way the phenomenon of perception was not static but dynamic and changing over time and space, as Eco discerned in the continuous process of visual instability in modern art was manifested from Impressionism to Futurism and in Informel Art.

Therefore in phenomenological appearance every art form would be guided by the principle of instability, but the historical artistic avant-garde made it one of the purposes of their poetry, as well as in works by GRAV, N and T groups. Their relationship with painting, then, could be seen at the height as in Lo Savio or Uncini, and not of substance.

The illusionistic space of painting was then main point in a second exhibition in Summer 1962. *Alternative Attuali*<sup>9</sup>, held at L'Aquila, was organized by Enrico Crispolti and Antonio Bandera and it also proposed alternatives to Informel.

In the catalogue Renato Barilli availed himself of the phenomenology of perception by Merleau Ponty to justify in the works a continuation of perspective space, understood as the connection between physical and psychological reports.

Among the exhibitors there were also someone from *Nuove prospettive della pittura italiana* and foreign presence, such as Pierre Alechinsky, Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland and Zoran Kemeny. Among them there would have been also Robert Rauschenberg, and that would have allowed a better understanding of the essay in catalog by Filiberto Menna.

In fact, the scholar - whom had been an Argan's pupil - focused his attention on the relationship of historical continuity between old and new Dada – according to the *Art of Assemblage* by William Seitz<sup>10</sup> - but introduced a personal variant. Menna<sup>11</sup> considered as happened in the time of Van Doesburg<sup>12</sup>, the same interchange was continuing to exist between the contemporary “New Dada” and “New Constructivism” research; in other words there was a complementary relationship between Dada and Neoplasticism.

Thus Menna justified by two opposing tendencies a common focus toward industrial design, which was explicated by the destruction or the exaltation of the object in its “more immediate phenomenology”. As a consequence we might suppose, then, works of N and T groups to the first *Arte programmata* exhibition, in May 1962, participated in the alternation of Dadaism and Neoplasticism echoes.

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<sup>8</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Gallimard, Paris, 1945 (1987), pp.235-280.

<sup>9</sup> *Alternative Attuali*, catalogue, July - August, 1962, Castello Cinquecentesco, L'Aquila, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma, 1962.

<sup>10</sup> W. Seitz, *Art of assemblage*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1961.

<sup>11</sup> F. Menna, *Vecchio e nuovo dada*, in *Alternative Attuali*, op. cit. Roma, 1962, pp.73-75.

<sup>12</sup> D. Riout, op. cit. 2000.

However in the *Arte programmata* in the following September, with the participation of Alviani and GRAV was accentuated their striving for a recovery of constructive, scientific and technological values. Their works, therefore, when they were exposed in August 1963 in Zagreb in *Nove Tendencije 2*, affirmed their historical continuity, not a “new” perspective, but of an ideal and operative succession to historical Constructivism. Similarly to what happens in scientific research in which each new discovery is based on the one which had preceded it. Artists came to awareness in Spring 1963, when the attention of Italian and international art critique was concentrated to settle the question about inheritances and heirs of the Informel Art.

In March 1963, Maurizio Calvesi dedicated the VII Modigliani Prize at Livorno to Informel<sup>13</sup>, meant as a specific historical phenomenon, by the exhibition *L'Informale in Italia fino al 1957* (The Informal in Italy until 1957)<sup>14</sup>. The date *ad quem* “1957” was referring to the 1958 Venice Biennial, consecrated the academic Informel Art, by a largest retrospective dedicated to Wols. Calvesi illustrated the historical dimension of Italian Informel by works made by Lucio Fontana, Alberto Burri, Roberto Crippa, Mattia Moreni, Ennio Morlotti and others whom developed and drained away every possible variations.

The exhibition of Calvesi had the aim to historicize a rich diversity of artistic positions which each author had personally developed, while a common denominator of those theories was sought by the critic and painter Jurgen Claus<sup>15</sup> whom published in 1963 *Theorien zeitgenössischer Malerei in Selbstzeugnissen* (Theories of contemporary painting, Italian edition, 1967).

According to Claus, theoretical assumptions of Informal were present in three widely spaced artists: Duchamp, for the relationship with objects and materials, Masson for the appeal to the sphere of the unconscious and finally Baumaister for the constructive organization of surfaces painting. From those three artistic rules, the author built - as Tapies previously did it in more empirical way in 1960 - a “grammar of the Informel practice”, whose an important contribution came out of works by Emilio Vedova, the only Italian artist mentioned.

About Vedova, Claus reported the intervention the artist held in September 1962 during the 4<sup>th</sup> International Course of High Culture at the Fondazione Cini in Venice (published in Italy in 1964).

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<sup>13</sup> G. Politi, *L'informale in Italia. IV Premio Modigliani*, «Letteratura», nos.62-63, March- April /May - June, Rome, 1963, pp. 148-150.

<sup>14</sup> *L'informale in Italia fino al 1957. IV Premio Modigliani*, catalogue, March - April, 1963, Palazzo del Museo, Livorno, De Luca editore, Roma, 1963. «informale significa solo ciò che concretamente è stato, cioè un complesso di ricerche e di fermenti che hanno come comune denominatore l'impegno, tutt'ora attuale, di superare le vecchie concezioni idealistiche, spiritualistiche, razionalizzanti della forma, e tanto l'immagine astratta come entità eidetica e trascendente il fenomeno e quanto l'immagine naturalistica come effigie e simbolo, riferibile ai fenomeni ma distinta da essi, per vagliare le possibili ulteriori altre, di una forma che sin proponga essa stessa come fenomeno: informale non è una derivazione o un sinonimo di informe, ma vuol dire, il che è diverso, 'non formale'».

<sup>15</sup> J. Claus, *Teorie della pittura contemporanea*, (ed. it.), Il Saggiatore, Milano, 1967 (1963<sup>1</sup>).

Vedova, as well as enhance the identity of pictorial action and political action, reserved his attention to a contemporary emerging phenomenon, i.e. the programmed Art research that had been exhibited in Venice. According to the Venetian painter:

*«The relation man-technique seems at peace [...] The man does not master the technique, but he is not overwhelmed. [...]. Then the dream of the Bauhaus has become a reality? [...] Or this entry, this familiarity with the interplay of variations of Meccano<sup>16</sup>, will not mean the degeneracy of the problem? [...] The technology-conscience drama hits us. [...] I speak of the subjugation of someone who claim to be called artists - which means first man - but instead taken from the technical [...] all so childishly fascinated by 'diorama' and object-machine, unconsciously calmed from these mild and harmless machines, we automatically grant clearance to any abuse of the technique (Friday, September 28, 1962)»<sup>17</sup>.*

The Vedova's attack directed to stigmatize an alleged art of “machines”, dehumanized and dominated by technology, was motivated by his “humane” painting and his being against the great powers of society, such as the industry and the technocratic apparatus.

However, the example of Vedova, such as the entire essay by Claus might be considered, showed a fundamental quality which differed from Informel, the research of Mari, Alviani, N Group and others. In the Informel painting, there were many theories as many artists practiced them, ignoring critics of art and their intellectual impulses, but from works had been exhibited in the *Arte Programmata* emerged a single theory took as model by various artists. That aspect of the approval was perhaps the one most worried Vedova and entailed the risk for younger artists to succumb to technology, as it could have been argued in the aftermath of the exhibition *Oltre la pittura oltre la scultura*, held in Milan in April 1963.

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<sup>16</sup> An old Italian toy for children in which they could build structures by means of metal units joined each others and moved by little electrical motors.

<sup>17</sup> E. Vedova, *Scontro di situazione*, in *Quaderni di San Giorgio, Arte e cultura contemporanea*, Sansoni, Firenze, 1964, pp.537-553.

§ *From the Cadario Gallery to the 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial of San Marino – Oltre l'Informale: Artists and art critics to a theoretical and formal definition of the new tendencies in Italy.*

The relationship between the architect Arturo Cadario, director of the homonymous gallery in Milan, and programmed and kinetics works of art were established in 1963 with the consultation of Umbro Apollonio<sup>18</sup>, whom between the end of 1962 and the subsequent five years, helped the gallery director in trade relations with the Yugoslav artists Picelj and Bakić.

The group exhibition *Oltre la pittura oltre la scultura. Mostra di ricerca di arte visiva* (Over painting over sculpture. Visual art research exhibition) held from April the 26<sup>th</sup> to May the 17<sup>th</sup> in 1963<sup>19</sup>. According to the correspondence between Getulio Alviani and Umbro Apollonio, showed in Milan the research of new tendencies, in continuity with the first *Nove Tendenze* in Zagreb (figs. 9-11).

Among the participants - a lot of them would be passed to the second *Nove tendenze*, which was visited by Cadario - there were Adrian, Alviani, Maino, von Graevenitz, Kammer, Kristl, Mack, Mari, Mavignier, Munari, Picelj, Piene, Talman and Equipo 57, GRAV, N and T groups. A short brochure catalogue reproducing details of works and reporting texts by Apollonio, Ballo, Belloli, Dorfles, Eco and Habasque.

The New Tendency consequently had an early Italian showcase, in direct continuity with the exhibition of the *Arte programmata* in Milan in 1962. In fact, that affiliation was sought because of a partial quote of Umberto Eco's well-known text, but at the same time reminded of exhibitions of GRAV, with text by Guy Habasque.

Furthermore Carlo Belloli, art critic and poet of Milan, contributed by an excerpt of the article *Nuove direzioni della cinevisualità plastica totale* (New Directions of total plastic kinetic visual form)<sup>20</sup>, published in December 1962. Belloli provided a first overview of relations between kinetic, programmed, visual and new constructivist Italian and European works.

Belloli, however, expressed his regret because many items could not be considered "art works" because without a spirituality which differentiated them from the experiment of applied

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<sup>18</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Curators. Folder Umbro Apollonio. Unit 10. Letter from Apollonio to Zita Vismara of September 23<sup>rd</sup> 1962. Unit 5. Letter from Galleria Cadario to Apollonio of December 9<sup>th</sup> 1962. Letter from Alviani to Apollonio of March 1963. Unit 10. Letter from Apollonio to Cadario of August 4<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Apollonio to Cadario of December 5<sup>th</sup> 1963. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>19</sup> *Oltre la pittura oltre la scultura. Mostra di ricerca di arte visiva*, catalogue, April 26<sup>th</sup> - May 17<sup>th</sup> 1963, Cadario Gallery, Milan, 1963.

<sup>20</sup> C. Belloli, *Nuove direzioni della cinevisualità plastica totale*, «Metro», no.7, December, Milano, 1962. «Solo, però, quando queste ragioni di correlazione degli elementi spazio-tempo e di percezione visiva, stabile o instabile, cromatica o volumetrico-spaziale saranno trasferite a dimensioni spirituali avremo allora la possibilità di vedere l'esercitazione di fisica ottica trasformarsi in spettacolo plastico. Lo stile comincia quando sulla visione si costruisce la concezione. Sino ad allora queste ricerche di visualità nuova continueranno a riguardare la fisica applicata e non l'estetica e non potranno certo inserirsi fra quelle proposte di nuova plasticità che intendevamo segnalare» p.113.

physics. The perplexity revealed the idealistic idea of Belloli whose interpretation had no follower among the critics and Italian art scholars - even in 1967 when he returned, for an update on the issues of “cinevisualità”<sup>21</sup>.

In the context of the *Oltre la pittura oltre la scultura*, the text by Belloli could tout the background in Milan, but it collided with the main idea of exhibition which referred to what Munari claimed about the T Group’s works in 1962 : they were neither painting nor sculpture, a state which could be extended to all the works on display in 1963.

On that interpretation was the text of Apollonio tract from the seminar held in September 1962 at the Fondazione Cini in Venice<sup>22</sup>, but was at that time extended for publication - that would take place next summer - on the journal «Quadrum»<sup>23</sup>.

The historical analysis of Apollonio showed the continuity between the historical constructivist avant-garde and Concrete Art research of MAC and – for the first time came to public attention in Milan – of Croatian EXAT 51, with recent artistic operations which had been presented in *Monochrome Malerei* (Leverkusen, 1960), *Construction and geometry in painting from Malevich to Tomorrow* (New York, 1960), *Konkrete Kunst* (Zurich, 1960), *Bewogen Bewegung* (Amsterdam, 1961) and *Arte programmata* (Venice, 1962). From the exhibitions Apollonio called for the emergence of a new style common to artists of new tendencies, fact emerged from the exhibition in the Cadario Gallery.

Guido Ballo, in a similar way, identified that matrix style with the name of “programmed art”. In addition, the views offered to the public in Milan and Italian, as noted by Luciano Lattanzi<sup>24</sup> in May 1963, contacted the art critique with works of Croatian artists, especially of Picelj and Kristl. According to Apollonio, Lattanzi said that it was an international tendency that was taking a unitary programmatic capacity.

Consequently, if the exhibition *L’Informale in Italia fino al 1957* outlined a proposal of historical reading of the “Informel” phenomenon and *Oltre la pittura oltre la scultura* had been a “trendy” show, the Fourth Biennial Art of San Marino – *Oltre l’Informale*<sup>25</sup> represented a moment of connection between those and other, already mentioned, tendencies which critics had called

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<sup>21</sup> C. Belloli, *Nuovi sviluppi della cinevisualità plastica*, «La Biennale di Venezia», no.61, Summer, Venice, 1967, pp. 4-23.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Chapter 4, note 48.

<sup>23</sup> U. Apollonio, *Ipotesi su nuove modalità creative*, «Quadrum», no.14, Summer, Bruxelles, 1963, pp.5-16. «[...] non si può non arrendersi all’evidenza che una realtà nuova è in formazione, e che dall’interiorità individuale si sta gradualmente per trasferirsi in una cerchia comunitaria, dove di nuovo la parola “stile” possa ricordare [...] unitarietà di interessi e di scopi[...]»

<sup>24</sup> L. Lattanzi, *Pro e contro pittura da cavalletto*, in *Arte contemporanea in galleria 1961-1964*, Edizioni D’Ars, 1966, p.37.

<sup>25</sup> *Oltre l’Informale. IV Biennale internazionale d’arte San Marino*, catalogue, July 7<sup>th</sup> – October 7<sup>th</sup> 1963, Cinema Kursaal, San Marino, Ente Governativo Turismo, San Marino, p.12.

“New Dadaism” and “New-Figuration”. On the latter trend a monographic exhibition, *La nuova figurazione* (the new representation)<sup>26</sup>, in which there were painters as Sergio Vacchi, Eduardo Arroyo, Sergio Dangelo, Jean Debuffet and others, held in Florence in June 1963, at the La Strozina Gallery, with critic interventions of Gillo Dorfles, Edoardo Sanguineti, Enrico Crispolti, Maurizio Calvesi and Lara Vinca Masini.

The former New-Dadaism current or - in its American meaning – “Pop art” with Adams, Del Pezzo, Dine, Gribaud, Lichtenstein, Rauschenberg, Warhol, and Rotella, together with the artists of the “New-Figuration” and others still attached to Informel, exhibited in later July at L'Aquila in the *Aspetti dell'arte contemporanea* (aspects of contemporary art)<sup>27</sup>, organized by Crispolti.

The two exhibitions had a common merit: to align against the foliage formed by Giulio Carlo Argan, Bucarelli Palma, Giuseppe Gatt and Umbro Apollonio. Art critics, to which was added Pierre Restany, in fact, in Spring 1963 had been appointed by the Republic of San Marino, commissioners for the calls to the Fourth International Biennial. The purpose of the event was to highlight not an historical analysis of the phenomenon called “Informel” – analysis that, although it was partially, it had just been developed by Calvesi – but according to the words of Argan to put “Informel” as a first term of a dialectical relationship between itself and other trends<sup>28</sup>. The commissioners selected among the artists above mentioned whom seemed to encourage the trend that defined “gestalt” (Argan and Gatt) or “programmed” art (Eco and Apollonio).

In fact, N and Zero groups awarded equal first the prize, prompting open controversy were mainly against Argan whom, according to his detractors, favored the “poetics of groups” (figs. 12,13)<sup>29</sup>. In addition, other artists close to N Group were rewarded, thereby giving to the jury - the same committee of the calls - the suspicion of a critical partiality<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> *La nuova figurazione. Mostra internazionale di pittura*, catalogue, June 11<sup>th</sup> – July 6<sup>th</sup> 1963, La Strozina, Firenze, Vallecchi Editore, Firenze, 1963.

<sup>27</sup> *Aspetti dell'Arte Contemporanea. Rassegna Internazionale. Architettura – pittura – scultura – grafica*, catalogue, July 28<sup>th</sup> – October 6<sup>th</sup> 1963, Castello Cinquecentesco, L'Aquila, Alfieri, Venezia, 1963.

<sup>28</sup> M. Venturoli, *Oltre l'informale*, «La Biennale di Venezia» nos. 50-51, December, Venice, 1963, pp.78-79; E. Fezzi, *IV Biennale di San Marino*, «Le Arti», no. 10, October, Milan, 1963, pp. 14-15.

<sup>29</sup> Regarding that polemic, Italo Mussa on his essay of 1976 (op. cit., pp. 352-379), collected quite all articles were published on «Messaggero» and «L'Avanti» from August to December 1963.

<sup>30</sup> G. Politi, *La biennale di San Marino*, «Letteratura», nos. 64-65, July – October, Rome, 1963. «Il secondo premio di lire centomila ciascuno è stato assegnato a Dusan Dzamonja e la Gruppo Uno (Italia),[...]. Altri premi in medaglie d'oro, agli artisti[...] Getulio (Italia), Gliha (Jugoslavia), Gruppo di Ricerca do arte visuale (Parigi), Rotella (Italia)[...]. Sono stati giudicati meritevoli di segnalazione: Arman (Francia), [...]Dorazio (Italia), Equipo 57 (Spagna), [...], Gruppo T (Italia), [...], Morris (Stati Uniti), Munari (Italia), Pasmore (Inghilterra), [...] Schifano (Italia), [...], Turcato (Italia)» pp.156-158.



As for the organization of the event in San Marino, in the correspondence between Apollonio and Argan<sup>31</sup> were called directly the “new tendency continues research” which, operating in the line of programmed works, expressed a real overcoming of the Informel technique.

Thus, in San Marino, Apollonio became the tutelary deity of “new tendencies” were invited not only the Equipo 57, GRAV, N and T groups but also Alviani, Maino, Mari, Munari (figs. 14-19) and Croatian artists Gliha, Picelj, Knifer and Bakić (figs. 20-22). Consequently, *Oltre l'informale*, opened to the public on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1963, did not conceal to have a deep connection with the exhibition *Oltre la pittura oltre la scultura* and specifically *Nove tendencije 2* that a month later would be inaugurated in Zagreb.

Giulio Carlo Argan, to respond to controversies, intervened with three articles on «Il Messaggero» of Rome<sup>32</sup>. In the first, entitled *Aut Aut*, he expressed his regret for the bad relationship which arts entertained with science, and provided not a fusion between art and science, but art would compensate, in terms of quality, the scientific progress<sup>33</sup>.

In the second, *La ricerca gestaltica* (Gestalt Research), Argan pointed out the difference between the historical Abstraction and Gestalt research. In the geometric and rationalist Abstraction, for example by Mondrian, was “prior” a metaphysical faith in the number and in the exact form, intended as universal characters. Gestalt studies, on the contrary, were operating on perception data through a scientific methodology. To the project followed, according to the laboratory method, the time to check the object.

Finally, in *Forma e formazione* (shape and shaping), Argan argued that the Gestalt operation was different from the historical avant-garde, since which did not produce new moral values, or a complaint to existing social customs. The Gestalt research was an experimental operation aimed to a teaching of the vision and it showed a continuous process of the shape and shaping because in the aesthetic order the form was always forming, “Gestalt” was always “Gestaltung” («nell'ordine estetico la forma è sempre formazione, la ‘Gestalt’ è sempre ‘Gestaltung’»).

As a consequence, Argan joined the theory of “formativeness” by Luigi Pareyson and functional education imparted in *Vorkurs* of Bauhaus. However, the interpretation of Argan left open some ambiguity, since on the one side argued that the Gestalt research did not aim to change

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<sup>31</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Correspondence Apollonio-Argan on February 1963. See appendix.

<sup>32</sup> G. C. Argan, *Aut Aut*, «Il Messaggero», August 7<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1963, p. 3; *La Ricerca Gestaltica*, «Il Messaggero», August 24<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1963, p.3; *Forma e Formazione*, «Il Messaggero», September 10<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1963, p.3.

<sup>33</sup> G. C. Argan, *Il rapporto arte-società nella condizione storica attuale*, «De Homine», nos.5-6, June, Roma, 1963, pp. 104-109. Argan wrote on the relationship between art and society during the technological epoch, and claimed it was a dialectical relation between on the one hand a planning art, borrowed from Neoplasticism, close to architecture and industrial design, on the other hand a no-project art. As a consequence the antithesis between two kind of arts was identified as the contrast between technology and ideology.

moral values, on the other hand did not subtracted it to its identification with the industrial design, and therefore its possible social goals.

Therefore Argan claimed “pedagogical phase” had to be overcome because artists had to take possession of a revolutionary ideology, not to satisfy the capitalist trade, and to capture thereby the means of production, through the collective and anonymous work. The hypothesis advanced by Argan was very close to what was working in Zagreb, in the movement of the *Nouvelle Tendence*; but in Italy drove the tone of the debate, triggered in San Marino, at the highest level of conflict took place during the *XII Convegno di critici, artisti e studiosi d'arte* (Twelfth Conference of critics, artists and art students), at Verucchio in September 1963.

§ *Art and Freedom in the “poetic of groups” and new critic orientations of Giulio Carlo Argan and Umbro Apollonio.*

At the Verucchio Congress, the good faith of Argan and the clarification he attempted in his articles, were not sufficient to prevent to the Committee the charge of plotting a demonstration on a customer base.

Piero Dorazio, Afro Basaldella, Carla Accardi and other Italian artists<sup>34</sup> signed a letter of complaint of the poor performance of Argan, whom responded with a bitter invective against the immorality of whom, firstly Piero Dorazio, sought the favor of art critics to win contests and prizes. The accession of Dorazio to the paltry complaint could be also explained in the light of its purge from *Nove tendencije*. In the correspondence - running from September to October 1963 - with Apollonio<sup>35</sup>, the artist claimed a “birthright” against research on the Gestalt that had not been recognized to him and, indeed, he had been forgotten by critics whom, as Apollonio, strove to argue in favor of.

That severe reaction from both parties, artists and critics, was a symptom of a change in the Italian culture in which it was no longer sustainable the role of the critique as a guide for the artist’s work. In the particular case of Argan as such as N and T groups, and Mari, the critic and the artist had more and more difficult to assert its educational role into a technocratic society.

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<sup>34</sup>I. Mussa, op. cit., 1976. Other signatories were Pietro Cascella, Pietro Consagra, Nino Franchina, Pericle Fazzini, Umberto Mastroianni, Gastone Novelli, Achille Perilli, Antonio Sanfilippo, Filippo Santomaso, Toti Scialoja and Giulio Turcato. Cf. pp. 359-360.

<sup>35</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Correspondence Apollonio-Dorazio, September-October 1963. See appendix.

In fact, in favor of Argan<sup>36</sup> and against the “middle generation” lined up Italian groups and Mari by means of a manifesto - which reproduced the main topic of the symposium *Art and Freedom* - titled *Arte e libertà. Impegno ideologico nelle correnti artistiche contemporanee* (*Art and Freedom. Ideological commitment in the artistic currents of contemporary art*)<sup>37</sup>.

They claimed three fundamental principles: the abolition of the romantic myth of the isolated artist and in conflict with society. The need to operate through an exact scientific methodology (according to studies of the *Gestaltpsychologie*). Finally, create or find exhibition places outside the trade and capitalist structures of the production and consumption of the art (as was thought to happen to *Nove tendencije*).

Manfredo Massironi<sup>38</sup> - spokesperson for N Group - intervened at the conference and explained on the basis of the Marxist dialectic between worker and boss, labor and capital, happened the demystification of the art. Once acquired technical principles of the artistic activity, as the worker with means of the production, it would be rebalance the relationship between artist and trade. In that statement, which as just seen fell within the debate between culture and industry, Emilio Vedova opposed an acute consideration.

Vedova<sup>39</sup>, remaining “faithful” to Argan, showed that artists as Massironi confused «*Olivetti with Karl Marx*» and were identified with the alienated worker while they proposed a revolution through objects «*for luxury boutiques*». Vedova was referring to the *Arte programmata* exhibitions, held in Olivetti stores, while not passed over secret the technical apparatus of the conference had been set up by the Ivrea company.

In fact, as Mari<sup>40</sup> pointed a few months later, his generation was not involved in the Resistance, and as a result on artists born in the 30s were not an ideological commitment as instead involved activities of Vedova.

Moreover, Mari’s rejection of extreme individualism - after the war was a response to the fascist conformist society - was balanced by a renewed faith in a community utopia and collective work. Consequently, the anonymity was not a demonstration of irresponsibility, as Vedova intended, but a strategy of defense from the trade.

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<sup>36</sup> M. Venturoli, *Il viaggiatore in arte*, Rizzoli, Milano, 1966, pp. 138-143.

<sup>37</sup> E. Mari, Gruppo N, Gruppo T, *Arte e libertà. Impegno ideologico nelle correnti artistiche contemporanee*, «Il Verri», no. 12, special issue, December, Milan, 1963, pp.133-136.

<sup>38</sup> M. Massironi, Paper on the topic “Impegno ideologico nelle correnti artistiche contemporanee”, 12<sup>th</sup> Verucchio Congress, September 28 – 30<sup>th</sup> 1963, in V. Feierabend, L. Meloni, op. cit. 2009, pp. 348-350

<sup>39</sup> E. Vedova, *A carte scoperte*, «L’Avanti!», December 11<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1963, p.3.

<sup>40</sup> *La ricerca estetica di gruppo*, editorial, «Marcatre», nos.4-5, March - April, Genoa, 1964, p. 16.

In late 1963, the epilogue of the controversy arisen during the Twelfth Verucchio Congress, according to Argan<sup>41</sup> allowed to see limits of the “poetry group”: the absence of an ideology was as political action and not rhetoric.

In addition, Alberto Boatto<sup>42</sup> recognized another limitation in their theory, which concerned the reference to the idea of rationalism, as it was codified by bourgeois Enlightenment traditions. Edoardo Sanguineti had just addressed that issue in 1962 and Boatto agreed with the writer in considering outdated that kind of rationalism, because it would bring Mari and others to meet the interests of the capitalist industry, by which in the efficiency of production and economy of means had its economic basis.

In fact, the risk in a few years would become a bitter reality - as recognized by Argan in a letter to the Secretary of the Congress, Filiberto Gerardo Dasi<sup>43</sup> - when the marketing of the Op art would have crumbled the cohesion of artists in the 1965 *Nova Tendencija 3* exhibition.

However to Italian art critics lacked a real understanding of the “programmed” phenomenon or “Gestalt research” outside the Italian context, since in Zagreb N Group, GRAV and Mari found an ideal world in which to pour their hopes out, not least the need to have an effective and efficient social role.

But also to “Gestalt” artists escaped a resounding fact: they were slowly losing the favor of the most influential Italian intellectual. Argan, in fact, since February 1963 considered within the Rome area – until then the programmed and gestalt works were a phenomenon localized in Northern Italy - a new formation named Uno Group. Born at the end of 1962 and winner of the second prize in San Marino, the group in the name recalled Forma 1, the first Italian Concrete painters group, among whose founders was Dorazio. Artists of Uno group, initially formed by

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<sup>41</sup> G. C. Argan, *Possibilità attuali*, «Marcatre», no.1, November, Genoa, 1963. «Qual è il limite-apertura della posizione che abbiamo chiamato ghestaltica? [...]Essa si sviluppa nella linea della pura metodologia produttiva, ripercorre con maggior vigore e con esplicito intendimento critico la strada del cosiddetto Disegno Industriale, proponendosi di scoprire le cause che l'hanno deviato dalla sua iniziale linea programmatica finendo per subordinare l'attività progettuale alla direzione economica dell'industria capitalistica. Essa si propone cioè soltanto il tema e il problema della produzione e del consumo, ma non considera o non considera ancora tutta una sfera produttiva che forma lo sfondo e il quadro dell'altra», p.31.

<sup>42</sup> A. Boatto, *Due ipotesi d'intervento*, «L'Avanti!», December 7<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1963 «[...] in questo caso l'ideologia postula tutto un movimento sociale e politico, come in effetti è esistito a fianco di quel costruttivismo storico che accompagna in Europa una generale offensiva proletaria, e la fine di De Stijl segna anche la sconfitta di quell'offensiva in Germania, col risultato di spingere il comunismo russo dall'internazionalismo verso un'involuzione nazionalistica ed autoritaria. Se questa analisi è esatta, [...] da essa discende anche la debolezza dell'odierno neocostruttivismo che risulta proposto senza che si sia in possesso di una nozione di razionalità ed in fondo nemmeno di un'ideologia. [...]Rimane il fatto che lavorando con l'industria l'operazione artistica subisce una netta distorsione: i suoi fini vengono ridotti a strumenti per raggiungere altri fini. È l'industria che in effetti trasmette il suo valore all'arte e non c'è passaggio in senso contrario[...]. L'arte concorre a produrre un oggetto che possa essere venduto: questo viene ad essere l'impiego dell'arte» p.3.

<sup>43</sup> *Da Fontana a Yvaral. Arte gestaltica nella collezione della pinacoteca di Verucchio*, op. cit., 2008. Letter from Argan to Dasi of May 1st 1965. «Quasi certamente andrò a Zagabria [...] per il convegno di Tendenze III. [...] è quasi il seguito del convegno di Verucchio: così come la mostra Op-Art a New York – ironia delle cose – è il seguito della mostra di San Marino» p. 47.

Gastone Biggi, Nicola Carrino, Nato Frascà, Achille Pace, Pasquale Santoro and Giuseppe Uncini, falling, between 1963 and 1965, only to Biggi, Carrino and Uncini.

Their poetry matured under the protection of Argan<sup>44</sup> and their overcoming of Informel was done by an autonomous way compared to the above-mentioned “new tendencies”. Argan drew for their first group exhibition at the Quadrante Gallery in Florence in March 1963 a theoretical framework shared by Palma Bucarelli, Nello Ponente and Giuseppe Gatt<sup>45</sup>.

Uno Group did not have a unified program, but reworking Argan’s theses in their own manifesto of September 1963<sup>46</sup>, realized structures defined “significant” (figs. 23-28) - a term borrowed from linguistics as a wanted opposition to the Theory of Information.

Also they differed from extreme views of rationalism and collectivism by Mari and N Group. By means of a research which resumed in a moderate existentialism of the Informel painting, according to Argan, they overcome barren positions of the constructivist revival, pointing to a objectifying search but at the same time respectful of the subjective factor and free expression. Uno Group proposed a kind of “third way” in the constructivist and Gestalt search, while Argan was slipping away, leaving the field of militancy in favor of the programmed research to critics as Umbro Apollonio, whom alone would reinforce the model of the *Nove tendencije*.

§ 2. *The New Tendency and the namesake exhibition in Venice in 1963: organization and its meaning in the Italian and Croatian art scene.*

The exhibition *Oltre la pittura, oltre la scultura* at the Cadario Gallery, the Fourth Biennial of San Marino and the Twelfth Verucchio Congress, had as starring the aforementioned Italian and Croatian artists and their programmed works, also helped to promote the *Nove Tendencije 2* in Italy<sup>47</sup>. N Group, in fact, aroused the interest of Giuseppe Mazzariol, director of the Querini

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<sup>44</sup> *Gruppo Uno (Biggi, Carrino, Frascà, Santoro, Uncini)*, catalogue, March 1963, Galleria Rota, Genoa, Edizioni dell’Ateneo, Roma.

<sup>45</sup> G. Gatt, *L’ipotesi neogestaltica*, in *Roma Anni ’60. Al di là della pittura*, catalogue, December 20<sup>th</sup> 1991 – February 15<sup>th</sup> 1992, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Carte Segrete, Roma, pp.39-41.

<sup>46</sup> Gruppo Uno. *Dichiarazione di poetica. Biggi, Carrino, Frascà, Uncini, Pace*. Published in the occasion of the first exhibition in Rome at the La Medusa Gallery, December 15<sup>th</sup> 1963.

<sup>47</sup> Dalla ricerca condotta nel 2010, presso l’archivio della Fondazione Querini Stampalia, non è stato ritrovato nessun incartamento riguardante l’esposizione in questione, incartamenti che risulterebbero quindi difficilmente reperibili o addirittura smarriti. Tuttavia l’archivio del Museo d’arte contemporanea di Zagabria supplito a tale lacuna, poiché conserva copia della corrispondenza organizzativa tra le due istituzioni.

Stampalia Foundation on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1963 required to Zagreb to be able to accommodate the *Nove tendencije 2* in the rooms of the Foundation<sup>48</sup>.

Landi and Massironi were Italian referees for the exhibition, which was not an isolated event but the first stage of an European tour would involve first Leverkusen and then Paris. Moreover - as we learn in a letter dated on October the 10<sup>th</sup>, sent by artists to apply for membership to subsequent exhibition stages - the fame of the *Nove tendencije* was endorsed by an audience of nearly fourteen thousand visitors.

At the same time aroused the interest of the Italian press as «Stampa Sera», galleries as Quadrante from Florence and art critics such as Enrico Crispolti; its success was reached even in New York, as in the cases of Marth Jackson Gallery or the kinetic works sculptor, George Rickey. As a consequence, the organization of the *Nove tendencije* had finally crossed the Yugoslav border and was prepared to an international comparison.

From Giuseppe Mazzariol's point of view, however, the prestigious collaboration also had another purpose: to promote in Venice and in the rest of Italy the Course of Industrial Design - the first in Italy - established in the 1960-61 two year period inside of Fine Arts Institute and was attended by N Group<sup>49</sup>.

Mazzariol and Renzo Camerino had created the course with the help of Italian industrialists and offered posts of teaching to artists and architects as Carlo Scarpa and Mario De Luigi - for the training to the vision and Analysis of Shapes - Gino Valle and Enrico Peressutti - for industrial design, finally Ernesto Rogers -for the formation of personality. Mazzariol taught History of Culture and History of Forms for the academic year 1962-63<sup>50</sup>. In addition, Mazzariol considered

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<sup>48</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb, Found NT, Folder NT2 73.163NT2. Letter from Giuseppe Mazzariol to Božo Bek of 24<sup>th</sup> September 1963. See app. Type letter from Secretariat to artists hosted at *Nove Tendencije 2* of October 10<sup>th</sup> 1963, to allow to move their works, signed by Božo Bek. See app. Letter from Angelo Dragone director of «Stampa Sera» of July 20<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Elisabetta Visentini (secretary of Quadrante Gallery) to Gradska Galerija of November 28<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Martha Jackson Gallery, of October 4<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Enrico Crispolti, as curator of *Aspetti dell'Arte Contemporanea*, of July 31<sup>st</sup> 1963. Letter from George Rickey of August 19<sup>th</sup> 1963. Notes sent to JUGOSPED shipping company, signed by Božo Bek of October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1963. Letter from N Group to Božo Bek of October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1963. Letter from Božo Bek to Bakić, Knifer, Picelj, Richter, Srnec, Šutej of October 12<sup>th</sup> 1963. See app. Shipping notes signed by Božo Bek of works by Šutej, Srnec, Bakić, Richter, Picelj, Knifer of November 5<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Božo Bek to Getulio Alviani of October 15<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Božo Bek to Manfredo Massironi of October 15<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from N Group to Bek of October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1963. See app. Letter from Manfredo Massironi to Matko Meštrović, undated but filed in Zagabria in November 21<sup>st</sup> 1963. See appendix.

<sup>49</sup> In Italy the matter to found a specific institute for industrial design, distinct from both the Fine Arts Accademy and Faculty of Architecture, was just discussed. Italian artists of new tendencies thought that lack as a limitation on technical and artistic development. Enzo Mari, a few days before the opening of Nuova Tendenza exhibition, claimed that «Una delle cose assolutamente importanti [...] è quella della scuola; occorre che chi intraprenda la professione, dico professione e non arte, del pittore o comunque del comunicatore o del ricercatore in questo campo, abbia una scuola in cui prepararsi». Cf. «Marcatre», nos.4-5, March - April, Genoa, 1964, p.16.

<sup>50</sup> L. Chiavellin, *Il corso Superiore di Disegno Industriale*, in *Giuseppe Mazzariol. 50 artisti a Venezia*, catalogue, September 4<sup>th</sup> – October 18<sup>th</sup> 1992, Palazzo Querini Stampalia, Venezia, Electa, Milano, 1992, pp. 69-71.

*Nove tendencije* as a good opportunity to publicize the place of restoration and architectural modernization of the Querini Stampalia, implemented by Carlo Scarpa from 1959 to June 1963<sup>51</sup>.

As had happened in Olivetti showroom in Piazza San Marco, also in Querini, Scarpa's geometries and volumes were able - perhaps the only example in Europe - to encompass the programmed works.

From the initial reasons for the choice made by Mazzariol, descended two other considerations. The Querini Stampalia Foundation tried to indicate to the Autonomous Body of the Venice Biennial a way to communicate with the programmed, kinetic and visual research<sup>52</sup>.

In addition, Mazzariol read such works as "primary forms" that - as occurred at the Fourth Biennial of San Marino and the Cadario Gallery - were not painting or sculpture, but objects reproducible in series according to the methodology of Industrial Design.

Consequently the Venetian exhibition, in addition to promoting the *Nove Tendencije*, was important because illustrated the same link between programmed work and industrial design, as a result, for the first time, even compared to Zagreb, were explained relationships between artists and industry. And the union between Zagreb and the Venice Course was held in the exhibition<sup>53</sup> catalogue.

However, if up to the moment, for instance, T Group, Picelj or Richter collaborated with industry in their own countries, for the furnishing and decoration of halls or other ephemeral structures, in the case of Venice, the situation was reversed. To the world of industrial design was proposed to learn through out programmed works a new method of the Gestalt survey (fig. 29).

Concerning exhibitors, accomplices the purpose of Mazzariol and the "purge" took place at the previous August, their number was reduced from the original *Nove tendencije 2*, to give priority to Equipo 57, GRAV, N and T groups, or singles as Alviani.

In fact, in the Venetian catalogue - despite the clichés were from Zagreb - were absent Dorazio, Bakić, Srnc and Zero Group; consequently also the title did not retrace the original, compared to what expected in some letters of October 1963, in which alluded to the *Nuove Tendenze 2*.

Works departed from Zagreb between October and November by different times and ways. For instance, N and T groups and Alviani took their chances to send works in Venice and thanks

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. G. Busetto, *Mazzariol alla Querini*. «Mazzariol rivendica con orgoglio di poter dare indicazioni alla Biennale attraverso l'operare della Querini. Così in una lettera di a Diego Valeri del 13 giugno 1966 [...] ricorda fieramente che nel 1963 è stata organizzata la prima mostra internazionale di Arte Programmata in Italia (Nuova Tendenza 2) recensita da Chastel, Argan, Pevsner, Ragghianti, visitata da migliaia di persone, "mostra che ha determinato il settore di Arte programmata della Biennale del '64"» p. 18.

<sup>53</sup> *Nuove Tendenze 2*, editorial, «Marcatre», nos.4-5, March - April, Genoa, 1964, pp.81-90.

to Alviani whom cleared them through customs. Finally, Massironi was responsible for the cataloging and arrangement of works.

Owing to reduced organizational time, the catalogue was just printed for the opening, the 14<sup>th</sup> December, and the title from the plural became the singular *Nuova Tendenza 2*, but it had just been mentioned as such in a letter from Massironi in November 1963<sup>54</sup>. It was clear that the singular form imitated the French one *Nouvelle Tendence* and meant a specific line on the programmed research.

In fact, that variation was found, for example, in the Meštrović's text<sup>55</sup> although he used continuously the plural expression to indicate works and artists. His "sociological" analysis had a Marxist orientation, shared also by Massironi, as happened in Verucchio, and by Sergio Bettini<sup>56</sup> in the same Venice exhibition.

Meštrović aimed to demystify art, to submit it to an inevitable scientific approach. In that way, art would not be subjected to the trade - treated it as a commercialized myth - and would have had a technical role - the study of vision - in the industrial society.

Similarly ideas were close to GRAV's ones, which Meštrović had personally discussed in Winter 1962-1963, as announced in a letter to Apollonio<sup>57</sup>. To the letter was attached a short essay by means of Meštrović referred to his experience and hoped to publish in Italy. It was published, thanks to Apollonio and his efforts<sup>58</sup>, on the pages of «Arte Oggi» in November-December 1963. Entitled *Demitizzazione dell'arte* (demystification of art)<sup>59</sup>, which was complementary to the essay on the Venice exhibition, Meštrović recognized in the dadaist performance by Piero Manzoni, the principle of a new phase of the art, in which to the demystification would follow a progressive rationalization of works, according to the theory of perception.

As a consequence, the public, by means of the perceptive instability caused by works, would participate to the critical analysis of the society and at the same time the art teamwork would have reformed the relationship between artist and everyday life.

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<sup>54</sup> *Nuova Tendenza 2*, catalogue, December 14<sup>th</sup> – January 15<sup>th</sup> 1963, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Lombroso publisher, Venezia, 1963.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. M. Meštrović, *Analisi Sociologica di Nuova Tendenza*.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. S. Bettini, *Poetica di 'gruppi'*. «Mi sembra che Marx avesse messo il dito al centro del problema[...]. L'alienazione [...] non avviene nella fase produttiva del disegno; avviene, semmai, quando questo è degradato, a seguito di quella che Marx chiamava "rottura della totalità", per la quale l'uomo non appare più come portatore del processo produttivo, "ma è incorporato come una parte meccanizzata in un processo meccanico": cioè quando l'uomo diventa "la carcassa del tempo". [...] Al che penso che ogni scuola moderna di Design debba reagire, precisamente facendo leva sul "tempo personale" non solo di chi crea la forma, del disegnatore; ma anche della società cui si rivolge e cui serve».

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Chapter 4, note 84.

<sup>58</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Curators. Folder Umbro Apollonio. Unit 5. Letter from Apollonio to Giancarlo Vigorelli («Europa Letteraria») of February 19<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Apollonio to Lorenza Trucchi («Europa Letteraria») of March 29<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Apollonio to Guido Montana («Arte Oggi») of May 18<sup>th</sup> 1963.

<sup>59</sup> M. Meštrović, *Demitizzazione dell'arte*, «Arte oggi», no.18, October – December 1963, Roma, pp. 23-26.



The two essays by Meštrović had a perfect contiguity with what was written by Apollonio<sup>60</sup> on the *Nuova Tendenza 2* catalogue. He argued the art was not subjected to technical and science, but by them would have opposed a strict principle to the absolute freedom of Informel. Works of N and T groups, Mari, Alviani and Castellani seemed to apply technical principles masked by art objects, whose aesthetics, however, repeated experiences of the Concrete Art and Bauhaus functionalism.

On the contrary such revival was stigmatized by Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti<sup>61</sup>, at the end of the Venice exhibition. Indeed Ragghianti read a real danger in which could incur some of the artists at the *Nuova Tendenza 2*: to lose sight of the actual operative practice, to follow a trend of “demythologizing” and “demystify” without matching to innovative results. Similarly also Crispolti<sup>62</sup>, as Ragghianti said, claimed the above-mentioned artists risked being mere imitators of historical Constructivism. But Crispolti came to such considerations - on «Il Verri», a special issue titled *Dopo l'Informale* (Post the Informel) which tried to systematize the controversy occurred during the year - reversing the meaning of the historical analysis on a new programmed and kinetic research that Apollonio had published on «Quadrum».

§ *Constructivism gone back to Paris: Nouvelle Tendence and the development of an international movement in 1964.*

It was therefore clear that the critical argument by Crispolti and Ragghianti clashed with ones by Apollonio and Meštrović, but difficulties for the affirmation of participating artists at the *Nuova Tendenza 2*, came from the inside.

Meštrović, in fact, felt his vision as different from GRAV and mean to risk losing control of what was emerging as an artistic movement. In March 1964 at the presence of museum director Udo Kultermann was inaugurated the stage of Leverkusen, which in the German translation the title became *Neue Tendenzen*<sup>63</sup>, returning to the original plural and in continuity with the precedent of Zagreb, rather than with the Venetian one.

Dorazio, Bakić and Zero Group were readmitted and Meštrović<sup>64</sup> in his statement revealed his intention to consolidate a “new tendencies” movement. On the question of the comparison between new tendencies on the one hand and the European Nouveau Realisme and American

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<sup>60</sup> U. Apollonio, *Ipotesi intorno a una nuova linguistica*, in *Nuova Tendenza 2*, op. cit., 1963.

<sup>61</sup> C. L. Ragghianti, *Ieri oggi domani*, «Critica d'Arte», no.61, May, 1964, Florence, pp.3-11.

<sup>62</sup> E. Crispolti, *Neoconcretismo, arte programmata, lavoro di gruppo*, «Il Verri», op. cit., 1963, pp. 20-57.

<sup>63</sup> *Neue Tendenzen*, catalogue, March 13<sup>th</sup> – April 14<sup>th</sup> 1964, Stadt Museum Leverkusen, 1964.

<sup>64</sup> Archivio MSU, Zagreb. NT Found. NT 2. Meštrović\_tekst\_njemački/hrvaski. Seven typewritten pages.

Pop Art on the other hand, Meštrović denounced the alienation induced by mechanisms of the mass consumption, which resorted to industrial society.

The Nouveau Realisme and Pop Art albeit by an ironic and irreverent attitude, remained deeply reactionary artistic expression, not unlike what has been said on several occasions by Argan. According to Meštrović programmed works of new tendencies, applied an operation way included the concept of standard and they would have socialized the art, but at the same time preserved the rigor of asceticism by Mondrian. But rather than his metaphysical immobility, the project of new tendencies was realized in the ethical aim to built a new world by a continuous shaping.

However once again analysis of exchanges between art and ideology, which also seemed close to what was discussed in Verucchio, concealed that Meštrović attached less importance to GRAV's claims.

A month later, was organized the Parisian stage, in contrast with Leverkusen, was titled *Nouvelle Tendance - recherche continue*<sup>65</sup> at the Pavillon Marsan at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs: was the foundation act of the New Tendency movement.

In the introduction to the catalogue, in fact, Karl Gerstner<sup>66</sup>, former protagonist of the *Nove tendencije* since 1961, by a provocative tone, retraced the history of the event in Zagreb, recognizing the paternity but not the authority on the *Nouvelle Tendance* and claiming its more importance than ones in Venice and Leverkusen.

The exhibition arrived in Paris, reached the rank of the major international event and the same New Tendency movement became close to the sources of historical vanguards. Therefore, GRAV had a predominant role and alongside it exhibited Italian N and T groups, Maino, Alviani and Mari near Croatian Kristl, Picelj and Richter.

The New Tendency artists whom were developing as an effective “new avant-garde”, adopted a working way would expand design and Gestalt principles of objects in the environment. Some of exhibited works, as the *Strutturazione Pulsante* (pulsating structuring) by Colombo and the *Struttura sferica* (spherical structure) by Morellet, reached architectural dimensions (fig. 30).

At the same time, but on another occasion, Mari and Richter came to very similar solutions. Mari made a modular structure as an alveolus occupied an entire wall in the seat of the industry

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<sup>65</sup> *Nouvelle Tendance*, catalogue, April 17<sup>th</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup> 1964, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Palais du Louvre, Pavillon de Marsan, Paris, 1964.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. K. Gerstner, *Qu'est-ce que la Nouvelle Tendance ?*. «Une société qui n'a jamais été fondée. Une organisation sans status. Un programme non écrit auquel plus de cinquante artistes se sont engagés. [...] L'exposition de Zagreb fut pour eux une révélation. Le résultat de Zagreb : d'une appellation (légère) est issue une marque (fixe), d'une exposition (improvisée), un mouvement (organisé). [...] L'exposition de Zagreb s'est transformée en une Biennale dont la seconde manifestation a eu lieu en 1963. D'autres expositions ont été en Allemagne et en Italie, mais aucune, à ce jour, n'a atteint l'importance que revêt celle due Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Paris.»

SniaViscosa at the Torviscosa (fig. 31) town<sup>67</sup>. Richter attended the Milan Triennial in 1964 and conceived the Yugoslav pavilion not as volume, but as a structure rhythmically punctuated by vertical and parallel elements - different from the pavilion designed for *Italy 61* but mindful of the Palazzo del Lavoro by Luigi Nervi. The light filtered and met the movement of visitors, giving to the whole a kinetic dynamics (fig. 32)<sup>68</sup>.

Richter's pavilion, compared to the “outsize” works by Colombo, Morellet and Mari, was a visual-kinetic environment, however, tied to the contingency of the fair, was limited in its aesthetic potential.

In contrast the true environmental dimension of programmed works was presented by the *Labyrinth* which GRAV had created and just exhibited in Paris at the *Troisième Biennale d'art des jeunes*<sup>69</sup> in September 1963 (fig. 33)<sup>70</sup>. On the occasion, GRAV arranged works for an interaction with the public and the layout was designed to highlight that interaction would combine space, time and movement.

By a similar manner to scientific laboratory experiments, GRAV planned each section of the environment to submit viewers to certain stimuli. They passed, for example, from an environment with fixed structures for visual activation, to one with works in movement; to activate in the viewer a voluntary participation, by means of the manipulation of mechanical and bright components.

Finally, the audience was no longer the subject of contemplation, but became the object of experimentation, whose were measured psychic and physical reactions. Foreign art critics as Apollonio and Horvat- Pintarić<sup>71</sup> did not miss the goal of the innovative type of programming, and they popularized results in their respective countries.

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<sup>67</sup> E. Biasin, R. Canci e S. Perulli (a cura di), *Torviscosa: esemplarità di un progetto. Atti del Convegno di studi, Udine, 18 aprile 2003*, Forum, Udine, 2003.

<sup>68</sup> V. Horvat Pintarić, *Vjenceslav Richter*, Grafički Zavod Hrvatske, Zagreb, 1970, pp. 13-21.

<sup>69</sup> *Troisième Biennale des jeunes de Paris*, catalogue, September 28<sup>th</sup> – November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1963, Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, 1963.

<sup>70</sup> 1963 Paris Biennial - in the jury among foreign members was Umbro Apollonio - was an international testing ground for GRAV and Yugoslav artists were overseen by Vera Horvat Pintaric. Although Miroslav Šutej distinguished herself as a painter, his work was very far from other ones exhibited at first in the *Nove Tendencije 2* and then in the *Nuova Tendenza 2*. However we wish to suggest that the exhibition was a median point between a direct line linking Zagreb with Venice. The exhibition, therefore, was ahead in respect of next researches which would have developed environmental structures. In addition, the Paris Biennial planned a section devoted to the teamwork (“travaux d'équipe”) in contrast with had happened during the San Marino Biennial in which groups were awarded but caused a lot of polemic. Showing that in Italy the polemic was vain and spurious among the Italian art critics and artists.

<sup>71</sup> V. Horvat-Pintaric, *L' "abattoir" di Arroyo e altre proteste alla terza biennale dei giovani*, «L'Europa Letteraria», nos.22-23-24, July - December, Rome, 1964 «[...] questo gruppo è formato da pittori e scultori, non da neoconcretisti, che per la prima volta realizzano le loro ricerche in dimensioni architettoniche. Nel labirinto insieme degli spazi è presentata una ragionata diversificazione di compartimenti spaziali, in considerazione agli effetti ottici e all'attuazione percettiva dell'osservatore. E benché alcuni di questi labirinti ottici possano (per la semplificazione degli effetti ottici) richiamare alla mente associazioni con il Luna Park,[...], pur tuttavia la realizzazione di questo gruppo è la più rimarchevole tra quelle che sono state presentate in questa III Biennale parigina. Essa è la più vicina al risultato a cui si tende nella ricerca di nuove forme espressive dell'arte figurativa, al tentativo (appena iniziato) della creazione di un ambiente-opera [...] in cui si cambia sostanzialmente il rapporto osservatore opera. E questa prima significativa realizzazione collettiva [...] non

Similarly for the *Nouvelle Tendence* exhibition, GRAV made *Labyrinthe II*, while T Group reworked the idea of environmental programming<sup>72</sup>, emphasizing the technical aspect related to lighting. Anceschi presented the *Ambiente a shock luminosi* (Environment with light shock), Boriani installed the *Spazio+linee+luce+spettatori* (space + lines + light + audience) and finally Colombo returned to reflect on the relationship between visual space, environment and orthogonal grid by the *Strutturazione cinevisuale abitabile* (Kinetic visual habitable structure).

The new environmental dimension galvanized also the research of other Italian colleagues of the New Tendency that, when the Committee invited them to participate at the Venice Biennial in 1964, fell in the illusion they would collect an international success.

§ 1964 Venice Biennial as a testing ground for the New Tendency. From the machine myth to the jammed “pinball”.

The work of the Committee - composed of Giulio Carlo Argan, Gian Alberto Dell'Acqua, Guido Ballo, Alberto Viani and Ennio Molotti - for the Thirty-second Venice Biennale, began in early 1963.

At Argan's<sup>73</sup> suggestion, the committee decided to establish a section dedicated to the museums in the world, to allow the Italian and international public to know the activities of nineteen museums, European and American founded after the 1950, in the field of contemporary art. The proposal - instead of retrospective historical section<sup>74</sup>, which until then was hosted by the Biennial – had in parallel another one advanced by Argan, but for the Fourth Biennale of San Marino<sup>75</sup> and concerned the possibility to invite the directors of some museums with international reputation in the jury.

Argan's interest in the role of museums and their directors in major artistic events, was dictated in the belief that - as Herbert Read claimed in *Education through Art* - art could educate the society. Based on the idea, in early September 1963 the Committee of the Experts was set up with Giulio Carlo Argan, as president, Jacques Lassaigne, Kurt Martin, Roland Penrose, John

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ha alcun legame con il dilagante accademismo e il manierismo dei neoconcretisti del quadro da cavalletto» pp.232-235. Cf. V. Horvat Pintaric, *Kamo idu mladi umjetnici?*, «Večerni list», September 2<sup>nd</sup>, Zagreb, 1963, p. 6.

<sup>72</sup> L. Meloni, op. cit., 2004, pp. 137-154.

<sup>73</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Series Visual Art, Folder 1964, Unit 133 XXXII Biennale 1964. «Relazione della Segreteria Generale. Relazione di Gian Alberto Dell'Acqua, del 15-1-65». See [appendix](#).

<sup>74</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Series Visual Art, Folder 1964, Unit 134 XXXII Biennale 1964. Folder X. «Problemi riguardanti la XXXII Biennale da sottoporre al Consiglio di Amministrazione. Verbale Consiglio d'Amministrazione della Biennale di Venezia, 14 maggio. Bozza del 13 maggio». See [appendix](#).

<sup>75</sup> Nowadays we could claim that suggestion was due to the Herbert Read's strong influence over Argan. Read, in fact, affirmed museums had to educate people through art as shown his essay entitled *Education through art*, whose translation from English to Italian was made by Argan.

Rewald, Umbro Apollonio and Gian Alberto Dell'Acqua. The Committee decided hosted museum would have exposed from ten to twenty works. Among the museums in the former Yugoslavia, was called the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti of Zagreb<sup>76</sup>, founded in 1954.

In the Subcommittee for the Italian section were gathered Italo Siciliano, Gian Alberto Dell'Acqua, Pietro Zampetti, Afro Basaldella, Lucio Fontana and Luciano Minguzzi. For the first time, to members selected for the Venetian Autonomous Body, were associated Dorfles, Cesare Guidi and Maurizio Calvesi<sup>77</sup> directly with ministerial appointment, respectively, of the Ministry of Public Education and Ministry of Tourism<sup>78</sup>.

The work of the Subcommittee began on October the 24<sup>th</sup> - but not without suffering the events had just occurred during the Twelfth Congress in Verucchio - and continued several times until the meeting of December the 4<sup>th</sup> 1963, when was decided the amount and kind of artists had to be invited.

Alongside the artists established on the national scene, appeared the youngest came from three lines of the new figurative art, Italian Pop art and “programmed art”. Coming from the latter tendency engaged artists were Castellani, Alviani, Mari, N, T and Uno groups. When deciding on the name of the section, the subcommittee found itself divided between «*Mostra delle nuove tendenze*» (Exhibition of the new tendencies)<sup>79</sup> and the neutral *Gruppi di Opere* (group of art works), a title which prevailed, according to the minutes, «*for respect of the minority in the Committee*». Probably because of the controversy caused by the Fourth Biennial of San Marino, the growing international interest in the *Nove tendencije* and the most recent the *Nuova Tendenza 2* in Venice and the *Nouvelle Tendence* in Paris exhibitions, the Subcommittee did not consider appropriate to bring together under one name all tendencies that would have been exposed.

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<sup>76</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Series Visual Art, Folder 1964, Unit 124 XXXII Biennale 1964. Arte d'Oggi nei musei. Folder Galerija Suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, Directeur: Božo Bek. Check list of the exhibited works and their assurance.

<sup>77</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Series Visual Art, Folder 1964, Unit 134 XXXII Biennale 1964. Folder with note copies by the Subcommittee. «Telegramma del 24 settembre 1963, il Ministero per il Turismo nella persona del Ministro Folchi designa Maurizio Calvesi, quale rappresentante ministeriale. Appunto riservato per il Dottor Grassi».

<sup>78</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Series Visual Art, Folder 1964, Unit 134 XXXII Biennale 1964. Folder with note copies by the Subcommittee. Lettere di incarico per la sottocommissione. Letter from Dell'Acqua to the president Sicialiano of August 26<sup>th</sup> 1963. «[...] come d'accordo, Le unisco il promemoria da Lei richiesto per il Ministro Folchi con i due nomi, nell'ordine di preferenza, di Gillo Dorfles e di Maurizio Calvesi. Il Dorfles che è anche docente universitario, è un critico militante, ma non troppo “engagé”, e particolarmente versato nel settore delle più recenti ricerche e tenenze che, nella prossima Biennale, dovrebbero essere largamente documentate. La sua designazione sarebbe da noi la più gradita anche per ragioni di equilibrio dei vari indirizzi critici nell'ambito della Sottocommissione. Subordinatamente, proporrei il Professor Calvesi, più giovane di età, ma già affermatosi come critico ottimamente informato e di notevole valore».

<sup>79</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Series Visual Art, Folder 1964, Unit 133 XXXII Biennale 1964. Folder Relazione della Segreteria Generale. Note by Gian Alberto Dell'Acqua, of January 1<sup>st</sup> 1965. «[...]Il numero relativamente elevato dei partecipanti alla XXXII Biennale si deve, come nel 1958, alla presenza di opere, in massima parte di giovani scultori e pittori che, secondo il criterio della maggioranza della Sottocommissione, avrebbero dovuto documentare le più significative ed interessanti ricerche attuali, come la cosiddetta “Nuova figurazione”, il “neo-Dadaismo” e il realismo d'oggetto, l'arte programmata e, in genere, le tendenze “gestaltiche”. Il rispetto dell'opinione della minoranza della Sottocommissione non ha consentito che questo settore del Padiglione italiano fosse organicamente configurato e presentato come “Mostra delle nuove tendenze[...]».

A demonstration of how new tendencies were known from the committee members, was given by Gillo Dorfles<sup>80</sup> in a speech on «Marcatre» when he contrasted Pop Art to new tendencies, identifying the latter with the programmed, kinetic and visual research. Furthermore, it indicated in Italy “new tendencies” had a specific connotation postponed to artists from different European countries and specially from Yugoslavia.

In the 1964 Biennial, however, the victory of Robert Rauschenberg and the subsequent consecration of Pop Art and New Dada, despite the controversy they aroused, gave a setback to the movement of New Tendency.

Italian artists were not isolated because in the other halls were present research related to programmed art, such as Belgium, which introduced the mobile surface of Pol Bury, Brazil with the visual works of Almir Mavignier and Venezuela with the kinetic structures of Jesus Raphael Soto.

Moreover, the involvement of Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, in the section *Arte dei musei oggi* (Art from museums today), was supported by the Commission since many of its acquisitions took place near the *Nove tendencije*, as a consequence to acquire a great deal - the first in Europe - of kinetic, programmed and visual works of foreign and Croatian artists<sup>81</sup>.

The director Božo Bek<sup>82</sup>, received the invitation, confirmed the works of Alviani (fig. 34), Biasi, Costa, Dorazio, Mack, Massironi, Mavignier, Morellet, Le Parc, Piene, Talman, Bakić, Knifer and Picelj.

Along with the strong Croatian presence at the Venice Biennial, Vera Horvat-Pintarić<sup>83</sup> published an article, for the first time in Croatian-Italian bilingual format, setting out - five years after the previous one on «La Biennale di Venezia» - the view of Yugoslav contemporary art.

According to Horvat-Pintarić<sup>84</sup>, was fundamental the modernization in a New Concrete art key implemented by EXAT 51 Group and the work of Richter, Srnec and Picelj for the

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<sup>80</sup> G. Dorfles, *La crisi dell'informale e le Nuove Tendenze*, «Marcatre», nos. 8-9-10, July-August-September, Genoa, 1964. «La Pop-art dunque è una delle correnti più interessanti, che dominano il panorama artistico[...]. Un'altra delle correnti molto importanti ed in un senso del tutto opposto è quella delle così dette *nuove tendenze*, dell'arte programmata. Si tratta di opere ormai diffuse in tutto il mondo, dall'Argentina, all'Olanda, da Parigi alla Jugoslavia, [...]» p. 268.

<sup>81</sup> *XXXII Biennale d'arte internazionale di Venezia*, catalogue, June 20<sup>th</sup> – October 18<sup>th</sup>, Giardini del Castello, Venezia, Ente autonomo la Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 1964. Only two works coming from *Nove Tendencije* were exhibited: *Forme Luminose 5* (1963/64) by Bakić and *Probabilità del nero eguale sul bianco 4* (1961) by Julio Le Parc. Božo Bek to introduce Zagreb museum claimed «Durante il primo periodo della sua esistenza (1955-1960) la nostra Galleria si orientò prevalentemente verso l'opera degli artisti domiciliati a Zagabria [...]. Dopo[...]nel quadriennio seguente (1960-1964), la Galleria poté operare anche oltre i confini della città. [...]per la prima volta furono presentate le opere di [...] Getulio; nel 1961 è stata istituita una manifestazione biennale col nome di “Nove Tendencije” (Nuove Tendenze)» p.58-59.

<sup>82</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Series Visual Art, Folder 1964, Unit 124 XXXII Biennale 1964. *Arte d'Oggi nei musei*. Folder Galerija Suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, Directeur: Božo Bek. Letter from Božo Bek to Italo Siciliano of July 5<sup>th</sup> 1963.

<sup>83</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Curators. Folder Umbro Apollonio. Unit 5. Letter from Apollonio to Lorenza Trucchi of March 29<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Apollonio to Horvat-Pintaric, of September 13<sup>th</sup> 1963. Letter from Horvat Pintaric to Apollonio of September 20<sup>th</sup> 1963. See appendix.

construction of Yugoslav fair pavilions abroad, among which the most important was one for *Italy* 61.

Furthermore, to demonstrate the fortune of the programmed research in Yugoslavia, Horvat-Pintarić remembered those art pieces merged into the “biennial of programmed art” – considering the *Nove tendencije* exhibition - in Zagreb.

However, that deployment of forces was not sufficient to balance, in particular, the fate of N and T groups. Milan and Padua artists, whom were enthusiastic for the experience of *Nouvelle Tendence* in Paris, decided to reverse the relationship between work and exhibitiv space, trying to create the appropriate paths of perception, in rooms with soft lighting and directed the viewer to interact with visual and kinetic structures (figs. 35,36)<sup>85</sup>.

Several unfavorable factors, unfortunately, intervened: the space logistic structure was difficult to modify because it was designed to display works of painting and sculpture in the traditional sense. To each group were then assigned about thirteen meters<sup>86</sup> and walls had almost no electrical outlets to power kinetic works.

In addition, the lighting of the rooms had been designed to give maximum brightness to the works but prevented - in the case of visual objects by groups, Mari and Alviani – to adjust exactly the light sources and the result was disastrous for the image of New Tendency.

The national press wrote inferences and serious attempts to understand the programmed works. Paolo Rizzi<sup>87</sup>, for example, testified in favor of groups on the precariousness of their assigned spaces. Others described the rooms as “witches houses” in which they felt noises and squeaks, which in reality were caused by electric and craft motors used in kinetic works such as

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<sup>84</sup> V. Horvat-Pintaric, *Suvremena Jugoslavenska Umjetnost/Arte Contemporanea Jugoslava*, «Civiltà delle Macchine», no.3, May-June, Rome, 1964. «[...] Nije stoga slučajno da se u Zagrebu već četiri godine održava i međunarodni Biennale programirane umjetnosti.[...]» p.41.

<sup>85</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Series Visual Art, Folder 1964, Unit 122, Folder T Group. Project for T Group's room. «*Parete U = Fermare la parete U che è alta fino al velario al piede della scala. Parete B = Costruire la parete B ortogonale ad U e della stessa altezza. B sia di 60 cm e distante da U cm.10 (nel caso difficoltà tecniche non permettessero detta fessura, la stessa può essere tralasciata e risulterà quindi B un intero di cm.70). Piano C = Piano in legno verniciato che da B va alla parete di fondo alto da terra cm.80. Parete A= Si desidera che dalla parete S si prosegua con lo zoccolo nero alto c. 220 sulla parete A fino alla porta di uscita (indicazioni e disegno per i Gruppo T di Gabriele De Vecchi)*». Also N Group projected its room but nowadays we can see only a reconstruction of it dated on 1974 and published in I. Mussa (op. cit. 1976, p. 113). Recently, a similar reproduction is edited by Chiara Costa, cf. *Massironi, la dinamica dell'oggetto*, op. cit., 2008, pp. 16-21.

<sup>86</sup> ASAC archive, Venice, Historical Found. Series Visual Art, Folder 1964, Unit 122, Folder Massironi, Letter from Gian Alberto Dell'Acqua to Massironi of April 9<sup>th</sup> 1964. «Ho il piacere di richiamarmi all'invito che è stato rivolto al Gruppo N dal Presidente della Biennale, nonché all'adesione da Lei data, a nome del Gruppo stesso, a tale invito per comunicarle che lo spazio che si prevede di assegnare alla partecipazione del Gruppo sarà di metri 13 circa»

<sup>87</sup> P. Rizzi, *La XXXII Biennale d'Arte di Venezia*, «L'osservatore politico letterario», no.9, September, Bologna, 1964 «[...]L'altra grossa novità della Biennale è stata l'arte programmata. Ma non si è gridato allo scandalo, questa volta. Anzi, l'entrata alla Biennale delle macchinette elettriche è stata in genere accolta con una benigna accondiscendenza. Persino i critici ultraconservatori [...] hanno ammesso che, tutto sommato, le ricerche visuali dell'arte programmata sono ben più serie di tante altre furberie manieristiche. Veramente – qualcuno ha aggiunto – la sede più adatta era la Triennale e non la Biennale... [...] Gli stessi gestaltici si sono sentiti un po' a disagio, e non soltanto per via dell'angolino che è stato loro riservato o per carenza di impianti elettrici o per la difficoltà di usufruire di ambienti oscuri: c'era qualcosa che li separava nettamente dal resto della Biennale: esso così rigorosamente razionalistici, gli altri così presi dalla frenesia dell'irrazionale.[...]» pp. 58-78.

those of Grazia Varisco, where she managed to combine the orthogonal grid by Mondrian with the movement of the optical-light and which would have yielded a different effect by means of an appropriate technology.

Finally, ironic colorings accentuated the disdain of visitors<sup>88</sup>, or the awkward image of the artists of groups N and T that during the inauguration were trying to repair various malfunctions<sup>89</sup>. By contrast, fortunately, was the reaction of the specialized press, such as Guido Ballo<sup>90</sup> on «D'ars Agency», analyzed the relationship between the poetic present in programmed works and their continuity with ones of Futurism and Neoplasticism by De Stijl, doubting, however, their true anonymity, because each work was accompanied by the label with on the artist's name.

Marcello Venturoli<sup>91</sup> opposed the programmed and new dadaist works to Informal ones, represented by sculptors such as Dino Basaldella and Ettore Colla, pointing out that Basaldella and Colla maintained an humanistic attitude than others. That speech was also supported by Dorfles<sup>92</sup> on «Aut Aut», whom argued that the relationship between technology and human activity, the importance of artistic creation divorced from practical ends such as the design object. He disagreed with mathematical operations by Alviani and Mari whom thought that it was a mediocre trick to enhance the science to the detriment of art.

The above interventions, ultimately, were among the most acute and original compared to a wide range of publications that did not offer any new perspective to the critical debate, compared to how it was set after the Fourth Biennial of San Marino. Indeed many articles also written by prominent critics, seemed hackneyed and sclerotic than what stated in other forums<sup>93</sup>.

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<sup>88</sup> N. Salvalaggio, *La Biennale proibita. L'arte che prende a schiaffi*, «Il Giorno», June 27<sup>th</sup>, Milan, 1964. «[...] quel che colpisce il visitatore è l'arte cinetica, o in movimento. [...] C'è "lo specchio rotante per far svenire l'amante": non lo puoi guardare per più di cinque secondi, se no crolli per terra; il quadro con le bisce che muovono; l'armadio con la bronchite; [...] anche più patetico il giudizio di Bruno Casagrande, guardiano del padiglione italiano: "certe giornate la gente è così arrabbiata, che ho paura di prendere un sacco di botte [...]».

<sup>89</sup> R. Pisu, *Tutto è perduto, anche il pudore*, «A.B.C.», June 28<sup>th</sup>, Milan, 1964. «Nel padiglione italiano della Biennale espongono gli artisti, tutti giovanissimi, del Gruppo N di Padova e del Gruppo T di Milano. Le sale a loro dedicate sono buie, sembra di entrare nella "casa delle streghe", alle giostre: ti colpiscono strani suoni, cigolii metallici, sospiri di sfiatato, rumori penetranti, ossessivi.»; R. Biasion, *Questa Biennale piacerebbe ai bambini*, in *Oggi*, 2 luglio 1964. L'autore riguardo alle opere scrive che «[...] si tratta, in sostanza, di una cinetica realizzata con piccoli motori (a quanto sembra dal funzionamento precario, nei tre giorni della vernice abbiamo visto i ragazzi dei gruppi sempre intenti a riparazioni. Strano, quando macchine ben più grosse e complicate girano senza danni intorno alla terra) che fa pensare un po' ad esperimenti scolastici di fisica e un po' al padiglione fieristico delle meraviglie della tecnica[...]».

<sup>90</sup> G. Ballo, *Proposte nuove alla XXXII Biennale di Venezia*, «D'ars Agency», April 30<sup>th</sup> – June 20<sup>th</sup>, Milan, 1964, pp. 37-39.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. M. Venturoli, *Una panoramica della Biennale di Venezia*, pp. 41-51.

<sup>92</sup> G. Dorfles, *Tecnica e intenzionalità alla XXXII Biennale*, «Aut Aut», September, Milan, 1964, pp.53-61.

<sup>93</sup> L. Trucchi, *Il Bilancio di una decade*, «L'Europa Letteraria», May 29<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1964. «[...] lo zelo classificatorio e pseudo storicistico seguita a caratterizzare la nostra critica, sempre più dell'avviso che pitture e sculture siano "oggetti di fruizione a rapido consumo" e, di conseguenza, impegnata, di stagione in stagione e persino di mese in mese, ad un lungo lavoro di continua e logora denuncia o soltanto di ferreo schedamento anagrafico, col rischio, è ovvio, di denunciare e di schedare tra i "vivi" anche i "nati morti". Lavoro ingrato e duro, mal ripagato dalla crescente ostilità e diffidenza degli artisti, ormai coalizzati contro questi precari metodi catastali, che finiscono col far parere le loro opere sempre o troppo premature o troppo ritardate rispetto al dogmatico riferimento di chissà quale utopistico Greenwich» pp. 112-113.



§ 3. *Umbro Apollonio's growing involvement with the international critique. The Nova Tendencija axis strengthens between Venice and Zagreb.*

During 1964 Umbro Apollonio's parable<sup>94</sup> as a supporter of New Tendency<sup>95</sup>, reached the climax, because the movement after the *Nouvelle Tendence* exhibition began to gather a large following among the artists. The general interest in New Tendency encouraged several artists to ask for a "charter" - as Apollonio made<sup>96</sup> - and in Italy the Trieste critic intervened with some essays on «Civiltà delle Macchine» and «L'Evento». Moreover, in parallel to the Venice Biennial, oversaw the organization of the Fourteenth Avezano Award, that Apollonio hoped to turn into a national importance event.

On «Civiltà delle macchine»<sup>97</sup>, Apollonio did not corroborated different tendencies, but upheld New Tendency as an artistic movement had a historical continuity and greater adherence to matters raised by the relationship between science and society. New Tendency found its own historical continuity in the inter-war period abstract-geometric research, but Apollonio claimed its centre radiated from the East, from countries like Yugoslavia where the Russian revolutionary Constructivism tradition had had a fortune independent of what happened in Paris or New York.

Apollonio as Horvat-Pintarić<sup>98</sup> supported a direct membership of programmed works at New Tendency, whose artists were divided into "old" as Bruno Munari and Nicolas Schöffer and "young" as Bakić, von Graevenitz, Kristl, Morellet and Picelj; and were approached by Castellani, Srnec and Šutej. However, was a further distinction between a search was stylistic - in Alviani, Mari, Mavignier, Richter and Soto – and one was linguistics - in GRAV and N Group.

According Apollonio, as he wrote on «Evento»<sup>99</sup>, to work against New Tendency in 1964 Venice Biennial was a misunderstanding about real activities of artists, because they did not simply took advantage of a industrial technology or made a test of the visual phenomena and projects to be developed. New Tendency in Italy, unfortunately it was making use of a "fragmented tradition" without a continuity with a modern Constructivist tradition; because of, the

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<sup>94</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 10. Letter from Apollonio of March 29<sup>th</sup> 1964. We should remember that Almir Mavignier put himself up to design the poster for 1964 Venice Biennial. «Carissimo Mavignier, mi dispiace assai, ma per quest'anno non c'è più nulla da fare con il manifesto per la Biennale. Bisognerà che ritentiamo nel 1966./Complimenti per l'invito a 'documenta'. Bene!/>»

<sup>95</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 8. In 1964 by correspondence Apollonio and Crispolti argued each other about their different critic views. Letter from Apollonio to Crispolti of May 25<sup>th</sup> 1964. Reply Letter from Crispolti to Apollonio of June 12<sup>th</sup> 1964. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>96</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 8. Letter from Herman De Vries to Apollonio of October 20<sup>th</sup> 1964. Replay from Apollonio of October 27<sup>th</sup> 1963. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>97</sup> U. Apollonio, *Ricerche di strutturazione dinamica della percezione visiva*, «Civiltà delle Macchine», no.4, July-August, Rome, 1964, pp. 45-52.

<sup>98</sup> Cf., note 84.

<sup>99</sup> U. Apollonio, *Nuova Tendenza*, «Evento», nos.17-18, September, Venice, 1964. in U. Apollonio, op. cit., 1979, pp. 143-148.

programmed works were presented in Italian pavilion by a conventional and inappropriate way: on one side hanging as if they were “paintings”, on the other providing environments in respect of intentions, seemed a false and mysterious wonder cabinets.

Apollonio suggested, recalling the experience had took in Paris, to bring on the architectural scale the programmed research but by an absolute rigor and scientific precision. He did not just suggest improvements to the way of setting up programmed works, but also sought to implement its recommendations.

The opportunity came when he was appointed organizer of the Fifteenth Avezzano Award. Apollonio, with Giuseppe Gatt and Giorgio Tempesti - the representative of the Provincial Body of Avezzano - decided to characterize the event as a New Tendency exhibition. Apollonio, a mediator between artists and the Award<sup>100</sup>, contacted N and T groups, and established an homage to Munari<sup>101</sup>. Unfortunately Munari, which would have give the event an international recognition, did not find appropriate conditions for its participation<sup>102</sup> and therefore Apollonio contacted Luigi Veronesi for his critic tie with the historical continuity of Italian geometric abstraction between the two wars.

*Strutture di Visione* (Vision Structures) – Fifteenth Avezzano Award<sup>103</sup> formed two polarities, an historical one by Veronesi, Mario Radice and Alberto Magnelli, the other current by works of New Tendency (Atoma, N, Experimental P, T, Time 3, V Rimini and One groups, Alviani, Mari, Santoro and Scheggi), which adds movies by Munari.

Also inserted researches on the monochrome painting and sculpture as programmed structures. Among the “veterans” called Antonio Calderara, Carmelo Cappello, Cannilla Franco, Mario Nigro and Antonio Virduzzo and among others, whom had taken up the Concrete painting, the less known Liliana Caraian, Salvatore D'Eugenio and Turi Simeti. That facility, defined academic, had the effect of confirming the accusation to artists to be followers of the historical avant-garde moved by art critics as Crispolti.

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<sup>100</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 6. Letter from Tempesti to Apollonio of July 7<sup>th</sup> 1964. «Egregio Professore, [...] Ho già provveduto ad inviare l’invito a Mario Nigro[...]. Per quanto riguarda Guarnieri, è stato già da tempo invitato con il Gruppo Tempo 3. [...]Munari mi ha scritto che manderà alcuni suoi films. Comunque, se Lei riuscisse ad ottenere che inviasse qualche opera sarebbe meglio. Veronesi ha aderito entusiasticamente; Radice, Reggiani, Bonfanti e Magnelli (sui quali sono perfettamente d’accordo) sarebbe bene che fossero interpellati direttamente da Lei. [...]Con Getulio, Mari e i Gruppi N e T ho parlato a Venezia e siamo d’accordo».

<sup>101</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 6. Letter from Gatt to Apollonio of May 8<sup>th</sup> 1964. Letter from Apollonio to Gatt, of May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1964. Letter from Tempesti to Apollonio of May 29<sup>th</sup> 1964. See appendix.

<sup>102</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 6. Letter from Apollonio to Munari of June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1964. Replay from Munari to Apollonio of June 16<sup>th</sup> 1964. Letter from Apollonio to Munari of June 30<sup>th</sup> 1964. See appendix.

<sup>103</sup> *Strutture di Visione, XV Premio Avezzano*, August, 1964, Palazzo Torlonia, Avezzano, Edizioni dell’Ateneo, Roma, 1964.

The exhibition, however, was inaugurated in August 1964, but as New Tendency received at the Biennial a modest attention, did not permit to *Strutture di Visione – XV Premio Avezzano* to have a greater resonance. In fact, the promotional strategy explained in the catalogue by Giuseppe Gatt was to put the exhibition in continuity with the Fourth Biennial of San Marino and the contemporary Venice Biennial. Despite the results, the catalogue written by Gatt and Apollonio was the first anthology of critic essays retraced the evolution of New Tendency's theories – from the Milan *Arte programmata* to the Venice *Nuova Tendenza 2* exhibitions.

In Summer 1964, then, to complete Italian New Tendency's misfortune, after the Biennial and Avezzano Award, was held in September the *XIII Convegno di artisti, critici e studiosi d'arte* (Thirteenth conference of artists, critics and scholars of art) which was dedicated to technology and ideology<sup>104</sup> exchanges. In Rimini, where works held from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> September, made speeches several famous philosophers such as Sigfried Giedion or younger architects and designers such as Ettore Sottsass jr. and Vjenceslav Richter.

However, the amount result was disappointed because, as reported by Argan<sup>105</sup>, was passed over what was the role of the art between technology and ideology. To the congress participated also a large group of artists and Yugoslav critics whom had a crucial role in defining the fate of New Tendency in Italy.

Argan, in fact, asserted the interest of Yugoslavs fellow to the question of technique, did not imply being incorporated into the system, but for them was no urgency of an ideological commitment, because it mostly has been “satisfied”.

Argan, also, borrowed “integrated” from the distinction made by Eco in *Apocalittici e integrati*<sup>106</sup>, and contrasted it with the word “apocalyptic” defined a denial of technology and at the same time an irrational ideological commitment. According to Argan there was no separation between technical progress and the ideological development of society since the first term of the comparison was irreversible.

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<sup>104</sup> The president was Argan and the Committee was composed of Apollonio, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Lucio Fontana and Ettore Sottsass jr. Among guests were scholars like Guy Habasque, Pierre Restany, Frank G., Popper, Assunto Rosario, Ballo Guido, Bettini Sergio, Alberto Boatto, Brandi Cesare, Palma Bucarelli, Maurizio Calvesi, Celant Germano, Enrico Crispolti, Gillo Dorfles, Giuseppe Gatt, Filiberto Menna, Lara Vinca Masini, Giuseppe Mazzariol, Luigi Pareyson, Nello Ponente, Italo Tommassoni, Lea Vergine, Yugoslav Božo Bek, Zoran Krziznik, Matko Meštrović, Vera Horvat Pintaric. Among artists, architects and designers were Julio Le Parc ( GRAV), Almir Mavigner, Getulio Alviani, Gianni Colombo (T Group), Manfredo Massironi (N Group), Achille Pace (Uno Group), Bruno Munari, Piero Dorazio, Emilio Vedova, Max Bill, Konrad Wachsmann, Tomas Maldonado, Enzo Mari, Pier Luigi Nervi, Pinin Farina and Croatian Vjenceslav Richter.

<sup>105</sup> G.C. Argan, *Tecnica e ideologia in un Convegno a Rimini*, «Le Arti», no.10, October, Milan, 1964, pp.32-33

<sup>106</sup> U. Eco, *Apocalittici e integrati*, Bompiani, Milano, 1964. «L'Apocalisse è un'ossessione del *dissenter*, l'integrazione è la realtà concreta di coloro che non dissentono. L'immagine dell'Apocalisse va rilevata dalla lettura dei testi sulla cultura di massa; l'immagine dell'integrazione emerge dalla lettura dei testi della cultura di massa. Ma sino a che punto non ci troviamo di fronte a due facce di uno stesso problema e i testi apocalittici non rappresentano il più sofisticato prodotto che ci offra al consumo di massa? Allora la formula “Apocalittici e integrati” non soffrirebbe l'opposizione tra due atteggiamenti ma le predicazione di due aggettivi complementari, adattabili agli stessi produttori di una “critica popolare della cultura popolare”» p. 6.

And as a result it had not to follow the bad conscience of the apocalyptic, but to concretized the rationality of history by means of a technical aesthetic of the art. Only in that way the art could aspire to take part in the development of operational and productive techniques of the modern world («*aspirare a intervenire nello sviluppo delle tecniche operative e produttive del mondo moderno*»).

In that regard Gatt<sup>107</sup> by an article written just after the congress, untitled *Arte, tecnica e ideologia* (art, technique and ideology), took up the Argan's distinction between the Gestalt art - wanted to take directly part in the industry to change it by the inside - and the Informel one and New Dada - struggled against industry and illustrated its dangers.

To regulate the relationship between Gestalt art and industry would have taken over the ideology, which would humanized production processes, in contrast to New Dada and its extreme right-wing derived Pop Art in which would have been absent.

It was clear that Gatt sought to overturn, at least on paper, results of the Venice Biennial, but paradoxically its position was shared also by Massironi<sup>108</sup> whom, on behalf of the dissolved N Group, intervened in Rimini denouncing the work of critics like Gatt.

According to the Padua artist, critics from San Marino from 1963 onwards misrepresented the team work, passing it off as real poetic, forgetting to reward work and not the ideological militancy.

Massironi<sup>109</sup> had just expressed his own disappointment in December 1963 during the conference held at the National Institute of Architecture, organized by Bruno Zevi. On both occasions, the former Group N artist, claimed his own art form was going toward a danger which was not represented by the technological applications, but rather by “bracketing” of the object created to foster an alleged poetic or ideological commitment of artists. The essential point was they were losing the real value of N Group's artistic operation, opposing to the debased Informel painting, it wanted to professionalize their own activities.

Massironi, in fact, considered the artist profession corresponded to worker one in the factory and would have been revolutionary only acquiring a “revolutionary technology” would give the object a real ideological charge. Massironi not only realized the danger toward was going

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<sup>107</sup> G. Gatt, *Arte, tecnica e ideologia*, «Il Sestante Letterario», no. 5, September–October, Padua, 1964, pp. 3-6. «[...] esiste attualmente una forma d'arte a carattere attivo e positivo e che mira esattamente a penetrare nei processi produttivi dell'industria per tentarne, quanto meno, un condizionamento dall'interno che non sia solo mera critica e denuncia, ma concreta disponibilità di alternative e di dialogo con un settore, quello della tecnica, che fino a ieri sembrava irrimediabilmente separato dall'uomo» p.6.

<sup>108</sup> M. Massironi, *Tecnica e ideologia, Intervento al XIII Convegno Internazionale artisti, critici e studiosi d'arte, Verucchio, 1964*, in V. Feierabend, L. Meloni, op. cit., 2009, pp.350-352.

<sup>109</sup> M. Massironi, *Comunicazione tenuta al Convegno “La ricerca estetica di gruppo, Istituto Nazionale di Architettura, Roma, 2 dicembre 1963*, «Marcatre», nos.4-5, March-April, Genoa, 1964, pp.10-12.

New Tendency, but his speech foreshadowed what would come next year in Zagreb: an unbridgeable gap between artists and art critics and the exaltation of a fictitious and mystifying ideology.

§ 1965. *An unique art movement for a single exhibition. Nova Tendencija 3, Enzo Mari, multiplied objects and the design of the industrial product.*

On a letter dated on January the 15<sup>th</sup> 1965<sup>110</sup>, Enzo Mari showed to Apollonio the main results of his visit to Zagreb during the Winter 1964, when discussed with Meštrović, Bek, Putar and Richter the planning for the future exhibition in Zagreb.

Mari had just developed in November 1964 the purpose of an exhibition would deepen achievements of the *Nuova Tendenza 2* in Venice and the *Nouvelle Tendence* in Paris. The growing importance of the Milan artist in New Tendency movement pushed to reconsider in terms of research, modeled on the Industrial Design planning, the works made according to the criteria of a serial production.

It was no longer to create multiple, as in the early Sixties, but to transform the artist into a professional activity within the dimension of industrial production; in addition works became the prototypes of objects reproducible with a low economic impact and easily repairable, by means to modularity of switchable each other single elements.

Mari, a few months earlier, had just expressed similar ideas in the Avezzano exhibition catalogue<sup>111</sup>, in which he argued works such “standardized” would open the art to a genuine democratization process, since the viewer would be transformed himself into a visual operator.

Apollonio’s reply<sup>112</sup>, however, was negative, because he felt that the way would have been soon impractical and would have prevented the artist to choose freely the materials - which would have been only industrial ones - and to show their “fantasy” was the characteristic differed him from the engineer and technician.

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<sup>110</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 7. Letter from Enzo Mari to Apollonio of January 1<sup>st</sup> 1965. See appendix.

<sup>111</sup> E. Mari, *Libertà nell'ordine*, in *Struttura di visione*, op. cit., 1964. «[...] sorge la necessità di trovare metodi di progettazione e composizione, strettamente legati al linguaggio e ai problemi del nostro tempo, vincolati da norme [...]. Una delle necessità principali della nostra civiltà plastica è quella della progettazione con elementi prefabbricati modulari. Questa necessità è ritenuta da molti un pericolo in quanto sembra diminuire quelle possibilità espressive proprie dell'architettura, del design e delle arti plastiche. [...]ricercare, sperimentare ed esemplificare metodi di programmazione di parti prefabbricate modulari, atti a divenire uno strumento comune per l'organizzazione di quegli aspetti plastici che escono dalla progettazione propriamente tecnica. Trovare una serie di canoni o programmi entro cui sia possibile operare con la massima libertà compositiva. Enzo Mari, 1964» p.54.

<sup>112</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 7. Reply letter from Apollonio to Enzo Mari of February 6<sup>th</sup> 1965. See appendix.

Despite the hesitations, Apollonio<sup>113</sup> decided to participate in the debate would have took place during the event, when - on a model similar to the Verucchio meetings - would have encountered art critics and artists.

Accepted by organizers, the suggestion by Mari became the announcement of a competitive exam to participate to the exhibition entitled *Nova Tendencija 3*. The title in the singular showed to be an exhibition of New Tendency movement, but with a progressive number, to preserve continuity with the previous ones.

The recruitment in Italy - to follow democratic ideals - did not happen through galleries, but through the publication of the notice in the magazine «Domus»<sup>114</sup>, where for some time works of Mari, Munari, Alviani and N and T groups, were the focus of editorial and critical interventions aimed to explain them to a specialized audience and interested in design, architecture, urbanism, and visual arts.

The notice stated were three sections in which artists and art critics could have attend one or all. The first was devoted to a retrospective exhibition on the *Nove tendencije* or to interventions of historical and critic character about objects presented, a second on the current involvement with the work of object or theoretical order, and a third aimed to a premium for the production in series of a visual object, which would have been achieved in Fifty five specimens by Danese company in Milano. However, the purpose of the announcement, as Apollonio warned, were confused and would have caused not a few misunderstandings during the organizational phase.

By the correspondence<sup>115</sup> occurred between the secretariat of the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti and invited or selected artists showed the organization was began in January and ended in July 1965.

Among the Italian artists, the “veterans” were called in January, as T Group or the dissolved N Group participated by Biasi<sup>116</sup>, Massironi (fig. 37) and Landi<sup>117</sup>. Italian art critics invited to participate with their own paper came from Rome academia, except Apollonio. Giulio Carlo Argan involved also the A.I.C.A. (International Association of Art Critics), thus giving more

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<sup>113</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 7/ MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3 br.89 od1 do 250. Letter from Apollonio to Secretariat of *Nova Tendencija 3* of February 19<sup>th</sup> 1965. Replay letter from Boris Kelemen and Matko Meštrović of March 17<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>114</sup> *Bando di concorso per Nova Tendencija 3*, editorial, «Domus» no.423, February, Milan, 1965, pp. 2, 56.

<sup>115</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3 br.89 od 1 do 250 – od 251 do 699, 1965. The correspondence developed in 1965 from January to July; in appendix were quoted only the letters have a very historic interest. From that point we indicate the autor, letter and date only for documents were in the same folder.

<sup>116</sup> Letter from Biasi of March 1<sup>st</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>117</sup> Nowadays in MSU archive we found only a type letter invitation. MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found. Folder NT3 Posiv na NT3. «Messieurs, En nous adressant à vous la prière de prendre part à la 3ème manifestation Nouvelle Tendence à Zagreb, [...]. Vous êtes prié également de mettre au courant des idée set de l’organisation de la manifestation Nouvelle Tendence, tout ceux qui, à votre avis, pourraient être intéressés dans ce sens. Le président du comité organisateur, Božo Bek».

prestige to the event<sup>118</sup>. The suggestion of Palma Bucarelli, for a New Tendency museum theory, had broad support in the Zagreb entourage and Božo Bek<sup>119</sup> wanted to involve for a next conference on a similar topic, the directors of museums in Beograd and Ljubljana. Giuseppe Gatt and the young researcher Elisa Debenedetti, finally, coordinated their participation with Argan, in accord with Enzo Mari.

Mari's role, also, was not only theoretical, but suggested the participation of MID Group – Movimento Immagine Dimensione -Motion Picture Dimension- (Antonio Barrese, Alfonso Grassi, Gianfranco Laminarca and Alberto Marangoni), Ivanohe Trivulzio and the architect Nanda Vigo (fig. 38); to Mari were turning V Group of Rimini (Giorgio Benzi, Flavio Casadei, Gerardo F. Dasi, Pino Parini, Giulio Tedioli, Mario Scarpa, Antonio Valmaggi, Aldo Villani) and Cybernetics Group (Benzi, Augusto Betti, Casadei, Dasi Vittorio D'Augusta, Tedioli, Galliano Ricci, Mario Valentini), the Austrian artist Erwin Thorn, the philosopher Paolo Bonaiuto and scholars such as Germano Beringheli and Gianni Stirone.

Rapidly, up to April 1965, requests for participation flooded largely in Zagreb. The researcher Lara Vinca Masini and artists Marina Apollonio, Dada Maino, Giovanni Pizzo and Lucia Luciano, asked for participate after knowing of the notice from other ways. Some tried to join over the specified time frame, as Turi Simeti and Eronda (Mario de Dona), first rejected and then accepted, and Paolo Scheggi and Getulio Alviani (figs. 39, 40), whom at that time shared a studio in Milan, Lea Vergine and Bruno Munari, whose involvement for the films that had just screened in Avezzano, remained in doubt up to September 1965<sup>120</sup>. Finally, Uno Group (reduced to only Carrino, Frascà and Uncini) was accepted without reservations but was unable to attend, since did not return within the time limit expire<sup>121</sup>. By the 18<sup>th</sup> March closed the first round of selections.

A second session of the organizing committee drew up a list of *refusées*: were less-known artists such as Cesare Casati and Renato Vanzelli, Pievani Dietelmo, Luciano Fabro, Saverio D'Eugenio, or the most famous Mario Nigro, George Bompadre whose works were not considered close to New Tendency. Nino Calos<sup>122</sup> was first invited and then - as he had complained to

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<sup>118</sup> Letter from G. C. Argan to M. Mestrovic of February 17<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>119</sup> Letter from Božo Bek to Palma Bucarell of March 18<sup>th</sup> 1965; br.89 od251 do 699. Letter from Božo Bek to Miodrag B. Protić, the director of the Moderna Galerija in Beograd and Zoran Kržišnik, the director of the Moderna Galerija in Lubiana, of May 11<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>120</sup> Letter from Bruno Munari of April 11<sup>th</sup> 1965. Letter from Bek to Munari of September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1965. Replay letter from Munari of September 8<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>121</sup> Letter from Uno Group (Carrino, Frascà, Uncini) to Meštrović of April 8<sup>th</sup> 1965. Replay letter from Kelemen and Meštrović of Aprile 14<sup>th</sup> 1965. Letter from Uno Group to Meštrović of April 21<sup>st</sup> 1965. Letter of engagement from Kelemen and Meštrović April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1965. Reply letter from Uno Group to Meštrović of May 4<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>122</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Nino Calos to Apollonio of April 10<sup>th</sup> 1965. Letter from Kelemen March 29<sup>th</sup> 1965 ( n.01-89/99). [See appendix.](#)

Apollonio - refused. Giancarlo Politi, whose ideas of “art to sale at the supermarket” did not meet the favor of organizers and finally Beringheli and Stirone were rejected because they had not complied with the resolutions drafted early.

The invited Yugoslav artists were Čanković Ivan, Ivan Čžimek, Juraj Dobrović, Davor Grunwald, Koloman Novak, Orbi Fedora, Ivan Picelj and Vjenceslav Richter (figs. 41-44).

Among the foreign intellectuals were Frank Popper, Abraham Moles and François Molnar. For the first time there were the British artist Bridget Riley and the American Frank Malina and Anonima Group (Ernst Benkert, Francis Hewitt and Ed Mieczkowski) and at last the Moscow artists from Dvizenje Group<sup>123</sup> - Movement Group - (Lev Nusberg, Francisco Infante, Anatoly Krivchikov, Vladimir Scherbakov, Viktor Stepanov, Mikhail Dorokhov). From GRAV was only Morellet, while from Group Zero returned after the purge and the “self-criticism”, Otto Piene. Around May 10<sup>th</sup> notification almost all forms of the works and membership came to Zagreb.

The high number of acceptances foreshadowed an impressive size exhibition, with a relative majority represented by Italians. In fact of the Twenty three critical essays in the catalogue, eight were by Italians, five by Croatians, and the remaining by other foreign scholars. Among the exhibiting artists, over a whole of ninety-six, between singles and groups, thirty four were Italians. Considering the original idea and part of the organization was thanks to Enzo Mari, the show was presented as an Italian-Croatian manifestation, where of course the substance of its success was mainly of the Committee of Zagreb composed by Meštrović, Putar, Bek , Zdenko Munk, Boris Kelemen and Richter.

Consequently, the rooms of the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti were no longer sufficient and participation was expanded to the Muzej za umjetnosti i obrt, directed by Munk, and to the Institut za industrijski dizajn (Institute for Industrial Design), directed by Richter<sup>124</sup>.

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<sup>123</sup> Letter from Kelemen and Meštrović to Lev Nusberg of May 5<sup>th</sup> 1965. See appendix.

<sup>124</sup> Report bill signed by Božo Bek, Zdenko Munk and Vjenceslav Richter and sent to Republički sekretarijat so kulturu FOND ZA UNAPREŽENJE KULTURNIH DJELATNOSTI, Zagreb on April 10<sup>th</sup> 1965. The report stated that amount would have been of 9,400,000 dinars. By economical reform of 1965 and a devaluation against dinar as 66,6 per cent, 1 dollar was exchanged for 1250 dinars and as a consequence in 1965 the cost was circa 4,690,000 lire.



§ *The Rise and Fall of New Tendency. Misunderstanding, mistrust and ambiguity among artists, art critics and art scholars.*

The *Nova Tendencija 3*<sup>125</sup> inauguration occurred on August the 13<sup>th</sup>, which was just followed by the Congress of Brezovica<sup>126</sup>. Argan and Bucarelli did not participate to opening, while the correspondence of the secretary of Zagreb showed that Elisa Debenedetti asked to search for an accommodation also to Maurizio Calvesi.

The complexity of the issues proposed could be summarized in four main areas: the historical development process of New Tendency movement, the status of ongoing research of artists, critic, philosophic and sociological readings on New Tendency by foreign scholars and finally its museological and ideological implications.

The catalogue, not yet printed, would have contained, among others, speeches by Meštrović, Argan, Apollonio, Bucarelli, Massironi, Gatt, Debenedetti and Vedova<sup>127</sup>. Their writings - come by June in Zagreb - formed the ideal platform from which started the discussion. Regarding the first topic, the task of tracing the history of New Tendency was entrusted, in the absence of Mavignier, to Massironi whom designed a re-reading, in an Italian key and linked to N Group, of New Tendency evolution from 1961 to 1963.

In the paper were approached both ones by Gatt and Debenedetti whom dealt specifically about the situation of New Tendency, starting from the post Informel research to arrive at the last situations related to the critic essay by Apollonio and the most recent connection between New Tendency and Optical Art.

For the sociological, aesthetic, philosophical aspects of the New Tendency research, intervened Bonaiuti and Molnar; for the ideological one Meštrović, Argan and Richter. Apollonio revisited the conclusions he reached with Mari. About the rules for the popularization of New Tendency to the public, through the educational activity in Museums and the information mediated by the cultural industry, intervened respectively Bucarelli and Moles.

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<sup>125</sup> *Nova Tendencija 3*, catalogue, August 13<sup>th</sup> – September 19<sup>th</sup> 1965, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, muzej za umjetnost i obrt, centar za industrijsko oblikovanje, Zagreb, 1965. On the second page of the catalogue there is a notice about the changed title from plural to singular. «Le titre ‘Nouvelle Tendence 3’ au singulier a remplacé l’ancien pluriel en raison d’une aspiration à la concentration idéologique et à l’intention e tau but commun».

<sup>126</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. Putar Found, Folder Razno, 30 typewritten pages with a transcription of Brezovica congress. See appendix.

<sup>127</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder Umjetnici\_V. Vedova. Letter from Vedova of February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1965. Replay letter from Putar and Meštrović of March 18<sup>th</sup> 1965. «Caro Vedova, La tua lettera ci ha fatto il grande piacere. Siamo veramente lieti della tua decisione di partecipare alla manifestazione NT3. Le nostre intenzioni sono unicamente quelle di migliorare il conoscimento di questo nostro tempo e di questo nostro mondo per arrivare ad una responsabilità e coscienza più alte dell’atteggiamento dell’uomo. Perciò stimiamo che il tuo contributo a questa manifestazione, che avrà un carattere polemico, sarà prezioso».

However, to the massive deployment of theorists and artists with bursts of very high level, as denounced by Apollonio, did not correspond to the factual reality in their exhibited works, which level was less than expected.

Moreover, again according to Apollonio, works were set up in a traditional manner and therefore did not show their real way used to (fig. 45).

Among the artists whom attended the debate were signaled Richter, Alviani, Massironi, Boriani and Mari, stigmatized the confusion and lack of consistency expressed by other speakers.

Indeed, the urgency given to the ideological commitment allowed the participation of Vedova - not as an exhibitor - whom had never sympathized with New Tendency, but for his Marxist political action and, probably, his friendship with Argan.

Deeper issues came to light, however, with the participation of new groups such as Cybernetics Group from Milan and Group V of Rimini, in close connection between them - to include almost the same artists - which proposed real laboratory experiments (fig. 46), whose formal technical solutions were different from the *Nove tendencije* artists' ones.

Others, like Di Luciano and Pizzo, had belatedly entered, whom came from the academic New Concrete painting (fig. 47,48), and then were on the opposite side to original claims by Mari and others, although they conferred to their works a faint taste of theory borrowed from linguistics.

Even the absences had an important meaning, because among the illustrious absents was Castellani<sup>128</sup>, whom realized what was happening in New Tendency, and decided to move away from such events. As he confessed to Apollonio, the decision had come just then his participation to the kinetic works exhibition entitled *Le Mouvement 2* at the Denise René Gallery and updated than the previous one held in 1955.

An essential factor arose from the dispersive situation when nobody told about works. The reason was perhaps often someone visualized some set of formal structures just studied and investigated, as it was verified the prophecy by Argan: New Tendency had lapsed into an "eternal planning" (*«eterno progettismo»*) eradicated from the real relationship with the society, becoming on as mathematical models, the design of the project.

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<sup>128</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 8. Folder 5. Privat Apollonio's correspondence A-Z (1964). Letter from Castellani to Apollonio of March 17<sup>th</sup> 1965. «[...]Ho visto la mostra "Mouvement II" da Denise René: molta roba, anche interessante, ma poco spazio, e così il mio quadricino tra una macchinetta e l'altra era "l'oggetto" più banale della mostra. Per cui ho deciso di non più partecipare a rassegne di quel genere, che sollecitano un unico e generalizzato metro interpretativo, non consono con lo spirito delle cose che faccio: penso infatti che le mie cose possano essere ritenute banali solo se interpretate come il frutto di ricerche puramente visuali... così ho rifiutato di partecipare alla mostra "Perpetuum mobile" che Menna organizza all'Obelisco di Roma... per autodifesa!»

However, as regards the third section of the announcement, devoted to the design of an object to be produced in series, probably catalyzed the best research of New Tendency. Prototypes in competition for *Divulgazione degli esemplari della ricerca* (Popularization of research specimens) were exhibited at the Muzej za umjetnosti i obrt (figs. 49,50).

Among the artists contributed Boriani, Colombo, Devecchi, MID Group, Vigo, Varisco, Picelj, Čanković, Dobrović and Grunwald (figs. 51-55). The winning design was by Michel Fadat (fig. 56)<sup>129</sup>, which would have been presented in 1966 in Italy on «Lineastruttura» a new magazine of art and architecture, directed by Lea Vergine and set up by the graphics advice of Mari.

In addition, innovative elements were represented by the participation of MID Group, which proceeded to complete premises of the interference between visual objects and industrial design, Dvizenje Group which in Soviet Union represented an hardly tolerated art by Communist Party<sup>130</sup>, and finally Italian T Group and German Effekt Group, which presented their environmental work.

MID Group was founded in Milan in October 1964<sup>131</sup>, thanks to the interest of Franco Russoli had been in contact with Mari, whom offered their participation for the *Nova Tendencija* 3. MID Group experienced anonymity to assert a new sensitivity consistent with the technological society. Their works were based primarily on records and spinning reels, on whose faces, circular monochrome structures or polychrome linear elements were moved by electric motors (figs. 57,58).

Their Gestalt studies had a real scientific systematization but not dropping into the trap of proposing laboratory experiments - such as V and Cybernetics Groups - or to produce objects by banal design. Apollonio and Mari appreciated their works that were imposed as one of the possible way was tried to practice in Zagreb.

The participation of Dvizenje Group fell within the political propaganda of the socialist government in Beograd, aimed to disrupt the image of Soviet communism because in Moscow the group, headed by Lev Nusberg, had been accused of representing the rebel movement of 'nonconformists' artists.

In 1962, the Secretary of the Soviet, Nikita Khrushchev turned against them the charges of being decadent and bourgeois, but the Western artistic world, thanks to the Zagreb mediation,

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<sup>129</sup> M. Fadat, *Uno strumento visuale*, «Lineastruttura», no.1, January, Naples, 1966, p.29.

<sup>130</sup> H.-P. Riese, *La seconda avanguardia russa. Non conformismo come fenomeno estetico e sociale*, in *L'arte vietata in U.R.S.S 1955-1988 Non-conformisti dalla collezione Bar-Gera*, catalogue, April 7<sup>th</sup> – June 4<sup>th</sup> 2000, Palazzo Forti, Verona, Electa, Milano, 2000.

<sup>131</sup> A. Barrese, A. Marangoni, L. Meloni, *MID. Alle origini della multimedialità*, Fondazione VAF, Silvana Editoriale, Milano, 2007.

paradoxically realized that their works were not backward models of revolutionary Constructivism.

In fact they were in continuity with the original spirit of Constructivism and according to art critics and artists could make a valuable lesson for Western ones (figs. 59,60). Moreover, Muscovites sent to Zagreb a parcel - addressed to Apollonio<sup>132</sup> - which contained a letter of presentation and art work reproductions, by which they hoped to receive help to exhibit in Europe.

The group's name was linked, however, to a diplomatic incident that took place between Apollonio and Bek<sup>133</sup>, a few months before the *Nova Tendencija 3*. The envelope was opened by Bek and associates, some of them inquired Apollonio, whom complained about the lack of honesty in relation to him. Fortunately the incident was resolved by diplomatic means, but it showed how the critic of Trieste had linked his name to Socialist and Communist bloc countries.

The last innovative factors were new kinetic and programmed environments, set up at the Muzej za umjetnost i obrt that represented a direct effect of the Paris *Nouvelle Tendance* in 1964.

Giovanni Anceschi and David Boriani signed the *Ambiente per un test di estetica sperimentale* (Environment for an experimental aesthetics test)<sup>134</sup>, which had a complexity based on the programmed switch of color lighting sequences. The work was completed with the participation of the public whom expressed his aesthetic pleasure, based on a questionnaire. Again Mari<sup>135</sup> had a supervisory role because he helped his Milan colleagues in adapting the environment to available space.

Gabriele Devecchi<sup>136</sup> realized the *Spazio in strutturazione plastico cromatica* (space in plastic -chromium-plated structure)<sup>137</sup>, whose purpose was - as the author wrote - to “consider the after-image” that impressed the retina of the eye and «*the chromatic dimension resulting from the overlays of the same images*». It was calculated the persistence time of an image externally induced, according to Gestalt theory.

Gianni Colombo built the *Ambiente sperimentale a zone contigue* (experimental environment with adjacent areas), where the audience felt their kinetic and visual skills through a combination of variable factors, from deformities of physical spaces, intermittently light pulses

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<sup>132</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3\_ Umjetnici\_D\_Dvizenje. Letter from Dvizenje Group to Apollonio of April 20<sup>th</sup> 1965. The original was written by Russian, we quoted the Croatian translated version. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>133</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3. Br.89 od 251 do 699 / ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Apollonio to Bek of June 11<sup>th</sup> 1965; Br.89 od 251 do 699/ ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 7 and Unit 9. Letter from Bek of June 12<sup>th</sup> 1965; Reply from Bek to Apollonio of June 18<sup>th</sup> 1965; Replay from Apollonio to Bek, June 30<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>134</sup> L. Meloni, op. cit., 2004, p.232-233.

<sup>135</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3. Br.251 od1 do699. Letter from Boriani to Meštrović of July 26<sup>th</sup> 1965. «Caro Matko, ti inviamo alcuni disegni con le modifiche da apportare al progetto del nostro ambiente. Tali modifiche sono state discusse ed approvate da Enzo Mari».

<sup>136</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3 Umjentici\_d\_Devecchi. Letter from Devecchi dated on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1965.

<sup>137</sup> L.Meloni, op. cit., 2004, pp.230-231.

and orthogonal grids, painted on the walls, and whose the perception was altered by chromatic superimposed changes (figs. 61-63).

Finally, Effekt Group set up his *Kugelkabinett* (environment with spheres) in the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti (fig.64)<sup>138</sup>, which joined the movement of the viewer to a volume of space occupied by white spheres hung suspended from the ceiling and illuminated. In that way the user moving between spheres, transformed their perception of space, according to the Gestalt principle by which our eye builds over time, a spatial image, through a temporary focus of certain fixed points, being in the visual field.

Environments, therefore, than the previous New Tendency works and multipliable objects, offered real new elements, indicating a possible way in developing the programmed and kinetic research. From the standpoint of technique, unfortunately, the works had an analog programming and were not controlled by computers, such as ones were determining the success of the space research. In fact, that was yet another idiosyncrasy between Cybernetics Theory that Moles<sup>139</sup> argued in Zagreb - as a solution to the interpretative arbitrariness in the field of experimental aesthetics - and exhibited works, which had still handmade mechanics.

The problems triggered by the showing of confused theories, due to instances of participation to a technological world, but with superficial and scholastic knowledge, or by works of art offered only a change compared to the other just exhibited to Zagreb, were also warned by the press.

The reactions were divided between praise and desecration but not presented innovative readings, except perhaps because the *Nova Tendencija 3* got an international exposure.

The Yugoslav and Croatian press<sup>140</sup>, considered the massive presence of foreign participants - including great importance for the political reasons above mentioned, had the Soviets – from July to September 1965, occupied columns of newspapers in an attempt to explain to the general public what was happening in Zagreb.

Putar, from the point of view of the Committee, published a careful record of the event, which gave a large space to environments.

In Ljubljana, the new magazine of arts and architecture «Sinteza», received an article by Meštrović<sup>141</sup> which placed the focus on socio-political values of the event.

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<sup>138</sup> M. Rosen, op. cit., 2010, p. 180.

<sup>139</sup> A. Moles, *Nova Tendencija 3*, op. cit., Zagreb, 1965.

<sup>140</sup> I.K., *Izložba "Nova Tendencija III"*, «Borba», July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1965, p.7; R. Putar, *Treća manifestacija novih tendencija*, «Borba», September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1965; T. Kožarić, *Nova Tendencija 3*, «Čovjek i Prostor», no.151, October, Zagreb, 1965, pp.4-5; J. Depolo, *Nova Tendencija*, «Vjesnik», August 8<sup>th</sup>, Zagreb, 1965; V. Maleković, *Nova tendencija – ništa nova*, «Vjesnik», August 22<sup>nd</sup>, Zagreb, 1965.

<sup>141</sup> M. Meštrović, *Pred III. Bialom Novih Smeri v Zagrebu*, «Sinteza», no.2, July, Ljubljana, 1965, p. 96; M. Meštrović, *Poskus raziskovanja zgodovinske realnosti*, «Sinteza», no.4, January, Ljubljana, 1966, pp.55-61.

Also in Beograd were interested in the *Nova Tendencija*, and some local newspapers reproduced works of Alviani and Vigo<sup>142</sup>. In addition, the magazine «Umetnost» in 1965 promoted the *Nova Tendencija 3* and in 1966 devoted an entire issue to the Zagreb exhibition, describing the event and publishing, for the first time, the speeches of Brezovica<sup>143</sup>.

In Italy, Vigo wrote an article on «Domus», Vergine on «La Fiera letteraria» and finally Celant on «La Biennale di Venezia». Vigo<sup>144</sup>, from the point of view of whom had participated to NT3<sup>145</sup>, and with the help of Mari<sup>146</sup> whom worked to find the images, admitted the modest success of the event and especially of the round table in Brezovica, where they had played a collective “mea culpa”. She spent large space for the Dvizenje Group her claimed by means of it the Op Art had came in Moscow. However she considered the environments not as autonomous spatial structures as a closer link between architecture and visual arts.

Vergine<sup>147</sup> returned the hospitality<sup>148</sup> but the article’s title, on the contrary, revealed the crisis of New Tendency. Focused attention on the environment, meant as a new way to emancipate the visual operator because it did not evoked an aesthetics wait, but sought a communicativeness response from the viewer, under lights and apparent dimensional changing of space and time.

Finally Celant, whom was not among the guests, according to Apollono<sup>149</sup>, first decided to publish on the journal «Modulo» - founded by Celant in Genoa - a chronicle, and speeches were in the meeting. As revealed by the correspondence between Celant and Meštrović<sup>150</sup>, that project was hijacked on the journal «Marcatre», but were many difficulty to make a compilation of all reports and, remarkable fact, to find the photographic documentation required. Celant was, therefore, able to publish his article in December 1965 resented the time elapsed - by a critical position very close to Apollonio’s one - and in some ways anticipated its future attitude unfavorable towards New Tendency.

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<sup>142</sup> Đ. Kadijević, *Nova Tendencija 3*, «NIN- Nedeljnih informativnih novena», August 22<sup>nd</sup>, Beograd, 1965; J. Depolo, *Nova Tendencija na prekretnici*, «Politika», August 22<sup>nd</sup>, Beograd, 1965; R. Putar, *Nova tendencija 3*, «Umetnost», no.2, April-June, Beograd, 1965, pp.130-131.

<sup>143</sup> *Nova Tendencija 2*, editorial, «Umetnost», no.5, January – March, Beograd, 1966, pp.69-81.

<sup>144</sup> N. Vigo, *Arte programmata a Zagabria*, «Domus», no.432, October, Milan, 1965, pp.47-50.

<sup>145</sup> Br89 od 251 – do 699. Letter from Vigo to Bek of October 20<sup>th</sup> 1965. «Kind mr Beck, [...] Licke I told to your secretary, I write the articol in Domus for NO.T.3 it would get aut for November, I write and we published also photos about Mosca grupa [...]».

<sup>146</sup> Br89 od 251 – do 699. Telegram from «Domus» editorial office to Meštrović of September 15<sup>th</sup> 1965. «materiale chiesto da enzo mari per pubblicazione su domus urgentissimo». Telegram from Mari to Meštrović of September 17<sup>th</sup> 1965. « Spedirmi urgentissimo buona scelta opere esposte per pubblicazione Domus. Mari».

<sup>147</sup> L. Vergine, *La nuova tendenza è già in crisi*, «La Fiera Letteraria», October 10<sup>th</sup>, Milan, 1965, p.11.

<sup>148</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3 Cirkularna psima. Letter from Putar to Vergine of October 14<sup>th</sup> 1965. See appendix.

<sup>149</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letters from Germano Celant – no dated – to Apollonio; Letter from Germano Celant to Apollonio of October 5<sup>th</sup> 1965. See appendix.

<sup>150</sup> Br89 od 251 – do 699. Letter from Celanto to Meštrović of September 27<sup>th</sup> 1965; Reply letter from Meštrović to Celant of October 14<sup>th</sup> 1965. See appendix.

The three cases thus contradicted the apparent success - for the achieved international fame but not for the effective reform of the New Tendency research – of the *Nova tendencije 3*, which just after the inauguration became the object of the correspondence between organizers and artists.

In August, Apollonio<sup>151</sup> in a correspondence with Bek, wished him as much luck for its fourth edition. In September Putar<sup>152</sup> asked Mari for first impressions and informed him not only about the possibility of a future fourth edition, but also the magazine «Sinteza» would have published an article dedicated to the Milan designer. The fame of “NT3” also passed the borders of Yugoslavia and the test was the interest shown by the prestigious Rembrandt Art Foundation, through the L’Obelisco Gallery, in New Tendency and the Bek’s Gallery<sup>153</sup>. Although trade relations with the gallery of Gaspero Del Corso were intensified in 1965, arose a pernicious contradiction between what was claimed in the fight against the trade and how instead the Zagreb Gallery really acted. The exhibition was supposed to close the 19<sup>th</sup> September, but as the Danese Gallery seen, when asked for Fadat’s works restitution, the success of the exhibition shifted its closure on next October the 3<sup>rd</sup><sup>154</sup>.

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<sup>151</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 7. Folder 17. Nuove Tendenze 1965 / MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3 br89 od 251 – do 699. Letter from Božo Beck to Apollonio of August 17<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix](#).

<sup>152</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Umjetnici\_M. Mari. Letter from Putar to Mari of September 4<sup>th</sup> 1965. «Cher Enzo[...] Je voudrais bien savoir si les impressions que Tu as eu pendant Ton séjour a Zagreb et qui ne sont été trop agréables, sont déjà un peu passées. En tout, on a pourtant réalisé un effort vraiment important. Je T’avoue – en toute discrétion, que l’idée de la manifestation NT4 m’obsède déjà... la revue « sinteza » qui apparait a Ljubljana me demande un article sur Toi. La rédaction me laisse un délai très court pour la livrancier de ce texte. Je Te prie de m’envoyer le plus tôt que possible tout matériel qui pourrait m’être utile pour faire un texte au moins exacte quant les informations données »

<sup>153</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3 br89 od 251 – do 699. Letter from Gaspero Del Corso to Bek September 8<sup>th</sup> 1965. «Dear mr. Božo Bek. I am very pleased to introduce you Mr. Van Niekerk who represent the Rembrandt Art Foundation and who is very interested in seeing the exhibition Nove Tendencije 3. We would be very grateful in giving him any possible help and assistance during his visit».

<sup>154</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, Folder NT3 br89 od 251 – do 699. Letter from L’Obelisco Gallery to the Secretariat of September 9<sup>th</sup> 1965; Letter from Bruno Danese to secretariat of September 15<sup>th</sup> 1965; Replay Letter from Kelemen to the Danese Gallery of September 25<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix](#).

In conclusion, Giulio Carlo Argan since February 1963 by Uno Group's experience was considering an overrun of Informel, but spaced out from the new dadaist and new constructivist research, because it had doubts about the ideological effectiveness of N and T groups.

The lack was one of the salient features of the Verucchio Congress in the same year. In contrast, Umbro Apollonio and Giuseppe Gatt, in 1964, wanted to import in Italy the critic line had supported the *Nove tendencije* exhibitions in Zagreb, *Nuova Tendenza* in Venice and *Nouvelle Tendence* in Paris. Planning for the Fifteenth Avezzano Award the exhibition *Strutture di visione* (*Visual structures*).

However, was created an issue, just showed in the Massironi's speeches in 1963 in Rome and in 1964 in Verucchio. The works exhibited by Alviani, N and T groups and Mari were repetitions and variations in number of ones displayed since 1963 in Zagreb, in San Marino and in Venice Biennial exhibitions. Were produced "serial exhibitions" of works themselves conceived in series, which with by time would have aroused a suspicion: cunning willingness by the artists, whom had limited themselves in reproducing always the same results. The issue would become increasingly urgent over the next year and would, later, made a difference within New Tendency, between artists whom would be freed from serials and whom would have emphasized in which sense its poetic.

Consequently, in 1965, during the *Nova tendencije 3* - hailed as the main exhibition of the homonymous movement - emerged two certainties from the meeting of Brezovica: firstly, only few people had really understood the meaning of the occurred transition from the *Nove tendencije* to the *Nova tendencija*, increasing instead the existing confusion in that respect.

Moreover, the technical skill of artists, although admirable, seemed detached - and in fact it was - from theoretical discourse on the cybernetics and the aesthetic validity of programmed works. Moreover, the contradiction between their reproducibility and diffusion through the art system increased when in 1965 the organization of Zagreb had close solid business relationships with the L'Obelisco Gallery in Rome.

In that regard, Palma Bucarelli suggested in order to avoid interference of the trade, would have been appropriate for the visual operators to work and collaborate with museums. According to that proposal - among the few ones were not dictated by any avant-garde rhetoric aims - the artists would have created works "on demand" not for profit and then they would have become visual educators for the public. And the only place able to start some such revolution was Yugoslavia.



However, while the *Nova Tendencija 3* had a commercial success, on the other hand someone as well as Mari had placed their trust in a real change of the art system, had a rude awakening. Also Mari<sup>155</sup> confessed in a letter sent to Apollonio:

*«Remembering the days of Zagreb - for me very sad - and what that so badly I tried to say and to do - I would not have offended you. Also because in the end, yours were the only reasonable things were said during the discussion. I hope you understand what I tried to say or to do, even if the facts demonstrate the reality of people is far away from utopia of things instead should be done. Once a time you said this to me. I will still fight for what I believe even if in this moment it's hard for me to figure out which roads to follow and what means and in the end which is my real possibility».*

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<sup>155</sup>ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Folder 1. Correspondence 1965. Letter from Enzo Mari to Apollonio of September 1<sup>st</sup> 1965.

## Chapter 6<sup>th</sup>. On the New Tendency ashes. Artists are at a crossroads: ideology or gallery.

In his speech about *Nova Tendencija 3*, Germano Celant<sup>1</sup> pointed out that the crisis of the movement was determined by its values which were mainly focused on speculative and technical levels. On the contrary, «the operative urgency» required tangible and corrective interventions on the industrial phenomenon. New Tendency had only been able to communicate a servile attitude towards technology, although it was in debt to De Stijl for his social claims. The issue was part of a broad debate. It was also debated in September 1965 during the Fifteenth Verucchio Congress<sup>2</sup> whose theme was *Arte e comunicazione*.

At the opening of the conference, Argan<sup>3</sup> considered art as an instrument of communication and for that reason its ultimate aim was to get over the false information of mass-media and promote a more rigorous one which had to suit the future society of images. According to Argan, in order to overcome the crisis of arts, the artist had to become a technician, an analyst, a designer. Argan's speech was in line with Charles Snow's<sup>4</sup> one which pointed out how the "two cultures"<sup>5</sup>, the technical and humanistic one, had found a possible fusion through the psychology and sociology on the one hand and the Gestalt and programmed research on the other hand.

Argan had just dealt with that issue in the text *Arte come ricerca* (Art as research), sent to Zagreb, and in the introductory essay of *Progetto e destino*<sup>6</sup>. In the latter, Argan admitted that the crisis of the art was part of the «*crisis of the European sciences*» and the Gestalt and the pop approach, which had been facing one another up to then, had had their day. Pop art focused on the hard data of the object and media information, without considering an effective communication between art and mundane reality. Nevertheless, in 1966, for New Tendency artists, the engagement in the field of industrial design seemed still feasible. During that time, the utopia of Gestalt art was failing because of its project had overcome the object while New Tendency seemed not able to modify the output and so it was absorbed by the same industrial production.

The crash of New Tendency had also internal origins. That was due to the attitude of some artists whom had gone back to the traditional economic trade system and art galleries. If 1965 marked the peak of critical approval of New Tendency, in 1966, many of its leading figures participated in official exhibitions or devoted themselves to research that mingle with the New American Abstraction and with *Primary Structures*.

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<sup>1</sup> G. Celant, *Nuova Tendenza 3*, «La Biennale di Venezia», no. 59, December, Venice, 1965, pp.59-60.

<sup>2</sup> *Il problema della comunicazione a Verucchio*, editorial, «Le Arti», no.11, November, Milan, 1965, pp.30-31.

<sup>3</sup> M. e M. Fagiolo, *Il futuro dell'arte nell'integrazione con la società*, «Avanti!», September 25<sup>th</sup>, Milan, 1965, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> C. P. Snow, *Le due culture*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1964.

<sup>5</sup> *Le due culture. Atti del Convegno organizzato dall'Associazione per la Ricerca Scientifica Italiana (ARSI) in collaborazione con la Esso Standard Italiana, Casa delle Associazioni Scientifiche e Tecniche, Milano, 14 maggio, 1965*, Tip. Tuminelli, Roma, 1965, pp. 15-16, 36-37.

<sup>6</sup> G. C. Argan, *Progetto e destino*, in *Progetto e destino*, Il saggiatore, Milano, 1965, pp. 9- 74.

Some others follow the commercial way of Optical art. Only in 1967, when the meeting in Zagreb was postponed, the situation seemed to consolidate around two polarities. On the one hand, we have the last outputs of New Tendency in Italy and in Yugoslavia. On the other hand, we have the artists whom set aside the methodology of industrial design and find a new opportunity of interaction with the audience in the production of kinetic and programmed environments.

Those attitudes redefined New Tendency, from a unified international movement to a trend among different artistic trends.

§ 1. *Redefinition attempts: Strutture Significanti and Arte Cinetica as two exhibitions showed a go back to the painting and sculpture.*

In September 1964, after Venice Biennial and the Fourteenth Verucchio-Rimini Congress, Apollonio<sup>7</sup> wrote an essay entitled *Ricerche di visualità strutturata* (Visual structured researches) which – published only in 1965 - reflected the new critical approaches developed in *Strutture della Visione*. Apollonio agreed with New Tendency but found also necessary to analyse it in terms of ‘structure’.

That allowed him to get over the Theory of Information and Cybernetics which mainly focused the attention on the human side of programmed works.

The term “structure”<sup>8</sup> originally belonged to the two scientific fields of biology and mathematics. Then, it was used in the Linguistics and finally it was applied by Claude Lévi-Strauss to the structural anthropology. As for the aesthetic field, according to Pierre Francastel, the importance of “structure” was inversely proportional to the “form”.

As a consequence, Apollonio concluded, Gestalt programmed works of New Tendency were models that maintained structural relationships on three levels: their internal construction, the psycho-physiological relationships with senses and the communication with industrial society.

After the development of the approach based on the “structure”, Apollonio proposed Argan to devote 1965 San Marino Biennial to the research developed by New Tendency<sup>9</sup>. Argan agreed with Apollonio’s subdivision of New Tendency into three genealogical lines: Gerstner, Mari, Pohl, Richter, Castellani and Scheggi followed Bill footsteps; GRAV, N and T groups, Palatnik, Malina and von Graevenitz traced back to Munari; the art of Vasarely had originated Mavignier, Picelj, Alviani, Agam, Tomasello and Soto.

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<sup>7</sup> U. Apollonio, *Ricerche di visualità strutturata*, in *Arte Oggi, Civiltà dell’Immagine*, Armando Curcio Editore, Roma, 1965, pp.69-78.

<sup>8</sup> R. Bastide, *Usi e significati del termine struttura*, Bompiani, Milano, 1965, pp.5-50.

<sup>9</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9, San Marino 1961-1965. Letter from Apollonio to Argan of October 24th 1964. Letter from Elisa De Benedetti (for Argan) to Apollonio of November 4th 1964. Attached to a letter to G.C. Argan, DD. 10.24.1964. Note by Government Committee for Turism from the session of March 5th 1965 u.s., regarding [omissis] the direction has to give 5th Art Biennial of San Marino. Letter from Apollonio to Corpora of May 3rd 1965. See appendix.

In March 1965 in San Marino, during the works carried out by the Tourism Committee, Marco Valsecchi presented a project which proposed a new interpretation of the artistic trends coming from Italy, Germany, France, Russia, Poland, and Yugoslavia. Compared to Apollonio's point of view, that new interpretation avoid the disputes that the previous edition arose.

After the rejection of the project, the critic from Trieste expressed his disappointment to Antonio Corpora. In his opinion, the commission had not understood, as far as the situation of the Italian art is concerned, the Prampolini-Reggiani-Alviani line collaborate with the Morandi-Birolli-Dorazio line.

In that period of growing the interest for New Tendency, during the first months of 1965, Apollonio began a long collaboration with Germano Celant.

The two met after the exhibition of Avezzano and probably during the Fourteenth Verucchio Congress where Celant was invited. Ciro Livigni<sup>10</sup>, from the Il Chiodo gallery in Palermo, considered useful to move the exhibition from Avezzano to Sicily and talked about that idea to Apollonio in November 1964.

In the middle of his "structural" turn, the critic from Trieste proposed to call the exhibition *Proposte Strutturali* and to invite Alviani, T Group, Munari, Costa, Mari and Castellani. Short after, also Edoardo Manzoni<sup>11</sup>, the manager of the La Polena gallery in Genoa, was invited to participate in the project. In one of his letters dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 1964, he assured that the exhibition take place in Palermo and in Florence.

So, the exhibition became itinerant and was actually renamed *Proposte strutturali plastiche e sonore* after Apollonio's proposal whom aimed at including research on electronic music as well. The exhibition was also organized in Genoa, in February 1965, and in the Il Punto<sup>12</sup> gallery in Turin, in April 1965. Alviani was in charge of the management of relations with the artists, the selection of works and the paging of the catalogue. Works of Alviani, Anceschi, Boriani, Colombo, Mari, N Group and Varisco were reproductions of ones produced from 1961 to 1963. Rocco Borella presented a structure made of fluorescent colours entitled *Cromemi* (1964), Paolo Scheggi presented a work entitled *Intersuperficie curva* (1964) and N Group, whose exponents where Biasi, Landi and Massironi, presented a series of silk screen prints, such as the so called *Visione dinamica s5*, which were subsequently exhibited at the La Polena gallery, in June 1965, under the name 'Gruppo N 65' (figs. 1-4).

On the other hand, in central Italy, after the success of Uno Group, Argan, together with Gatt, Vinca Masini, Tempesti and Tomassoni, continued to insist on the possibility of an alternative line to programmed research.

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<sup>10</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 8. Letter from Ciro Livigni to Apollonio of August 27<sup>th</sup> 1964. Reply letter from Apollonio of September 7<sup>th</sup> 1964. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>11</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Edoardo Manzoni to Apollonio of March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>12</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Edoardo Manzoni, to Apollonio of November 8<sup>th</sup> 1964. Letter from Germano Celant – undated – to Apollonio. Reply letter from Apollonio to Celant of November 16<sup>th</sup> 1964. Letter from Germano Celant to Apollonio of April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

From April to May 1965, the travelling *Strutture visive*<sup>13</sup> exhibition was organised in Naples (Libreria Guida, 24<sup>th</sup> April), Florence (Aquilone Art Gallery, 29<sup>th</sup> April) and Rome (Il Bilico Gallery, 14<sup>th</sup> May). The exhibition was supervised by Gatt and the painter Francesco Guerrieri<sup>14</sup>. Artists participating in the project had different origins: the founders of 63 Group: Lia Drei, Francesco Guerrieri, Lucia di Luciano and Giovanni Pizzo (63 Group ended in 1963 and became P Experimental Group only with the participation of Drei and Guerrieri), the former member of Uno Group Achille Pace, D'Eugenio and some others. On the whole, that experimentation followed the one developed by Uno Group.

Despite remaining in the field of the Gestalt research – in 1963 at the Fourteenth Verucchio Congress P Experimental Group<sup>15</sup> claimed its works represented the “third phase of the Gestalt research” (*«Terza fase delle ricerche gestaltiche»*) -, the main aim of the project was to show new ways of the expression, ways which could be ascribed within the geometric painting and sculpture, but moved away from kinetic works and programmed machines (figs. 5, 6).

The project *Strutture visive* did not go unnoticed. As an example, in a letter to Gatt, Alviani<sup>16</sup> considered *Strutture visive* as a confusion which aimed at promoting artists had nothing to do with programmed art. In a reply dated on June the 15<sup>th</sup> sent to Apollonio as a copy, the critic tried to justify himself warning Alviani that the situation in central-south Italy, as also Celant pointed out, was not as free from compromises as in the North.

Such a reply helps us to understand how criticism considered New Tendency. It was a different way to look at similar episodes such as exhibitions *Strutture Significanti* and *Strutture Significanti 2*<sup>17</sup> took place in November 1965 in Livorno and in February 1966 in Genoa. The titles given to exhibitions expressed a direct resumption of the linguistic structuralism. Exhibitions were presented by the critic Claudio Popovich and texts were written by Argan, Emilio Garrone and Berenghelli. Among the exhibitors, there were Drei, Guerrieri, Cannilla and Pace. Exhibitions aimed at setting New Tendency aside since its claims had not reformed industry but, on the contrary, from industry had been manipulated (figs. 7, 8).

That shadow world, which could be defined as art of “visual/significant structure”, was integrated by the exhibition devoted to kinetic and programmed art, promoted by Gillo Dorfles in Trieste from July 18<sup>th</sup> to August 14<sup>th</sup> 1965. *Arte Cinetica* followed the line of the 1962

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<sup>13</sup> *Strutture visive*, catalogue, from April 24<sup>th</sup> Libreria Guida, Napoli; from April 29<sup>th</sup> Galleria Aquilone, Firenze; from May 14<sup>th</sup> Galleria “Il Bilico”, Edizioni dell’Ateneo, Roma, 1965. Italo Tomassoni affirmed «[...]come oggi appare, la ricerca ghestaltica si attua attraverso un processo di allargamento della sua originaria vocazione (formale e formante) in senso soprattutto critico, quasi che alla fase strettamente poetica stia succedendo un momento squisitamente ed integralmente operativo; [...]. È un’astrazione che definirei funzionale proprio per il fatto che oltre ad analizzare i processi operativi preposti all’opera d’arte, fa oggetto della sua ricerca tutto quel complesso di energie che dall’opera si sprigionano, psicologicamente e sociologicamente. [...]. Mirabile equazione che dimostra come dalla pura oggettività delle prime esperienze, si sia passati ad una reale nuova oggettività, in senso radicalmente diverso, ed opposto, alle grossezze pop e alla cosiddetta “nuova figurazione”» p.10.

<sup>14</sup> G.C.Argan, M. Grande, F. Menna, *Francesco Guerrieri*, Vol. I. 1960-1980, Edizioni Le Vigne Nuove, Roma, 1994.

<sup>15</sup> *I manifesti*, editorial, «Marcatre», nos. 6-7, May - June, Genoa, 1964, pp. 184-189.

<sup>16</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Gatt to Alviani of June 15<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>17</sup> *Strutture significanti*, catalogue, November 20<sup>th</sup> – December 6<sup>th</sup> 1965, Casa della Cultura, Livorno; *Strutture significanti 2*, catalogue, February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1966, La Carabaga club d’arte, Genova.

Programmed art exhibition and presented works produced between 1962 and 1965 by Alviani, N and T groups, Mari and Munari. Other artist that participated in the exhibition were Dada Maino and MID Group. The project was sponsored by the Autonomous Tourist Information Office in Trieste and by the local *Circolo della Cultura e delle Arti* which arranged the halls of Palazzo Costanzi for the event. The exhibition took place together with the third Film Festival of Science fiction.

As the press reviewed<sup>18</sup>, kinetic works had become a visual metaphor of a fantastic world whose literature was linked to the mass consumption of the science fiction genre. However, that did not was made only for commercial aim. At the first edition in 1963 the programmed art has just been associated with the movie entitled *Ikarie XB -1*, by Czech director Jindric Polak<sup>19</sup>. The science fiction set was made up by the Czech architect Jan Zazvorka, whom directly inspired himself to Rationalist European tradition. Jindric Polak and Marcello Mascherini, whom exhibited the sculpture *L'astronave d'oro* (The gold Star ship), won equal first the prize<sup>20</sup>.

In contrast, in that exhibition Dorfles seemed to get closer to the American definition of *kinetic art*, as it was meant by George Rickey whose works highlighted the morphological aspect rather than the ideological one.

That artistic environment derived from the original meaning New Tendency had applied to its works, which was mystified because of the influence of technological society. At the same time, other situations were taking shape in Rome and Turin.

The exhibition *Perpetuum mobile* supervised by Filiberto Menna<sup>21</sup> was organised in Rome, from 5<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 1965, at the L'Obelisco Gallery. The critic interpreted works in reference to the didactic of the Bauhaus, expectations of Italian and Croatian New Tendency and according to

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<sup>18</sup> *Vigilia dell'inaugurazione della mostra. Si riflette nell'arte cinetica il fascino del mondo di domani*, editorial, «Il Piccolo», July 16<sup>th</sup>, Trieste, 1965; *Nella sala comunale di Palazzo Costanzi. Questa sera si inaugura la Mostra d'Arte Cinetica. Esposti una ventina di "oggetti" estremamente suggestivi per la fantasmagoria delle visioni offerte allo spettatore*, editorial, «Il Piccolo», July 17<sup>th</sup>, Trieste, 1965; *Inaugurata ieri a Palazzo Costanzi. Novità assoluta in Italia la Mostra d'arte cinetica. Rilevato il valore della rassegna anche per la partecipazione che tali opere possono dare alle vicende dell'umanità futura*, editorial, «Il Piccolo», July 18<sup>th</sup>, Trieste, 1965; *Lusinghiero successo della mostra d'arte cinetica*, editorial, «Il Piccolo», August 14<sup>th</sup>, Trieste, 1965.

<sup>19</sup> L. Gasca, *Fantascienza e cinema. Lessico delle opere, storie e personaggi dal 1989 ai giorni nostri*, Mazzotta, Milano, 1972, p. 309.

<sup>20</sup> *Da Trieste*, editorial, «D'ars agency», no.4, June 20<sup>th</sup> – September 20<sup>th</sup>, Milan, 1963. «Un primo esempio di pratica applicazione di "arte programmata" ci è stata offerta dal film cecoslovacco "Ikarie XB – 1", presentato al I Festival Internazionale del film di fantascienza (Castello di San Giusto – Cortile delle Milizie – luglio – 1963). "Ikarie XB – 1", soggetto di Pavel e regia di Jindric Polak, si avvale di una accurata scenografia disegnata dall'arch. Jan Zazvorka che bene ha assimilato le ultimissime ricerche ed esperienze in questo campo di forze dell'oggettività estetica. [...] Ad "Ikarie XB – 1" è andato ex-aequo, il primo premio del Festival: l'Astronave d'oro – opera dello scultore triestino Marcello Mascherini» p. 104.

<sup>21</sup> *Perpetuum Mobile*, catalogue, April 5<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> 1965, Galleria dell'Obelisco, Roma, 1965. Cf. F. Menna, *Per una nuova comunicazione visiva*, «[...]le tendenze più tipiche dell'odierno panorama artistico internazionale sono rappresentate [...] da quelle correnti, come la "Nuova Tendenza" e la "Pop Art", che mostrano di aver preso atto di questa condizione antropologica generale, caratterizzata dallo sviluppo tecnologico nelle sue dimensioni fondamentali della produzione industriale e del consumo di massa[...] Le nuove correnti artistiche raggruppate sotto la denominazione comune di "Nuova Tendenza" muovono, quindi, [...] dalla realtà tecnologica [...] che ha come protagonisti l'oggetto e l'immagine e che costituisce un vero e proprio spettacolo visivo ricco di una molteplicità di messaggi[...]. Ma[...] intendono piuttosto ridare chiarezza e vigore alla struttura fisica dell'immagine, ponendo per così dire tra parentesi il significato che essa veicola, e ricostituendo (o costituendo) il rapporto individuo ambiente sulla base di una pura relazione percettiva. Si comprende perciò come gli artisti della Nuova Tendenza fondino i propri processi operativi sulla psicologia della visione[...].» pp.19-24.

the interpretation given by Argan in 1951. The works came from Italian and foreign art galleries and collectors such as Cardazzo, La Chiocciola, La Salita, Schwarz and Edouard Loeb. Also Apollonio<sup>22</sup> - no mentioned - contributed to the event lending the silk-screen prints by Vasarely, i.e. *Midori II 1954*.

The cover of the catalogue was taken from a 1964 silk-screen print by Landi and Biasi, and the rectangular format resembled the 1961 catalogue of Amsterdam. Artists participating in the event were: Richter, Srnec and Bakić from *Nove Tendencije* of Zagreb, Alviani, T Group, Biasi, Landi, Costa and Massironi, Cruz-Diez, Le Parc, Kramer, Mari, Munari, Mackm Uecker, Soto, Tinguely, Bury, Calder, Duchamp and, the least famous, Cosimo Carlucci, Roberto Fasola, Lupo, Edival Ramosa and Paolo Scheggi. In the end, also Francesco Lo Savio was included in the event finding a collocation within the kinetic, visual, programmed research.

Menna traced their research back to three main backgrounds: De Stijl, Bauhaus, Albers and Moholy Nagy. He pointed out that the event could be ascribed within the movement of New Tendency even though its background did not refer to contemporary technological society – as it happened in Trieste – but to Renaissance, or better, to that line of anti-Renaissance was just identified by Eugenio Battisti<sup>23</sup> in 1962. That was the reason for the Latin-like title, in which anamorphous picture and first mechanic automata studies<sup>24</sup>, given to an exhibition that aimed at humanize the kinetic and programmed works through structural analysis. Such an approach anticipated new interpretations that later on Apollonio applied to New Tendency.

§ *Turin and the beginning of Germano Celant at the *Forme programmate* exhibition. Difference between New Tendency artists' works and industrial objects.*

In Turin, Apollonio continued to work on the relation among art, industry and industrial design. An exhibition of artists belonging to New Tendency took place in September from 7 to 29<sup>th</sup> 1965 at the Il Punto Gallery after *Proposte Strutturali*. Marina Apollonio and Paolo Scheggi, back from Zagreb, and Agostino Bonalumi joined the event. Apollonio did not give a specific title to the exhibition<sup>25</sup>. Only later on, he identified the project within the frame of New Tendency.

In the text, he categorically underlined:

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<sup>22</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Cesare Bacelli (L'Obelisco Gallery) to Apollonio of March 6<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>23</sup> E. Battisti, *L'antirinascimento*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1962.

<sup>24</sup> E. Battisti, *Gli automi revisionati*, in *Perpetuum Mobile*, op. cit., 1965. «[...] i pittori del primo rinascimento che odiavano il movimento, si siano disperati, di fronte al variare delle luci e delle apparenze, servendosi di specchi, di camere ottiche, affidandosi per i loro calcoli alla concretezza dell'architettura. [...] Erano quelli, anni di straordinari risultati anche nella fabbricazione di automi, di macchine semoventi, di espedienti militari, come fantastiche fortezze del tutto automatizzate [...]. Per cui data, questa attuale occasione, di vedere più moderne immagini ed oggetti che si muovono propriamente da sé[...] forse questo mio discorso dovrebbe vertere sulla storia del muoversi veritiero degli oggetti, e no tanto su quello metafisico delle immagini» pp. 10-13.

<sup>25</sup> L.M.Barbero, op. cit., 2010, p.42

«Without any doubt, the works of New Tendency constitute one of the most relevant artistic manifestations of our times [...]»<sup>26</sup>.

The artists participating in the project offered nothing new, apart from the coming back of Bonalumi together with N and T groups, which were well known at the time of the Azimut Gallery. The project was supervised by Celant with the advice of Apollonio and could be considered as an extemporaneous event compared to the most important *Forme programmate*<sup>27</sup>.

In the city symbol of Italian industrial development, Celant had firstly planned an exhibition entitled *Situazione 65* and then organised another one which influenced New Tendency movement in a different way compared to the modest success of *Proposte Strutturali* – also based on the Apollonio's project has been rejected by San Marino Committee<sup>28</sup>.

Celant's main idea was to put together the New Tendency art and the industrial design. For that reason, he contacted Dorflès and asked him to be the second advisor of the exhibition. The place for the exhibition was the prestigious Polytechnic where he also found the collaboration of Pininfarina (Giuseppe Farina). Between July and August 1965, Celant and Apollonio<sup>29</sup> decided for artists and graphic designers which participate in the event. The original project was extended to an exhibition on printing history and to the graphics course at the Polytechnic. The catalogue was completed with a short essay on Gestalt scientific research.

A section of the exhibition was devoted to Pininfarina's frames and photographs, section which paid particular attention to formal values of serial industrial objects. Another section was devoted to printing machines and exhibited machines used during the last century by publishing. Both sections had a striking visual assonance with programmed objects, feature which underlined the fusion of the two worlds which had long since come into contact with one another (figs. 8 – 15).

The clear aim was to show the *zeitgeist* of industrial society. Visual relations among programmed structures, forms and objects of the industrial production finally came to surface. Celant concretised that visual intent through the exhibition of objects which came from Italian domestic and working environments.

In order to underline that point, the clear subdivision of different sections into “packaging”, “graphic”, “design” and “pure research”<sup>30</sup> established the divide among the works, whose didactical intention was to build up a collective imagination different from that of mass-media. The exhibition represents a further reduction of borders with the Pop culture.

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<sup>26</sup> U. Apollonio, op. cit. 1979, p.174.

<sup>27</sup> *Forme programmate*, catalogue, September 1965, Castello del Valentino, Torino, Industrie Grafiche, Turin, 1965.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. note 9. See appendix.

<sup>29</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Germano Celant – undated – to Apollonio (7 letters). Letter from Celant to Apollonio August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1965. See appendix.

<sup>30</sup> *Mostre musei gallerie*, editorial, «SeleArte», no.76, October- December, Florence, 1965, pp.66-68. The article did not mention New Tendency artists and works.



As far as the fusion between pure research and industrial design is concerned, it's worth mentioning the emblematic case of Colombo.

The 1962 work *Strutturazione Acentrica* (fig. 16) shown in Turin passed through different stages. After its creation, Gianni Colombo transformed it into a series sculpture (figs. 17-19)<sup>31</sup>. The structure of the object remained identical to itself, with no evolution. That implied its artistic value was higher than the functional one which was restricted to the ability of giving off light like a lamp.

Subsequently, between 1963 and 1964, Gianni Colombo's brother, Joe - whom shared with him the same studio in early Sixties<sup>32</sup> and was trained in the environment of Nuclearism in Milan - succeeded in transforming *Strutturazione Acentrica* into a mobile bookcase, showing that programmed objects could be used as a model for industrial production of furniture or more elaborated objects (fig. 20,21).

A similar experimentation could be seen in the section devoted to industrial poster designing in which Eugenio Carmi (fig. 22) represented the only effective application to New Tendency research to the development of convenience goods' reproductions.

Moreover, as Argan pointed out, Carmi had become an artist whom possessed the means of production. In Genoa, in Autumn 1963, Carmi and his wife Kiky Vices Vinci founded the Boccadasse Cooperative and the Deposito Gallery. Their aim was to put together artists and critics belonging to New Tendency movement. At the same time, they wanted to offer a laboratory and a gallery where reproductions could be realised and exhibited. Carmi was in contact with Alviani<sup>33</sup> (fig. 23) and Apollonio<sup>34</sup> whom opened him the doors to East Europe. It was during that period that Vera Horvat-Pintarić became member of the Cooperative together with Bruno Alfieri and Gillo Dorfles.

The Cooperative had its own monthly journal which was regularly sent to the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti in Zagreb. The liaison between Genoa and Zagreb had just began in Summer 1963 when Carmi visited *Nove Tendencije 2* and had the opportunity to meet Horvat-Pintarić and her husband Brano Horvat. Horvat was one of the best printer in Zagreb and the owner of a gallery where silk-screen prints were produced by Yugoslavian and Italian artists.

For instance, many important works were commissioned by N Group.

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<sup>31</sup> *A Milano un 'grande magazzino' per l'arredamento moderno*, editorial, «Domus», no. 438, May, 1966, Milan, pp. 21-29.

<sup>32</sup> *Joe Colombo. Inventing the Future*, catalogue, September 16<sup>th</sup> – December 18<sup>th</sup> 2005, Triennale di Milano, Vitra Design Museum/ La Triennale di Milano, Vitra Design Stiftung, Skira, Milan, 2005.

<sup>33</sup> *Oggetti/Objects*, catalogue, Galleria del Deposito – Gruppo Cooperativo di Boccadasse, 1965?, Genova.

<sup>34</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 5. Letter from Carmi to Apollonio of April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1962. Carmi asked to Apollonio for being his critic at the 13<sup>th</sup> Premio Lissone. Unit 4. Letter from Carmi to Apollonio of November 14<sup>th</sup> 1963. Invitation to Apollonio for opening of the Galleria del Deposito-Gruppo Cooperativo di Boccadasse, on November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1963. Correspondence between Eugenio Carmi and Umbro Apollonio. Letters from July 15<sup>th</sup> 1964 to September 8<sup>th</sup> 1964. Concerning some pictures for Italsider review in which would publish an article by Ponente on 1964 Venice Biennial.

As reported in the journal dated February 1964<sup>35</sup>, Horvat became a member of the Cooperative during the exhibition devoted to Miroslav Šutej at Deposito Gallery.

In parallel with that exhibition, in October from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> 1964, an exhibition devoted to the works of Carmi took place in Zagreb. The catalogue, written by Vera Horvat-Pintarić<sup>36</sup>, guided the interpretation on Carmi's works towards a formal and technical coincidence with Neo Dadaism and pop art. According to Horvat-Pintarić, the repetition of elements taken from poster designing and advertising packaging made his paintings become 'object paintings'. Carmi's works belonged to an industrial landscape and, according to Putar<sup>37</sup> on «Čovjek i prostor», were realised with a particular technique which focused on materials and expressed a taste for shocking images which recalled the Baroque tradition.

Thanks to the success of the exhibition devoted to Carmi, the gallery bought some of his works such as *Rosso e Nero e 4 Cerchi e Conti Calda Ec* (figs. 24, 25). As Alviani did, in April 1965 Carmi exhibited his works at the Mala Galerija in Ljubljana<sup>38</sup>. The presentation in the catalogue was written by Dorfles. Although Carmi did not produce conventional programmed works, together with Alviani, he can be considered one of the most important Italian artists whom contributed to strengthen the relationship between Italian and Croatian New Tendency movement. It's worth underling that Carmi's works, as he occurred at 1966 Venice Biennial, anticipated the coincidence between Optical art and Pop art, a trend he taken into account in New York only after *The Responsive Eye*.

§ *The democratic industrial product in Yugoslavia and Vjenceslav Richter's «sinturbanism» theory.*

Carmi's fortune in Yugoslavia was due to a growing interest in the Italian industrial design as was showed by a great itinerant exhibition organized by the Milan Triennial Body. From January to March 1963, the first stage was in Beograd, then Sarajevo, Zagreb and Ljubljana; the Yugoslav chef curator was Vjenceslav Richter as the president of SLUPUJ (Savez likovnih umetnika primjenjenih umetnosti Jugoslavije/Association of Artists of Applied Arts of Yugoslavia).

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<sup>35</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb, NT Found. Folder 49. We found of Carmi's monthly Bulletin, the following issues: no.2, February 1964 – exhibition no.4 of Miroslav Šutej; no.5, May 1964 – exhibition no.7 of Paolo Scheggi; no.3 March 1965 – exhibition no. 16 of Hermann Goeppert; no.5, May 1965 – exhibition no.18 of Victor Vasarely; no.7, August 1965 – exhibition no. 20 of Karl Gerstner.

<sup>36</sup> *Eugenio Carmi*, catalogue, October 2<sup>nd</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> 1964, Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1964.

<sup>37</sup> R. Putar, *Eugenio Carmi*, «Čovjek i Prostor», nos. 130-140, October-November, Zagreb, 1964. «Mjestimice se čini kao da Carmi teži prema strukturanju površine pomoću linearni ritmova. Ali to nije tako. Njegova je kompozicija u svakom slučaju klasične vrste, kao što je i njegov senzibilitet za govor materije ukorjenjen u tradiciji elitnoga Baroka» p.10.

<sup>38</sup> *Carmi*, catalogue, April 1965, Mala Galerija Ljubljana, Delo, Ljubljana, 1965.

In Zagreb *Italijanski industrijski dizajn* (Italian industrial design)<sup>39</sup> was set up at the Muzej za umjetnost i obrt<sup>40</sup>. The exhibition, according to the Milan Body secretary Tommaso Ferraris, was an ideal continuation in the debate on the social role of industrial design as the Triennial in 1954 launched (fig. 26).

Richter claimed in Yugoslavia the public had a strong interest in the industrial design planning and its theories. However, on «Čovjek i prostor» - in May and April issues of 1963 - were different statements. Putar<sup>41</sup> explained reasons of the exhibition and praised the Italian design, for harmonious and serial objects were innovative from the point of view of the technique and planning originality. As a consequence, he highlighted in Italy that research was common to both painting and sculpture. As Bruno Munari's works – whose was the Danese ashtray reproduced - showed the way joining the industrial design technique with the geometric precision of painting, close to Mondrian (fig. 27).

In contrast, the architect Darko Venturini<sup>42</sup> criticized Munari's ashtray because although it had a good shape, was lack of a real social function to popularize the design.

That matter was the main in the exhibition, in which however only Nizzoli and the duo Zanuso-Supper were able to represent a democratic design. Owing to the curators whom had more interest in artistic characters than functional ones. In fact, Venturini meant the Yugoslav design aim was to democratize industrial products through useful and plain shapes.

Also in Italy that matter was argued, as made Dorfles whom told about the design degenerated into “styling” and his idea was known in Yugoslavia thanks to Meštrović's<sup>43</sup> translations. In 1963, the Croatian critic, indeed, translated the Dorfles's essay *Le oscillazioni del gusto* (1958)<sup>44</sup> and reviewed *Il disegno industriale e la sua estetica* (1963)<sup>45</sup> on «Čovjek i prostor» in 1964.

Consequently, besides Carmi as artist also Dorfles was a well-known aesthetic scholar in Yugoslavia when was involved as a jury member at the *Bienale industrijskega oblikovanja* (Biennial of Industrial Design)<sup>46</sup> – BIO – which held at the Moderna Galerija of Ljubljana in

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<sup>39</sup> *Italijanski industrijski dizajn*, catalogue, January - March, Beograd, Sarajevo, Ljubljana, Zagreb, 'Kultura', Beograd, 1963.

<sup>40</sup> Z. Munk, *Arhitektura Muzeja prostora*, «Arhitektura», nos. 5-6, Winter - Spring, 1962-63, pp. 7- 14.

<sup>41</sup> R. Putar, *Standard industrijskog oblikovanja u Italiji*, «Čovjek i prostor», no.121, April, 1963. «Posve je očito da je vrijednost italijanskog industrijskog “dizajna” u neposrednoj vezi i sa količinama likovne tradicije i općeg standarda likovne kulture u toj zemlji. U onom smislu u kojem se razvija moderna likovna umjetnost i Italiji na području slikarstva, skulpture i arhitekture, razvija se i umjetnost oblikovanja predmeta kojih je praktične prirode. Ne bi bilo lako provesti neposredne usporedbe između tipičnih slikarskih i tipičnih ‘dizajnerskih’ rješenja u suvremenoj Italiji. [...]Ako su Munarijeve kompozicije na slikarskoj plosi u smislu Mondrianovih aposlutnih kvaliteta oblika i boja, pristupačne uglavnom: odgojenom i napose orijentiranom senzibilitetu, u i tisućama oblika Munarijevih pepeljara taj je likovni rječnik namijenjen i pristupačan zaista svakome. Kad bismo u okviru izložbe morali odabrati primjer najsrećnijega jedinstva formi, praktične upotrebljivosti i proizvodne tehnike, onda bismo zaista Munarijevoj pepeljari odali najveće priznanje» p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> D. Venturini, *Izložba nespোরазума (i nespোরазума oko izložbe). (D)efekti talijanskog oblikovanja*, «Čovjek i prostor», no. 122, May, 1963, p.7.

<sup>43</sup> M. Meštrović, *Industrija I njen oblik*, «Čovjek i prostor», nos.133-134, April-May, Zagreb, 1964, pp. 13-15.

<sup>44</sup> G. Dorfles, *Oscilacije ukusa I modern umjetnosti*, Mladost, Zagreb, 1963.

<sup>45</sup> Dorfles, op. cit., 1963.

<sup>46</sup> *I. Bienale industrijskega oblikovanja*, catalogue, October 9<sup>th</sup> – November 15<sup>th</sup> 1964, Moderna Galerija, Lubiana, ČZP «Ljudska pravica», Ljubljana, 1964.

Autumn 1964. Together Dorflies were also two New Tendency representatives like Karl Gerstner and Vjenceslav Richter.

The event was one of the most significant international meeting took place in a Socialist country. Were compared two worlds – the Communist East face to face with the Capitalist West – to define types of industrial shapes which integrated the functionalism tradition with the attention to artistic “detail”.

By ICSID (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design) and ICOGRADA (International Council of Graphic Design Associations) sponsorship, in the event took part the major Yugoslav (ISKRA from Kranj, Stol from Karmik, Jugokeramika from Zagreb and the popular Skopje glass), Western and Soviet companies.

In the “toys” section was Enzo Mari for Milan Bruno Danese and in the “graphic” one was Ivan Picelj for Zagreb Studenteski Center (figs. 28,29). Exhibited objects did not follow the contemporary futuristic forms trend, linked to the “space exploration”, but showed an exact planning that certainly was more plain than programmed and kinetic works (figs. 30,31). Yugoslav design, specially, was not close to Soviet ideology<sup>47</sup> but its aim was to depict democratic needs by means of no elitist, low cost daily objects.

As a consequence the second BIO – nevertheless was the international last - was due to the success of the former, and took place at the Ljubljana Moderna Galerija in Summer 1966<sup>48</sup>, second time round by ICSID, ICOGRADA and Italian ADI (Associazione per il Disegno Industriale) sponsorship.

Among jury members were Dorflies and Richter, and also was called Apollonio<sup>49</sup> whom worked as consultant suggesting to be involve Bulgar scholar Elka Nenova like industrial design expert as to confirm his interest in Eastern studies.

About the exhibitors from Italy came to Ljubljana a lot of companies<sup>50</sup>: the steel industry Italsider, Milan Brionvega and Irradio – for domestic appliance -, Danese and Kartell - for furniture. Also, Necchi company from Pavia and Solari from Udine – for machine tool – and at last Olivetti (figs. 32,33). Were prized Italian Marco Zanuso by two gold and Gino Colombini by two special mentions.

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<sup>47</sup> D. Crowley, J. Pavitt, *Cold War Modern, Design 1945-1970*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2008.

<sup>48</sup> 2. *Bienale industrijskega oblikovanja*, katalogo, June 10<sup>th</sup> – September 18<sup>th</sup> 1966, Moderna Galerija, Lubiana ČZP «Ljudska pravica», Ljubljana, 1966.

<sup>49</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Correspondence Apollonio-Krznisnik-Gnamuš of 1965. See appendix.

<sup>50</sup> There exhibitors were Ettore Sottsass with electrical typewrite machines *Praxis 48* and *Tekne 3*, for Olivetti. Marco Zanuso with television Algol 11 and radio OM-MF, for Brionvega; together Sapper a cabinet and a chair for Kartell. Gino Valle with clock Synchron 3 for Solari. Achille and Piergiacomo Castiglioni with a draught beer for BRAS of Milano. Mario Bellini with computer machine CMC7-7001 for Olivetti. Gino Colombini with an ashtray for Kartell. Bruno Munari with an ash tray and hanging lamp, and Enzo Mari with “Fair tail game” for Danese. From Croatian side there was the team work from CIO (Centar za industrijsko oblikovanje) of Zagreb, composed by Juraj Dobrović, Julie Knifer e Evgen Feller. They made boxes for Chromos Katran Kutrilin, produced by CIO of Zagreb.

Yugoslav press showed interest in the Biennial as made, for instance, Slovenian art magazine «Sinteza», on which the event was depicted as fundamental to exchange cultural, technical and industrial products among the involved countries<sup>51</sup>.

Also in Italy the BIO editions were the focus of attention on specialized visual art, industrial and graphic reviews from «Marcatre» - on which paid attention in 1964 and 1966 – to «Casabella».

On «Marcatre», Dorfles<sup>52</sup> about the relationship between industrial design and “fine arts” highlighted that on the one hand the former had reached an amazing international agreement, on the other hand the latter had not made the same effort.

Celant<sup>53</sup>, on «Casabella», explained in Ljubljana what Snow had suggested about the “two cultures” has been materialized. By means the team work the scientific sphere and humanistic one had reached an interdisciplinary approach. Have been produced by a programming control some of objects and classified through generative aesthetics by Moles and Bense: a metric, statistic and topologic process. The “metric” moment meant numerical measurement and calculation of forms, “statistic” one consisted in how many times a form had a way of repeating itself, and the last, “topologic” – as Molnar and Morellet had suggested in 1963 - was the mathematic calculation of forms were subjected to deformation.

As consequence, the aesthetics, that the two scholars borrowed from the Theory of Information and Cybernetics, had suggested to understand the design in a better way than has been made during the *Nova Tendencija 3*.

The same matter was analyzed by Vjenceslav Richter whom published his most important essay in 1964: *Sinturbanizam*<sup>54</sup> which Richter wanted to translate into Italian, as he asked to Apollonio<sup>55</sup> for. The essay, well-known in Zagreb artistic and architectonic circles<sup>56</sup>, was in the same time with a solo exhibition of him<sup>57</sup> held in April 1964 at the Muzej za umjetnost i obrt.

Were exhibited drawings, architectonic planning, combinatory sculptures and mobile objects<sup>58</sup>. The exhibition poster, also, seemed a direct reference to another one has been made by

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<sup>51</sup> M. Gnamuš, *1. Biennale industrijskega obliovanja BIO Ljubljana*, «Sinteza», no.2, July, Ljubljana, 1965, pp.64-69; F. Ivanšek, *Iz Razgovora II. BIO*, «Delo», July 13<sup>th</sup>, Ljubljana, 1966; M. Tepina, *Sinteze industrijskega obliovanja*, «Sinteza», nos.5-6, Ljubljana, 1967.

<sup>52</sup> G. Dorfles, *BIO, Seconda Biennale del Disegno Industriale a Lubiana*, «Marcatre», nos.26-27-28-29, December, Genoa, 1966, pp.109-113.

<sup>53</sup> G. Celant, *II Biennale di disegno industriale*, «Casabella», no.311, November – December, Milan, 1966, pp.70-72.

<sup>54</sup> V. Richter, *Sinturbanizam*, Mladost, Zagreb, 1964.

<sup>55</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Vjenceslav Richter to Apollonio of January 15<sup>th</sup> 1965. «Cher Monsieur, je m'excuse mille fois pour un tel retard, mais il etait presque impossible trouver un exemplaire du livre, et après il fallait organiser la traductions des lagaudes. Eu tendant da vous faire plus clair le sens du SynthUrbanizme, je vaous envpir un texte qui explique le deouxieme part du livre. Je serius très heureux si vous y trouvere un interet, parce que peut etre il sereuit possible d'organizer une edition en italien»

<sup>56</sup> M. Meštrović, *Urbanizam ostvarljivog uz teze Vjenceslava Richtera*, «Čovjek i prostor», no.135, June, Zagreb, 1964, pp.2-3.

<sup>57</sup> Richter, catalogue, April 8- 24<sup>th</sup> 1964, Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb, 1964.

<sup>58</sup> V. Horvat-Pintarić, *Vjenceslav Richter*, op.cit., 1970,

Mari for the Düsseldorf *Arte programmata* exhibition in 1963. That showed as Richter was following the Italian programmed art research<sup>59</sup> (figs. 34,35).

The work and specially *Sinturbanizam* were also well-known in Italy on «Casabella» and thanks to Argan.

In December 1965, on «Casabella»<sup>60</sup> an editorial about new Yugoslav architectonic and artistic researches quoted the Richter's essay. Reproduced its cover made in a kind of New Tendency "style" (fig. 37) and also other five pictures: the «Sinteza» first issue cover, one Ivan Picelj's *Surface*, one «Čovjek i prostor» cover, a reproduction of Richter's Yugoslav pavilion scale model for 1964 Milan Triennial and at last, a picture of Moles was watching a Richter's work taken during the *Nova Tendencija 3*. All together the pictures depicted the Yugoslav "modernism" panorama, as recently Jerko Denegri has suggested<sup>61</sup>.

In contrast, Argan criticized Richter's architectonic point of view. In 1965, in *Progetto e destino*<sup>62</sup>, according to Italian critic, Richter's ziqurat architecture changed the monumental and political control myth with the macroscopic and technological control one («*il mito del macroscopico e del potere tecnologico*»). However, Argan did not read *Sinturbanizam* because a quotation was taken away from it and translated into Italian the first time in January 1967 on «Lineastruttura»<sup>63</sup>.

The essay was important both in Croatia and Italy – such as nowadays - for a chapter which was devoted to New Tendency works and their formal and structural relations with the industrial design.

Both kind of objects were permeated by the revolutionary and innovative technological characters as such as standardized surfaces and multiplied anonymous structures synthesized time and space. New Tendency language based on modular units which at the same time built visual flat surfaces, three-dimensional forms by a fourth time dimension.

As architectures, New Tendency structures had a innovative optical, tactile and spatial dimension by means of new standard and commercialized matters. The works morphology had a continuity between monochrome and polychrome, shifted from plain to plastic (meant as sculpture), from plastic to space and from static to dynamic.

Indeed Richter reached those statements, since the latest of Fifties, by studying new industrial matters were utilized to cover architectonic surface, for sound and thermal insulation and to

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<sup>59</sup> J. Galjer, *op. Cit.*, 2009.

<sup>60</sup> *Urbanistica in Jugoslavia*, editorial, «Casabella», no.300, December, Milan, 1965, pp. 18-20.

<sup>61</sup> J. Denegri, *Inside or Outside "Socialist Modernist"? Radical Views on the Yugoslav Art Scene, 1950-1970*, in D. Djurić, M. Šuvaković (edited by), *op. cit.*, 2003, pp. 170-208.

<sup>62</sup> G.C.Argan, *op. cit.* 1965. «[...] La ricerca stilistica o formalistica, che ha ripreso fiato dopo la crisi rigoristica del razionalismo, svaluta l'attività di piano e ripropone la validità dell'edificio in sé, della cosa architettata. Non mira a determinare una situazione spazio-temporale in fieri, ma cerca la forma plastica unitaria e chiusa, come realtà e simbolo. Tra le due posizioni v'è una relazione di antagonismo e complementarietà, come tra Ghestalt e Pop-Art: le Unités d'habitation di Le Courbusier, per non parlare del più paradossale Sintrurbanismo di Richter, mirano a fare rientrare l'urbanistica nell'architettura comprimendo tutta una città in un solo edificio e bloccando così, per la sua durata, lo sviluppo storico di una comunità», pp.52-53.

<sup>63</sup> V. Richter, *Sinturbanistica*, «Lineastruttura», nos.1-2, January - March, Naples, 1967, pp.34-38.

improve the light reflexion or dispersion. On engineering level visual, plastic and time factors were integrated through modular elements.

To depict his discourse Richter reproduced works of Castellani, Mavignier, Stein, Picelj and his own pavilion at the 1964 Milan Triennial. In fact, New Tendency works if were compared to industrial panels, which were advertised on review like «Esthetique Industrielle»<sup>64</sup>, showed similar surface forms (figg. 38-45).

However, the real difference between the two objects, according to Richter, consisted in the way they worked. On the other hand, Richter suggested that they were able to find a synthesis by a new urban dimension, in which his Utopian architectures have carried New Tendency works in the daily life<sup>65</sup>. As last consequence, his statements seemed to refer to the programmed environments were exhibited at the 1964 *Nouvelle Tendence*.

§ 2. *From Paris to New York. Optical art precedents: Mondrian's fortune in the American New Abstraction painting.*

New Tendency development suffered a setback when in Spring 1965 international exhibition *The Responsive Eye* opened in New York. The main matter was in regard to European researches and American ones overlapped each other under the name Optical Art. Although some contacts have been thanks to Mondrian's works and Bauhaus's teaching as a tradition in common, American artists developed autonomous and often opposite researches in respect of European ones<sup>66</sup>.

1957, for instance, Meyer Schapiro<sup>67</sup> stressed the importance of an autonomous character of American abstract painting as an onward trusting in self-sufficient forms and colours in painting, was due to artist's freedom.

According to Shapiro, abstraction led to crisis social roles and habits; also, Action painting and Abstract expressionism were ultimate "handmade" objects showed the most human efforts in the contemporary culture. Pollock's painting and technology had some characters in common: they were "automatism" and "randomness" but by opposite meanings. Automatism and randomness in Modern painting meant emerging forms from the unconscious that neither had any kind of previous planning nor anticipated the spectator's perception outcomes. In contrast, the industrial technology meant "automatism" as an alienation product and the visual communication failure was due to "randomness" as noise.

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<sup>64</sup> *Matériaux nouveaux – formes nouvelles*, editorial, «Esthetique Industrielle», no. 55, March-April, 1962, Paris, pp. 11-15.

<sup>65</sup> V. Richter, op. cit., 1964, pp.73-82.

<sup>66</sup> S. Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, The University of Chicago, 1984.

<sup>67</sup> M. Schapiro, *Recent Abstract Painting*, pp. 213-226; *On the humanity of abstract painting*, pp. 227-232; *Mondrian, Order and Randomness in Abstract Painting*, pp.233-261, in *Modern Art*, George Braziller, New York, 1982.

Continuing in that idea, in 1960 Shapiro linked contemporaneous American painting with Mondrian's abstraction, since young artists borrowed from Mondrian his spiritual strength and the technique to compose the surface using a few of changeable units. In a similar way, Mondrian's asymmetric orthogonal grid that reached out canvas borders was a precedent for the "all over" technique in the Action painting (figs. 46,47).

That so-called "New York school" – means not a physical place but an ideal attitude which Pollock, Motherwell, Still, Rothko and Newman<sup>68</sup> had in common – between 1958 and 1959, just after the first "cold war" phase, had a great success in Western as such as Eastern Europe through the *The new American painting* exhibition.

It took place in the major European cities like Milan, Amsterdam, Bruxelles and London. The New York vanguard success reached Eastern Europe. In Yugoslavia, for instance, Beograd Government asked to American institutions for set up another exhibition to show their latest art researches. The first stage of *American Vanguard Painting*<sup>69</sup>, was been in charge by the Long Beach Gallery director Jerome Alla Donson, was in September 1961 in Beograd, in October in Skopje and in December both in Zagreb and Ljubljana, and at last in Rijeka/Fiume in January 1962.

In Zagreb, Vera Horvat-Pintarić<sup>70</sup> told about the most popular American Action painting and New Dada artists, highlighting that they had a continuity with European painting has taken place between the two wars and the following Fifties. In Zagreb, some artists came from the younger generation like Ad Reinhardt, Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, Jaspers Johns and Robert Rauschenberg (figs. 48-51). Reinhardt's case was special because his painting reached extreme pure values until being "monochrome". His art form grew by a continuous comparison with Mondrian's geometric abstraction, using regular grids and joined these with visual effects of complementary colours, according to teaching by Josef Albers<sup>71</sup>.

In addition, Harold Rosenberg<sup>72</sup> from his critic point of view was involved in the artistic debate on Mondrian. In both edition of *The Tradition of new*, in 1959 and 1960, focused his own attention on the relationship between art and revolution, concerning Neoplasticism theory.

According to Rosenberg, during the Twentieth century deep differences happened between political revolution and artistic one. The former consisted in a violent change, the latter had not destroyed any but revealed what was just destroyed. Mondrian's radicalism was not able to wish another world but to understand old balance and beauty forms had disappeared from the art and society.

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<sup>68</sup> F. Tedeschi, op.cit., 2004, pp.181-236.

<sup>69</sup> J. A. Donson, *The American Vanguard exhibitions in Europe*, «Art Journal», vol.22, no.4, Summer, 1963, College Art Association, Los Angeles, pp. 242-245.

<sup>70</sup> V. Horvat-Pintarić, *Suvremeno Američko slikarstvo*, «Telegram», December 1<sup>st</sup> 1961, Zagreb, p.5.

<sup>71</sup> F. Tedeschi, op. cit., 2004, pp. 229-231.

<sup>72</sup> H. Rosenberg, *La tradizione del nuovo*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1964, pp. 57-65.



As a consequence, the main character of contemporary art was a revolutionary anonymity since apolitical artists painted by an external logic that was due to the society development level.

One year later, in 1961 Clement Greenberg by *Modernist Painting* became the critic guide<sup>73</sup> for the second artists generation whom wanted to regain their social role. In fact, Greenberg refused the Romantic artist idea as an “academic” rebel, encouraging an history of the modernist painting in which the artist was able to be a professional feature by a specific job: the painter.

Therefore Greenberg, by the so-called Post Painterly Abstraction<sup>74</sup>, claimed the main character was the “flatness”, meaning the two-dimensional structure was the “contents” of the thinking on the painting<sup>75</sup>.

In the early Sixties, authors like Frank Stella, Carl Andre and Richard Morris (figs. 52-55), crossed through that painting zero degree, carried their paintings in the three-dimensional space and changed them into objects. In that way, they gone back to a speech on the sculpture<sup>76</sup>. A “minimal” character was in their objects and in 1965 thanks to Donald Judd’s manifesto entitled *Specific Objects*, the works were knew like Minimal art in which:

*«half or more of the best new work in the last few years has been  
neither painting nor sculpture»<sup>77</sup>.*

In addition to American modernism such as meant by Schapiro, Greenberg and Rosenberg, the architecture and industrial design achieves maintained a direct link with historic Bauhaus. That continuous dialog was due to the teachers of Gropius’s school when they had gone to America.

The Constructivist and rationalist European traditions imported their own social utopia – nowadays called “Bauhaus modernisme”<sup>78</sup> - whose fundamental aim was a pure formal research both in paintings and industrial objects.

For instance, Josef Albers’s<sup>79</sup> paintings showed that. Albers, whom was the first Bauhaus teacher to go in US, between Forties and Fifties taught at the Black Mountain College, in North Carolina and Yale University. He taught the applied study of the Gestalt as such as he had made for the *vorkurs* at the Bauhaus (figs. 56-59). Since the Weimar and Dessau period, Albers continued also to encourage the social aims and to involve artist in the industry.

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<sup>73</sup> T. De Duve, *The Monochrome and the Black Canvas*, in *Reconstructing Modernism. Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal 1945-1964*, edited by S. Guilbaut, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991, pp. 244-309.

<sup>74</sup> C. Greenberg, *Post Painterly Abstraction*, «Art International», nos. 5-6, Summer, 1964, Lugano, pp. 63-65.

<sup>75</sup> R.A. Carmen, Jr, *Modernist Art 1960 to 1970*, in *The Great Decade of American Abstraction Modernist Art 1970 to 1970*, catalogue, January – March, 1974, The Museum of Fine Arts, Huston, The Press of A. Colish, Mount Vernon, New York, 1974, pp. 13-39.

<sup>76</sup> M. Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, in *Minimal Art. A Critical anthology*, (edited by) G. Battcock, E. P. Dutton&Co., New York, 1968, pp.116-147.

<sup>77</sup> T. Duve, op. cit. 2009, p. 267.

<sup>78</sup> M. Kentgens-Craig, *The Bauhaus and America. First Contacts 1919-1936*, The Mitt Press, Cambridge, London, 2001, p.XV.

<sup>79</sup> F. A. Horowitz, B. Dalinowitz, *Josef Albers: To Open Eyes*, Phaidon Press, London-New York, 2006, pp.73-149.

However, in the US the Bauhaus revolutionary utopia was progressively deprived of all political meaning<sup>80</sup>, on the other hand it met American pragmatic educational system as was affirmed by John Dewey's *Art as experience*<sup>81</sup>. Albers's teaching, nevertheless, was able to form the younger painter generation, like American Frank Stella, and – according to Kirk Varnedoe<sup>82</sup> – in the same time his teaching gone back in Europe thanks to the French painter François Morellet (figs. 60,61).

A second way directly linked with Dessau and Berlin Bauhaus was traced by Lazlo Moholy Nagy. Hungarian artist, whose art form followed the Middle-European Constructivism, was involved as the director of the Chicago School of Industrial Design in 1937 which later became the New Bauhaus Institute and then knew as Institute of Design; finally, in 1949 it became a department of the Illinois Institute of Technology. Konrad Wachsmann was involved as chef of Building science Department and the school specific aim was directed towards industrial design.

In 1955 indeed a manifesto showed his educational idea:

*«It is a generally accepted premise that capitalism with its industrial technology has to serve in the most economical way for the realization of profit. However the 'economical' should be subordinated to human requirements to make technology a benefit instead of a course. We must control the application of material, technique, science, and art not only economically but also biologically and socially. [...]. The common denominator is the fundamental acknowledgement of human needs; the task is to recognize the moral obligation in satisfying these needs, and the aim is to produce for human needs, not for profit.»<sup>83</sup>*

The original aim of Moholy-Nagy, whom explained it by the essay *The New Vision* (1938)<sup>84</sup>, continued to exist (figs. 62,63), as is shown by the quotation above. Also, Moholy-Nagy's fortune was encouraged by his wife Sybil<sup>85</sup> whom in 1950 published the biographical monograph *Moholy-Nagy. Experiment in Totality*, in which her explained the artistic development of Hungarian artist and his relations with German and Middle-European vanguard artists.

In Italy and Croatia the Moholy-Nagy work was acknowledged in different way. Although in Italy Sibil Moholy-Nagy's essay was reviewed on «Domus»<sup>86</sup> in 1952, the individual life history of Lazlo was included in the general Bauhaus panorama thanks to Argan 1951<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>80</sup> P. Gay, *La cultura di Weimar. L'outsider come insider*, Dedalo, Bari, 2002 (ed. orig. Ing. 1968).

<sup>81</sup> M. Kentgens-Craig, op. cit., 2001, pp. 214-216.

<sup>82</sup> K. Varnedoe, *Pictures of Nothing*, Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 61 et seq.

<sup>83</sup> H. M. Wingler, *The Bauhaus*, Mit Press, London, 1978, p. 197.

<sup>84</sup> L. Moholy-Nagy, *The new vision*, Norton & Company, New York, 1938, pp. 90-160.

<sup>85</sup> S. Moholy-Nagy, *Moholy-Nagy. Experiment in Totality*, The MIT press, 1969.

<sup>86</sup> S. Moholy-Nagy, *Moholy Nagy e la Bauhaus*, «Domus», no. 272, July – August, Milan, 1952, pp.41-44.

<sup>87</sup> G.C.Argan, op. cit.,1951.

Croatian artists, instead, met Moholy-Nagy work and the New Bauhaus teaching in two occasions apart. In 1950 for the Chicago International Fair Vjenceslav Richter, Ivan Picelj and Zvonimir Radić set up the Yugoslavia pavilion. They built geometrical prisms as cells exhibiting Yugoslav national goods (fig. 64). Richter spent a month in Chicago and viewed the Institute of Technology<sup>88</sup> and when he gone back to Zagreb, founded together the above-mentioned colleagues the Exat 51 Group.

All group members knew the Bauhaus's lesson by means of a direct reading of its main theoretical essays. In Zagreb, thanks to architect Radić (1921-1985) came in *Vision in Motion* by Moholy-Nagy and *The Language of vision* by Gyorgy Kepes<sup>89</sup> in the first Fifties.

Among artists which emigrated from Europe to US, in Chicago Kepes<sup>90</sup> was one of the most important theorist about visual arts and he published his fundamental essay entitled *Language of vision* (1944)<sup>91</sup>. It was a kind of visual atlas to teach Gestalt studies and the modern art evolution from Mondrian's abstract painting to constructivist researches of El Lissitzky. That essay had also success in Italy; i.e. Munari<sup>92</sup> to illustrate his book *Quadrato*, borrowed from Kepes's *Language of vision* quite pictures.

That straight complex of relations between United States and Eastern Europe, for instance, was represented by the exhibition *Construction and Geometry in Painting from Malevitch to Tomorrow* (fig. 65) held in March 1960 at the Chalette Gallery of New York<sup>93</sup>.

Were exhibited a few of works which showed the continuity from historical Neoplasticism and Constructivism researches to younger European painters as Ivan Picelj, whose was the first American exhibition<sup>94</sup>.

Also Apollonio claimed his own interest in the event since he suggested that Malevitch's revival was a sign of returning the new vanguard towards Eastern Europe<sup>95</sup>.

As a consequence geometric abstract painting returned to its own humanistic root – free from Greenberg's modernism – and social aims but within a specific historical meaning.

According to American artist Robert J. Wolff (1905-1977)<sup>96</sup>, whom worked with Moholy-Nagy and Kepes in Chicago, the American painting vanguard was coping with a dilemma. Owing to it had found any autonomy of painting out – against Greenberg's modernism – as a result that was into the historical word “art”. The “art”, in fact, was full of human habits and two were the

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<sup>88</sup> V. Horvat Pintarić, *op.cit.* 1970, pp.7-9.

<sup>89</sup> V. Horvat Pintarić, *Tradiciija i moderna*, HAZU, 2009, p.528

<sup>90</sup> R. K. Wick, *Teaching at the Bauhaus*, Hatije Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2000, p. 356.

<sup>91</sup> G. Kepes, *Il linguaggio della visione*, Dedalo, Bari, 1971.

<sup>92</sup> B. Munari, *op.cit.*, 1960.

<sup>93</sup> *Construction and geometry in painting. From Malevitch to 'Tomorrow'*, catalogue, March 31st – June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1960, Galerie Chalette, New York, 1960. «Construction and geometry in painting is an effort to review one major facet of abstract art which originated two generations ago and continues vigorously to this day. [...] Abstract art in its many phases has by this time reached a climax and turning point. It is now possible to see past and present in a clearer perspective and to envision developments in the future».

<sup>94</sup> D. Suro, *New York. Construction et géométrie en peinture 'De Malevitch à demain'*, «Aujourd'hui. Art et architecture», no. 29, December, Paris, 1960, p. 54.

<sup>95</sup> U. Apollonio, *op. cit.*, 1963, p. 23.

<sup>96</sup> R. J. Wolff, *The Dilemma of American Avant-garde Painting*, «Art Journal», vol.22, no.3, Spring, 1963, College Art Association, Los Angeles, pp. 153-157.

ways – according to Sigfried Giedion’s “ruling taste” - to overcome the “end of art”: on the one hand the irrational Dada, on the other hand a need of rationality, coming from Bauhaus’s teaching.

Both art forms were able to find the illusion of painting autonomy out that until then had invalidated the word “art”. Dada and Bauhaus, consequently, had shown the whole art world did not identify itself with painting only, but the latter was into vital human sphere. By means of, i.e., heterogeneous matters, taking object away from or putting object in every-day dimension.

The discarded or planned object importance had as a consequence by artists and art critics a new interest in the object spatial presence as sculpture.

According to Dale G. Cleaver (1928-2000)<sup>97</sup>, a teacher at the University of Tennessee, the static in modern sculpture was replaced with a new demand of movement representation – by means of machine, increasing science role and tracing the progress idea. The art passed from a naturalistic representation of movement, by Rodin, to a no figurative sculpture in which the abstraction included scientific outcomes, by Gabo and Pevsner; finally to Calder whom did not show the movement but his works were kinetic by themselves. However, scientific relativism destroyed Aristotle’s physics as such as modern social certainties. Dadaist *collage-reliefs*, Stankiewicz’s *junk sculpture* and Tinguely’s kinetic and self-destructive sculptures represented the irrational reign of existence in the artistic way by objects.

As a consequence programmed works, which begun to come in US during the Sixties, represent the opposite side.

§ *From Chicago, the Moholy-Nagy’s legacy: George Rickey, the Institute of Design and Eastern Europe.*

In regard to kinetic sculpture, George Rickey (1907 - 2002) a sculptor and student from 1948 to 1949 at the Institute of Design of Chicago, attended to kinetic artworks since 1961, when he took part in the *Bewogen Beweging* exhibition of Amsterdam<sup>98</sup>.

In the same year, Rickey<sup>99</sup> was among first American artists whom had interest in the *Nove Tendencije*. On 1963 he sent a letter to committee in Zagreb to ask for information about aims of the Croatian manifestation and to get a copy of catalogues, because he was going to write a forthcoming essay entitled *Heirs of Constructivism*<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>97</sup> D.G. Cleaver, *The concept of time in Modern Sculpture*, «Art Journal», vol.22, no.4, Summer, 1963, CAA, pp. 232-245.

<sup>98</sup> *Bewogen Beweging*, op. cit., 1961.

<sup>99</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT found. Folder NT2 73.163NT2. Letter from George Rickey to secretariat of August 19<sup>th</sup> 1963, New York. «We are working on a book, ‘Heirs of Constructivism’ for the University of California Press. We should very much appreciate your sending us a copy of the 1963 catalogue of ‘Nove Tendencije’. We have the 1961 edition».

<sup>100</sup> G. W. Rickey, *The Morphology of Movement*, «Art Journal», vol. 22, no. 4, Summer, 1963, College Art Association, Los Angeles, pp.220-221.

In 1964, also, on occasion of Venice Biennial Richey published an article titled *The New Tendency (Nouvelle Tendence – Recherche Continue)*<sup>101</sup>, concerning the definition of New Tendency. He claimed that trend, born in Europe, was growing up also in the US. Theoretical and formal New Tendency's base was historical Constructivism, reborn in Europe and especially in Yugoslavia, but in the US it was becoming closer to hard edge painting.

In addition Richey included same ideal meeting places of New Tendency – beyond Zagreb's exhibitions – like Denise René Gallery in Paris, thanks to Udo Kultermann in Leverkusen, Chalette Gallery in New York, with the above-mentioned exhibition in 1960<sup>102</sup> and the latest *Nouvelle Tendence* opened in Paris at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs. Finally, He told in advance that MoMA was going to organize in next 1965 an exhibition dedicated to optical constructivist phenomena and would name *The Responsive Eye*.

Among the American artists closed to *Nouvelle Tendence*, he remembered both Richard Anuskiewicz and John Goodyear, however they were less ideological involved than their European colleagues. Directly knowledge about the ideology of *Nouvelle Tendence* was offered to Richey by Yvaral, GRAV's member, whom had sent to him an abstract of the GRAV's manifesto – by means of a letter on December 16<sup>th</sup> 1963 -; the same showed in 1964.

Richey, among the Italian artists of New Tendency, included N Group, quoted its manifesto and published two works: *Studio della struttura modificabile dallo spettatore* (1962) and *Struttura di nastri in pvc* (1962). From T Group, there was Devecchi's *Lpano* (1963), a vertical structure composed with transparent and square staked rotating units; by Bruno Munari he showed *Struttura continua* (1960) and at last, one *Superficie Bianca* (1961-63) by Enrico Castellani.

According to Richey, N Group and others of New Tendency were followers of Bauhaus's experiments in spite of they did not have directly acquaintance with Gropius's school. Mains formal characters in N Group's works were represented by means of new space idea, meaning as a continuum formed relation between positive and negative plans. They used to apply micro-units to build the texture, the no-Euclidean geometry, the light - as an autonomous meaning factor-, and at last the movement and optical phenomena. For ideological reasons they used industrial materials such as the theory of anonymity depersonalized their art pieces. That way, Richey suggested, came from their contacts with Yugoslavian socialist artists.

On 1967 Richey's statements developed into a new essay entitled *Constructivism, origins and evolution*<sup>103</sup>, in which he explained Constructivism's origins from the past to present and in the US it became the most important study on that matter.

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<sup>101</sup> G. W. Richey, *The New Tendency (Nouvelle Tendence – Recherche Continue)*, «Art Journal», vol.23, no.4, Summer, 1964, CCA, pp.272-273.

<sup>102</sup> *Construction and geometry in painting. From Malevitch to 'Tomorrow'*, op. cit., 1960.

<sup>103</sup> G. W. Richey, *Constructivism, origins and evolution*, George Brazillier, New York, 1967. «Certain activities I describe – such as the “New Tendency” – were more important when I began than they are now; they are already history», pp. VII-VIII.

The essay was published by George Braziller in New York, with whom Richey worked for a previous book series entitled *Vision and value* about the contemporary art, since 1963. In a book was also Gillo Dorfles whom wrote an essay dedicated to the movement morphology<sup>104</sup>.

Kinetic art's fortune begun and since 1961, according to Richey<sup>105</sup>, by means of the international exhibition *Bewogen Beweging* and touched its climax thanks to New Tendency movement.

His essay was built in two sections. The first had an historical development, the second one followed a morphological line to indicate specific elements that had been found, just since 1963 and 1964, in the kinetic and new tendency works. Richey focused his attention on Italian artists' works like Boriani's *Superficie magnetica*, Anceschi's *Percorsi Fluidi*, and Colombo's *Struttura Pulsante*. He highlighted that same works, for instance by Tinguely, although had mechanical movements, were not kinetic art at all.

Richey claimed kinetic art had to be projected with industrial materials but not with waste ones, as it was in Dada art form. In addition, he had interest in works of Alviani, Castellani, Dorazio, Mari and Munari; and, among Croatians, Richter. The last relevant point was that in 1967 Richey joined New Tendency's art works with minimal objects, primary structures and some of the no kinetic, geometric or optical ones (figs. 66-69).

To get back in 1964, Richey affirmed that New Tendency's works went in the US the first time. In fact, that was the year of renewed artistic relations between the US and Europe. Specially by Italian programmed art because Olivetti company brought the *Arte programmata* exhibition, thanks to Smithsonian Institution, around some of American cities<sup>106</sup>.

At the same time Enzo Mari<sup>107</sup> was involving in the Venice Biennial, Olivetti asked him for a journey in New York, to follow the setting of the *Arte programmata* exhibition, was going to take place at the Loeb Center of New York University in next September (fig. 70).

Entirely its title was *Arte programmata. Kinetic Art*. On the brochure catalogue – also designed by Mari - Riccardo Musatti<sup>108</sup> marked the occasion by writing an introduction in which

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<sup>104</sup> G. W. Richey (edited by), *The nature and art of motion*, George Brazillier, New York, 1965. «The third essay, by Dorfles, touches upon the contemporary panorama of the complex interplay between our knowledge and technology of motion, and our psychological, artistic responses to them. Dorfles indicates some of the significant conceptual, technical, and emotional transformations in our industrial world. He points out that the new kinetic conditions have compelled a re-evaluations in our inherited artistic idioms. The new conditions have led to new principles of object shaping. [...] the consequence has been a new form of art in which the dynamic characteristics are central. [...]» p. VIII.

<sup>105</sup> G. W. Richey, op. cit., 1967.

<sup>106</sup> Exhibitions took place between later months of 1964 and during 1965: The Loeb Student Center, New York University, New York; the Art Department, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida; the Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina; the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, Cornell University of Ithaca, New York; the Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, Pennsylvania; the Art Gallery, State University of New York, New Paltz, New York; the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio; The Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; the George Thomas Hunter Gallery of Art, Chattanooga, Tennessee; the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; the Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; the Tampa Art Institute, Tampa, Florida.

<sup>107</sup> Adriano Olivetti Foundation archive, Ivrea. Folder Giorgio Soavi. Letter from Soavi to Mari of July 8<sup>th</sup> 1964. See appendix.

<sup>108</sup> *Arte programmata. Kinetic Art*, catalogue, 1964, Loeb Center, New York University, Olivetti Company, Smithsonian Institution, Officine d'arte grafica, Milan, 1964.

he explained that works had own funny and positive characters while them were overhauled and improved than ones have been exhibited in 1962.

In New York's exhibition were only works by N and T groups, Mari and Munari. The latter gave out the meaning of the expression "arte programmata". Munari stated that the aim of programmed art research was to built objects were neither paintings nor sculptures, but artists combined together kinetic and optical elements to make a *Good design*<sup>109</sup>. Their aim was to produce an object in which its form and function were able to result in an aesthetic entertainment.

In the later of 1964, the *Arte programmata* took place at the Columbus Museum of Arts and Crafts in Georgia. Burt Wassermann (1926)<sup>110</sup>, art professor at the Glassboro State College, New Jersey, visited the exhibition and reviewed it in a very enthusiastic way.

Another review was written by the art scholar Athena Tacha Spera (1936)<sup>111</sup>, entitled *Arte programmata*, on the Bulletin of the Allen Memorial Art Museum of Ohio. That centre was near to Carnegie Institute of Technology and Oberlin College, where members of Anonima Group met each others. They were only American artists whom were close to the European groups' art form.

Consequently, that was an ideal surroundings for New Tendency. The exhibition *Arte programmata* opened in October 1965 (fig. 71), just then *The Responsive Eye* and *Nova Tendencija 3* which probably influenced observers. In fact, the author claimed as equivalent New Tendency and *Arte programmata*; his knowledge about events of Zagreb perhaps was mediate by Richey's article of 1964, from whom she borrowed similar definitions to analyse the twenty two exhibited works.

According to Tacha Spera, New Tendency had two main characters like abstract forms, industrial materials and techniques. Also, its roots were in De Stijl, Constructivism, Bauhaus and Moholy-Nagy. And its works had three kind of movement: the natural motion, by means of extrinsic factors; the mechanical motion, with electrical motors and controls; and at last, visual motion, prompting optical illusions on the spectator's retina. New Tendency had an interest in science and utilization of up-to-date techniques; as a consequence the artist gave spectator an active role, however - warned the author - his aim was to stress the viewer by anonymous teamwork. That goal, transmitted by works, represented the modern life instability.

In addition, several American galleries and collectors had an interest in programmed works, just before Olivetti's exhibition. For instance, Gallerie Chalette immediately planned to set up in New York a *Nouvelle Tendence* and programmed art exhibition, but the director Madeleine Chalette Lejwa collided on the one hand with the artist's ideological engagement – specially with GRAV - on the other hand with the Olivetti's advertisement build-up. Madeleine Chalette Lejwa

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<sup>109</sup> B. Munari, *Good design*, Vanni Scheiwiller, Milan, 1963.

<sup>110</sup> B. Wassermann, *Kinetic Art*, «Art Education», vol. 17, no.9, December, 1964, National Art Education As., pp.37-38.

<sup>111</sup> A. T. Spera, *Arte programmata*, «Bulletin», vol. XXIII, no.1, Fall, 1965, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio, pp.17-20.

was in correspondence with Umbro Apollonio<sup>112</sup>, whom just then Venice Biennial wanted to organize a New Tendency show in New York. Although, the Gallery had just bought some New Tendency art works, the show - as Apollonio hoped to make it - did not happen.

As regards the programmed art collector's fortune, in Autumn 1964 when the Venice Biennial had just closed, Italian artists – nevertheless they gave any prizes - sold several of their works<sup>113</sup>.

In fact, Joseph Hirshhorn<sup>114</sup>, an uranium magnate, had a deep interest in programmed works because he used to invest on the American contemporary art by young artists and similarly on the European ones. In addition, from his point of view, the manager had to improve the conditions of his workers and miners in the daily life and in the aesthetic attitude. Hirshhorn looked on the Italian Renaissance town as a model and that, perhaps, encouraged him to become close to New Tendency.

§ *American kinetic sculpture and European programmed works. Forwards the Optical art.*

October 23<sup>rd</sup>, in New York programmed, kinetic and New Tendency researches got the general interest by an article edited on «Time»<sup>115</sup>. That new artistic trend was called Optical art and consequently Americanized<sup>116</sup>. The article claimed Optical art was an art form to consider between Abstract Expressionism and Pop art. American galleries begun to have interest in that and the curator of MoMA, William Seitz set up a great exhibition entitled *The Responsive Eye*.

In addition, the exhibition works were based on two mains *Op art* characters: afterimages on the retina and the *moiré* effect. Although Mondrian and Malevitch were its historical precursors, the nearest ones were Albers and Vasarely, because they had influenced the youngest American painters as was recognized at the 1964 Venice Biennial.

Reviewing European artists, the journalist ironically compared Parisian GRAV with the “Atomic Energy Commission”. Group Zero's art was showed as a “new idealism” in contrast with pop art's “new realism”.

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<sup>112</sup> ASAC Archive, Venice, Historical Found. Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio. Unit 8. Folder. 5. Apollonio's private correspondence A-Z (1964). Letter from Galerie Chalette by Mrs Chalette Lejwa to Apollonio of August 21<sup>st</sup> 1964; Reply from Apollonio of November 20<sup>th</sup> 1964. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>113</sup> ASAC Archive, Venice, Historical Found. Visual Arts, Folder Sales Italian Artists. Unit 132. Letter of October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1964 from Sales Office (Ettore Gian Ferrari) to Getulio Alviani, concerning two works sold: n°3 “2/vis – LL64 Q 14x14 Sin”, purchase price Lire 400 000, sold to sig. Seymour J. Philips – 417 5<sup>th</sup> Ave New York 16 NO.Y.; Letter of October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1964 from Sales Office (Ettore Gian Ferrari) to Manfredo Massironi, concerning two works sold: n°13 “Visione dinamica S 1”; purchase price Lire 100 000; n°14 “Visione dinamica S 4”, purchase price Lire 100 000, sold to Arnold Maremont – 168 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago – Ill.; Letter of October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1964 from Sales Office (Ettore Gian Ferrari) to Davide Boriani, concerning one work sold: “Superficie magnetica”, purchase price Lire 600 000, sold to mr. Joseph H. Hirshhorn – Round Hill John St. Greenwich, Conno. Unit 122, Letter from Davide Boriani to Segreteria Biennial's administration of November 21<sup>st</sup> 1964. «Spett. Segreteria, ho ricevuto in data 16 ottobre '64, una lettera dell'Ufficio Vendite della Biennale, con cui mi si confermava la vendita di una mia opera, la “superficie magnetica” del diametro di cm. 100, a fondo nero, a mr. Joseph Hirshhorn, USA».

<sup>114</sup> A. B. Saarinen, *I grandi collezionisti americani*, Einaudi, Torino, 1977, pp.229-244.

<sup>115</sup> *Art: Op Art: pictures that attack the eye*, editorial, «Time», Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, New York, 1964, pp.42-44.

<sup>116</sup> *Op art*, catalogue, February 17<sup>th</sup> – May 20<sup>th</sup> 2007, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Walter Köning, Köln, 2007, pp. 18-40.



The author, also, spent some words on T Group, Equipo 57 and especially N Group, whose work was published. Among the foreign single artists, Almir Mavignier, Jesu Rapahel Soto and Bridget Riley were involved and also American ones like Richard Anuszkiewicz and Julian Stanczak - whom were both Albers's students at Yale -, and Anonima Group (F. Hewitt, E. Mieczkowski, E. Benkert) was the only one close to European anonymity theory; finally John Goodyear. The article ended by the questioning about Op art was an art form or a science.

The answer went a few time later on February 25<sup>th</sup> when the great exhibition *The Responsive Eye*<sup>117</sup> took place at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. William Seitz had planned that exhibition since November 1962 to make clearly the visual art panorama. Although He had considered the artistic development from Impressionism to Optical art, the idea moved with the times and Seitz focused his interest only in contemporary artists.

By George Rickey, as the main consultant, was the range of artists and works chosen for the show; in regard to commercial aims Denise René was called by Seitz. As such as he had applied to make the previous exhibition titled *The art of Assemblage*<sup>118</sup> in 1961 – when he suggested a direct link among the Courbet's realism, Futurism, Cubism, Dadaism, American Abstract Expressionism and New-dada -, Seitz had a very similar critic viewpoint.

On the one hand *The art of Assemblage*, both in the States and Europe, had offered success to American legacy of Dada and Surrealism, on the other hand the Optical art exhibition gave the same success to European artists in New York.

In addition, out of one-hundred exhibitors, forty seven were Americans and others came from Europe and Latin America. Together with the Italian Biasi, Massironi, Landi, Costa, Castellani, Alviani, Dorazio and Mari, there were the French GRAV, Mavignier and the Croatian Picelj and Šutej.

Above all, the orthodox front of New Tendency involved in the international jet-set and consequently it was in direct contradiction with its original aims. Also, a lot of works were by Albers and Vasarely as they were considered the most important painters.

Therefore, the main attitudes were American Post-painterly abstraction and European New-Constructivism. As a consequence, New Tendency – as such as the Bauhaus - lost every ideological manners and became very similar to American painting.

Seitz, in fact, set up the exhibition in compliance with a morphological scheme: a visual grammar divided up into several sections called “color image”, “invisible painting”, “optical paintings”, “black and white” and “moiré pattern”. In that way, Frank Stella, Ad Reinardt, Richard Anuszkiewicz, Morris Louis, Ellsworth Kelly, Kennet Noland, Lerry Poons and Leon Polk Smith could be close to Dorazio, N Group, GRAV and Mari (figs. 72-77).

That event, as witnessed by Brian De Palma's<sup>119</sup> documentary movie, increased the popularity

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<sup>117</sup> *The responsive Eye*, catalogue, February 25<sup>th</sup> – April 25<sup>th</sup> 1965, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1965.

<sup>118</sup> *The Art of Assemblage*, catalogue, October 2<sup>nd</sup> – November 12<sup>th</sup> 1961, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1961.

<sup>119</sup> B. De Palma, *The Responsive Eye*, short movie, 26mm, PAL, 1966, in *Brian De Palma. Les années 60*, edited by

of Op art and Rudolf Arnheim – during the opening - explained to the public relations between visual arts and visual perception.

However spectators had not positive opinions in regard to Seitz's expectations; according to Rickey<sup>120</sup>, on «Art International» of next May. One month later, on the same magazine, Rosalind Krauss<sup>121</sup> published *Afterthoughts on 'Op'*, in which highlighted MoMA wanted to promote Op art like a new artistic trend.

According to Krauss, Op art was a mere Cubism's illusionism form, so called *trompe l'oeil*; on the other hand by it the spectator's eye learned the visual principle of flatness, as was indicated by Greenberg. As a consequence, Op art with own tactile effect of *trompe l'oeil* joined different painting values, from lighting in contrast with colour to composition. In fact, Krauss claimed was not compatible the presence of Louis, Stella and Noland in the Op trend, because their researches – were close to Pollock and Noland as Michael Fried read – belonged to an opposite area.

Consequently, the author wondered at MoMA's advertising campaign that tried to pass Op art off a new tendency, albeit it was a feeble revival of traditional Western painting. As a matter of fact, the real Seitz's intention was to make the Museum like judge of the American modernism debate such as was thought by Greenberg, Freid and Rosenberg<sup>122</sup>. If their modernist idea encouraged the individualist manner, the scientific research made by Op art opposed to the artist's and spectator's free interpretation. The latter were controlled by science, as suggested Rosenberg, and the establishment's power which held scientific research tools.

In addition, the critic Thomas Hess sustained that Op art was not a modernist trend, because it used only to adopt trivial scientific efforts to decorative aims; there was a huge discrepancy between that and the truth found by means of American painting. Hess, closer to Krauss, claimed Op art was more older than further. However, within American technocratic society, because of the painting was losing its cultural relevance, Seitz's critic point of view regained the relationship between art and science, changing the modernist paradigm.

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Luc Lager, Centre National de la Cinématographie/ production Vincent Paul-Boncour, Carlotta Films, Paris, 2002-2003.

<sup>120</sup> G. Rickey, *The Responsive Eye*, «Art International», no.4, May, Lugano, 1965, pp.16-20.

<sup>121</sup> R. Krauss, *Afterthoughts in Op*, «Art International», no.5, June, Lugano, 1965, pp.75-76.

<sup>122</sup> F. Follin, *Embodied Visions, Bridget Riley, Op Art and the Sixties*, Thames&Hudson, London, 2004, p.38 et seq.

§ 3. *After The Responsive eye: Optical and Pop art, a meeting point at the 1966 Venice Biennial.*

In January 1965, Lara Vinca Masini<sup>123</sup> wrote an essay untitled *Arte Programmata* (Programmed Art) – that was partially published in the following November in Zagreb<sup>124</sup> – in which she compared “op art” and the theory of “arte programmata” since the exhibition at Olivetti’s shop in 1962. In the margin she quoted the Karl Gerstner’s manifesto, that was written on the occasion of 1964 Paris *Nouvelle Tendence* exhibition.

She highlighted straight relations among meanings of the optical, programming and New Tendency. A plastic reproduction of an optical painting by Vasarely and several ones by other artists were attached.

According to Apollonio, whose the above-mentioned essay printed on the art magazine «Quadrum» in 1963 was partially quoted, she also compared origins of Kinetic art with contemporary artists like Munari, Mari, Alviani, Dada Maino, Malina, Richter and Picelj. The mains borrowings arose were the “programming” from the economic area, the “series” from the industrial design and the “team-work method” - concerning Equipo 57, GRAV, N and T groups - from the architectural field. At the time of Masini’s article a clear distinction among the different artistic researches arose just then 1964 was still possible.

After *The Responsive Eye*, on Spring 1965 the confusion of meanings, instead, in Italy<sup>125</sup> was due to the gap between artists’ ideas and their taking part into several commercial exhibitions. That hid the lack of a straight ideology, as Argan had shown since 1963.

In addition Lara Vinca Masini<sup>126</sup>, by another essay titled *Mostre di OP-Art nel mondo* (Op art exhibitions around the world) utilized the label “optical art” to balance differences between programmed and kinetic works, with respect to New Tendency.

On showing the straight link between American optical trend and European programmed art, that comparison was originally due to the clash of ideologies that New Tendency engaged with commercial goals of Pop art.

As such as Masini, Franco Passoni<sup>127</sup>, by his article *Scuole americane e scuole europee* (American and European schools), maintained Pop art and the trade of galleries - foremost among these were Sidney Janis and Leo Castelli – encouraged American art system to colonize European one. The climax was at the Biennial of Venice in 1964 when Pop art - by Rauschenberg’s win – was acclaimed as an international trend.

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<sup>123</sup> L. Vinca Masini, *Arte programmata*, «Domus», no.422, January, Milan, 1965, pp. 40-48.

<sup>124</sup> L. Vinca Masini, *O porijeklu kinetičke umjetnosti*, «Čovjek i prostor», no. 152, November, Zagreb, 1965, p.8.

<sup>125</sup> *New York: The Responsive Eye. Una mostra al Museum of Modern Art*, editorial, pp.222-224; A. B. Mosetti, *Una ricerca operativa*, pp.226-228, «Marcatre», nos.14-15, May–June, Genoa, 1965; *Op Dresses*, editorial, «Domus», no.245, April, Milan, 1965, pp. 29-30.

<sup>126</sup> L. Vinca Masini, *Mostre di 'op art' nel mondo*, «Domus», no.424, March, Milan, 1965, pp.44-45.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, F. Passoni, *Scuole americane e scuole europee*, pp. 69-77.

As a consequence the art trade, between New York and London, largely concentrated his efforts on Pop art. On the contrary, in Italy that business in its attempt to take control of the market was thwarted by Gestalt art.

However that situation – according to Passoni - was a turning point for the fortune of Gestalt trend, because it could not oppose to Pop art yet. For instance, in March 14<sup>th</sup> Mauro Calamandrei displaced to artists of New Tendency on the news magazine «L'Espresso». Alberto Biasi<sup>128</sup> soon replied to Calamandrei's statements that American art trade misinterpreted his own researches and ones by his colleagues.

Also Biasi claimed American system worked to modify New Tendency for a commercial aim. In fact, in New York Optical art was developing to join with Pop art such as Sidney Janis made by the exhibition titled *Pop&Op* in December 1965.

By Masini and Passoni was clear the question concerned not only the historical determination of a “programmed art”, but also its technical and ideological evolution. That was due to the visual researches were going into the same critic, stylistic and commercial panorama. To contain the homogeneity process caused by optical art, two possibilities arose: continuing on the original mode of the *Nove Tendencije* exhibition – to joint each different trends – or otherwise building an history of New Tendency that could have its roots in the Constructivism tradition.

Concerning the first solution, for instance Gillo Dorfles set up the exhibition titled *Zero avantgarde*<sup>129</sup> opened in May 1965 at the venetian Cavallino Gallery. Dorfles by a text on catalogue - also published on art magazine «Marcatre»<sup>130</sup> - told about artists “percettivisti” (perceptives) instead of “op artists”, because exhibitors had not reduce their «oggettualizzazioni visive» ( visual objects) to mere scientific data.

He remembered the artists Fontana, Simeti, Soto, Manzoni, Mack, Uecker, Piene, Vigo and Schoonhoven whom clearly showed a different manner compared to New Tendency. *Zero avantgarde* was directly close to a former exhibition, opened in April 1965 at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and titled *Nul*<sup>131</sup>. There were artists that were in Venice then and others like Alviani, Castellani, Dorazio, Klein, T and Gutaj groups. That exhibition, almost starting from the early *Nove Tendencije* again, showed a more divergent way than New Tendency or Optical art one.

On the other hand, an alternative way – drawing a genealogical tree - was made by Apollonio<sup>132</sup> up in January 1966, on the art review «Lineastruttura». By the essay *Sistema matematico e ordine naturale* (Mathematical system and natural order), Apollonio claimed the mathematics forms from physics and biology shifted to the Mondrian's and De Stijl's researches.

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<sup>128</sup> MSU Archive, NT Found, NT Tendencije 4 01-27 1-349 1969. Letter from Biasi to Bek of April 5<sup>th</sup> 1969. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>129</sup> *Zero advangarde*, catalogue, May 4–14<sup>th</sup> 1965, Galleria del Cavallino, Venice.

<sup>130</sup> G. Dorfles, *I percettivisti*, «Marcatre», nos.16-18, July – September, Milan, 1965, p. 159.

<sup>131</sup> *Nul. Negentienhonderd vijf ez zestig*, catalogue, April 15<sup>th</sup> – June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1965, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965.

<sup>132</sup> U. Apollonio, *Sistema matematico e ordina naturale*, «Lineastruttura», no.1, January, Naples, 1966, pp.16-23.

To explain the meaning of their artworks as were natural phenomena. Therefore if firstly New Tendency visual operators mainly used to combine geometrical patterns, next they used to transfer computed unites - modules – to the physical space, to increase their aesthetic operational range to a liveable environment globally («*quantità computate – o modulari - entro la fisicità dello spazio, per estendere il loro campo d'azione ad un ambiente globalmente vivibile a livello estetico*»).

According to Apollonio, the main matter was New Tendency lingered too on old art form - like manifestos – that was borrowed from the historical vanguard. Consequently, their art form did not give new outcomes enough, but they used to imitate visual patterns by Neoplasticism or basic scientific experiments.

Furthermore, a third point of view arose to show a new artistic phase was growing out of the blend of Pop and Op in time. In Summer 1966, Giuseppe Gatt<sup>133</sup> remembered that Argan highlighted gestalt researches, New Dada and Pop art as phenomena were common to many industrialized countries.

However in the same time the Pop and Op art were becoming very similar. To make a link between themselves was the New American Abstraction, that joined historical Concrete Art – coming from Mondrian's abstract painting and his influence on the second-generation of American painters – with Pop art.

In addition, Gatt claimed in the New American abstraction there were on the one hand a very strict painting - closer to Neoplasticism - of Frank Stella, and on the other hand a painting that was free from strict roles and closer to Pop art, as in artworks of Jasper Johns. Otherwise, Donald Judd and Larry Poons used to borrow “semantic” qualities of the object from Pop art and the planning manner from the pure abstraction at the same time.

As a consequence, European gestalt researches to be emancipated, had to make semantic their own artworks, as Eugenio Carmi, Dorazio or New American Abstraction used to. On the other hand, according to Gatt, Italian Op art, i.e., of Schifano, Mauri and Angeli, needed to win back ethical values transmitted by the perception mechanism, meaning it as a visual mass consumption.

Consequently – Gatt continued – a new artistic European research came out of the exchange between New Tendency and Pop art. To synthesize a further visual language that had in common both the education («*formazione*») and information («*informazione*»).

Gatt published his statements just then the opening of the Thirty third Biennial of Venice in June 1966<sup>134</sup>. But he was not the only whom told on. In fact several matters arose and the ASAC<sup>135</sup> archive in Venice collected many national and international press which had argued the point.

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<sup>133</sup> G. Gatt, *Pop e op verso l'integrazione*, «Marcatre», nos.23-25, June, Milan, 1966, pp.102-103.

<sup>134</sup> *XXXIII Biennale Internazionale d'Arte di Venezia*, catalogue, June 18<sup>th</sup> – October 16<sup>th</sup> 1966, Giardini del Castello, Venezia, Ente La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 1966.

<sup>135</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Documents collection. Series Visual Arts. Folder I-XIII. R. Joos, *Esauriti i ricambi delle macchine di Le Parc*, «Il Gazzettino», October 5<sup>th</sup>, Venice, 1966; E. Salvi, *'Ai crocicchi della civiltà di*

In fact the Biennial first prize that Julio Le Parc got from the Committee, among whom were Sergio Bettini and Palma Bucarelli, was a making amends, perhaps, for the precedent one. For instance, «Financial Times» headed *The Kinetic Year* to mean that<sup>136</sup>. Le Parc attended as a single artist – in compliance with the regulations of Biennial<sup>137</sup> – and sparked off a lot of messy polemics on Italian press.

A first attack was on Argan and claimed his responsibilities for awarding to Le Parc, because he was close to Gestalt art and had an important institutional role. Undoubtedly Argan<sup>138</sup> made something, but he only suggested to call the Uno Group – as he thought on its works like a newer art form than the Pop and “programmed” one - that was criticized by the local press. Preferring N and T groups to the “abc” of geometry («*abc della geometria*») was showed by Uncini, Frascà and Carrino<sup>139</sup>.

Regarding the Le Parc’s art pieces – were divided up into *surfaces-sequences*, *reliefs*, *continuels mobiles*, *continuels lumiere*, *reliefs a déplacements du spectateur*, *elements a manipuler*, *mouvement-surprise*, *images velocite-lumiere*, *lumiere directe*, *passages*, *éléments a essayer* - offered a wide selection of visual researches made by GRAV and *Nouvelle Tendance* from 1960 to 1966 (figs. 78,79).

Florentine «La Nazione» compared Le Parc’s works to the electric “pinball”<sup>140</sup> («*biliardini elettrici*») and, by ill-concealed sarcasm, quoted an interview in which Le Parc told about his own art form. The artist provocatively maintained he had not produced art works, but materialized a research was far from every aesthetic matters («*problemi di ordine estetico*»), to encourage his spectators to enjoy.

When the Le Parc’s works failed – as Italian’s ones in 1964 - owing to several technical issues, slanderous attacks were also directed against other artists came from programmed art field, like Italians Bruno Munari and Eugenio Carmi.

In Venice, Munari displayed four *Polariscop* (fig. 80): metal black boxes with lights and motors on the inside, a transparent perspex face and a black screen with round holes to see changeable chromatic images, were caused by the polarized light.

The Carmi’s work (fig. 81) *Struttura policiclica a controllo elettronico* (polycyclic structure by electronic control) was a complex electronic mechanism, programmed automatically to combine geometric patters – about 876 variations in all. However those images were much closer to silk screens by pop artists than orthodoxy of New Tendency (fig. 82).

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*domani le macchine inutili idoli dell’arte di oggi*, «Il giornale di Brescia», July 27<sup>th</sup>, Brescia, 1966; D. Manganotti, *Il Grande assente: l’uomo alla Biennale*, «L’Universo», Istituto Geografico Militare, May-June, Florence, 1966; G. Visentini, *La Biennale non rispecchia la reale situazione dell’arte di oggi*, «Il Messaggero», June 18<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1966; G. Dorflès, *Tecnologia, oggettualità e spaesamento alla XXXIII Biennale*, «Aut Aut», no.95, September, Milano, 1966.

<sup>136</sup> P. Grinke, *The Kinetic Year*, «The Financial Times», June 24<sup>th</sup>, London, 1966.

<sup>137</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Series Visual Arts, Unit 142. Note of International jury of 1966; Letter from Kurt Martin to Mario Marazzan of June 17<sup>th</sup> 1966. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>138</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Series Visual Arts, Unit 140. Letter from Giulio Carlo Argan to Gian Alberto Dell’Acqua of October 20<sup>th</sup> 1965. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>139</sup> P. Rizzi, *Il feticcio bianco*, «Il Gazzettino», July 15<sup>th</sup>, Venice, 1966.

<sup>140</sup> «*Non faccio arte*», editorial, «La Nazione», July 5<sup>th</sup>, Florence, 1966.

Carmi's printings were within range of a painting current, that was spreading in both Europe and United States. In that so called object-painting, signs, shapes and images were combined on the canvas surface by a photomechanical printing or without any expressionistic outcome. According to Dorfles<sup>141</sup>, Carmi's machine was able to see further applications of programming to designed a specific artistic production for the general public.

On the other hand, the Croatian press which had ever encouraged the "programmed" researches, focused on Le Parc and others.

For instance, on «Čovjek i prostor», Boris Kelemen<sup>142</sup> wrote an article about the Venice Biennial. Kelemen brought Le Parc to the fore as the winner of the first prize and, above all, remembered he as one among the first artists had taken part in the early *Nove Tendencije*.

According to Kelemen, in Venice other artists were close to the "nova tendencija" like Jesus Raphael Soto, Enrico Castellani, Agostino Bonalumi and Bruno Munari. Also he thought again on Lucio Fontana (fig. 83) whom by his own big and white Concetto Spaziale, was ahead of the «novotendencijaše» trend of the environment art, which was showed at the last *Nova Tendencija 3*.

Also American artists of Minimal art impressed Kelemen, whom sustained that they were able to rewrite, by their pure elegance, the legacy of Mondrian and Malevich.

In addition, on «Čovjek i prostor» again, Jesa Denegri<sup>143</sup> noticed – through Moles's and Weiner's studies - the Carmi's artwork was a perfect example of the Italian programmed art.

In Italy, on the contrary the democratic ideology of New Tendency was not in favour with the Italian Left-wing. In fact, Antonello Trombadori<sup>144</sup> and Mario De Micheli<sup>145</sup> on the one hand criticized the Biennial Committee as awarded the so called experimentations («*cosiddette sperimentazioni*») – gestalt, kinetic, optical and industrial art forms because of their otiose, vain and sophisticated handicraft («*artigianato ozioso, estetizzante e sofisticato*») – and on the other hand they claimed the Committee was unable to avoid fashions: in the former Biennial, Pop became as very popular as Op art in the latter.

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<sup>141</sup> G. Dorfles, *Eugenio Carmi*, «Le Arti», no.6, June, Milano, 1966, p. 24.

<sup>142</sup> B. Kelemen, *33. Bijenale u Veneciji*, «Čovjek i prostor», no. 164, November, Zagreb, 1966. «[...]Predimo nultu tačku i zakoraknimo u područje 'nove tendencije', Prva nagrada na ovogodišnjem bijenalu: Julio Le Parc. Nama dobro poznat još 1961. kad je Galerija suvremene umjetnosti izložila i prva nabavila jedno njegovo djelo. [...] Ne, ova izložba pokazuje da je problem 'novih tendencija' niz problema koji zahtijevaju timski rad nekolicine stvaralaca i da ni jedna ličnost ne može uzeti isključivo pravo prisvajanja prvog, jedinog ili svog. [...]. Ili još jedan primjer: Enrico Castellani – Agostino Bonalumi. [...]. Uopće, čini se da nedostatak timskog rada kao i slabo ili nikakvo korištenje dostignuća nauke i tehnike nužno mora dovesti do akademiziranja rezultata na području 'nove tendencije'. [...] Bruno Munari je bezuvjetno zakoraknuo najdalje. [...] Lucio Fontana jedan je od rijetkih koji je na bijenalu izložio do kraja dorečeni i osmisleni ambjent, ono što se u današnje vrijeme tolikim stvaraocima nalazi na jeziku da izreknu, da ostvare. Sjetimo se samo zagrebačke izložbe 'nt3' i svih onih diskusija o opravdanosti i potrebi stvaranja ambijenata, tada će nam postati jasnije i preimućstvo Lucija Fontane u odnosu na ostale novotendencijaše» pp. 1,5-7.

<sup>143</sup> J. Denegri, *Eugenio Carmi: 'Struttura policiclica a controllo elettronico'*, «Čovjek i prostor», no. 166, January, 1967, Zagreb, pp. 11,13.

<sup>144</sup> A. Trombadori, *XXXIII Biennale. Premi preassegnati e scelte deformanti*, «L'Unità», June, Bologna, 1966.

<sup>145</sup> M. De Micheli, *Una Biennale magra*, «L'Unità», June 18<sup>th</sup>, Bologna, 1966.

In a quite similar way, Luigi Carluccio<sup>146</sup> on the newspaper «La Gazzetta del Popolo», highlighted Op art could not overcome the success in female fashion, standard furniture and the industry of advertising yet.

For instance, in Milan the new Home Shop Fly was decorated in every particular by the young architect Gae Aulenti - she set up work-places - or the stylist Mariuccia Mandelli for Krizia - whom designed the saleswomen's cloths<sup>147</sup>.

In addition, Op art became a feature in another mass cultural field – just a few times before has been caught on by Pop: the comic strips. In May 1965 that was possible thanks to Guido Crepax on the Comic magazine «Linus»<sup>148</sup> (figs. 84 – 88).

In the second part of his article, Carluccio also emphasized a new factor from the Biennial: the changeover from the ideology of the *homo faber* to *homo ludens*<sup>149</sup>. That was an important signal change in the theory of New Tendency.

A deep crisis - according to Vittorio Fagone<sup>150</sup> – concerning the art like a play that took over from the serious wish to change the world, borrowed from the utopia of Bauhaus and De Stijl.

However, to play as a cognitive value of the world perception – according to the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and to the above-mentioned scientist Desmond Morris – had to follow an ethical conscience about its social aim.

Therefore the technology was able to become more human through a new relationship – based on a creative and artistic process - between men and machines. Similar statements gained credence in the Argan's speech at the Fifteenth Verucchio Congress in September 1966, whose topic was *Arte Popolare Moderna* (Popular modern art).

At the Verucchio Congress beyond Argan's<sup>151</sup> speech, also were ones by Umbro Apollonio, Italo Tomassoni and Cesare Brandi.

Apollonio<sup>152</sup> claimed New Tendency - in which he included Alviani, Effekt, GRAV, MID, N and T groups, Morandini, Mavignier, Mari, Richter, Castellani and Scheggi - was a popular art. He meant that if both the humanistic cultural sphere and scientific cultural one were balanced by means of a reciprocal exchange. The technological society was developing a new culture, according to Snow<sup>153</sup>, called as the “third” culture.

Supporting Apollonio's statement and positive values of New Tendency there was Italo Tomassoni<sup>154</sup> whom affirmed that the Industrial Design was changing the idea of handicraft form.

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<sup>146</sup> L. Carluccio, *Gioco, passatempo e varietà sono protagonisti nel grande spettacolo della Biennale di Venezia*, «Gazzetta del Popolo», June 8<sup>th</sup>, Turin, 1966.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. note 30.

<sup>148</sup> G. Crepax, *La curva di Lesmo*, in *Ciao Valentina*, vol. 1, edizioni «Corriere della Sera», Milan, 2007, p.77.

<sup>149</sup> P. Restany, *Venezia 33 Biennale. L'homo ludens contro l'homo faber*, «Domus», no. 441, August, Milan, 1966, pp. 37-45.

<sup>150</sup> V. Fagone, *Gioco e tecnica alla XXXIII Biennale di Venezia*, «La Civiltà Cattolica», July 16<sup>th</sup>, Rome, 1966.

<sup>151</sup> G. C. Argan, *Arte Popolare come Arte Moderna*, in *Incontri di Verucchio*, Cappeli Editore, Bologna, 1968, pp. 23-33.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., pp. 77-82.

<sup>153</sup> C. Snow, op. cit, 1964.

<sup>154</sup> I. Massoni, *Arte popolare e arte tecnologica*, «D'Ars Agency», nos.1-2, March 10<sup>th</sup> – April 10<sup>th</sup> 1966, Milano, 1966, pp. 70-73.



He shifted the question point from a popular art to an art for people thanks to New Tendency which was defined Technological art («*Arte tecnologica*»). Meaning that the action was important rather than the representation, the methodological approach rather than the pragmatic one, an historical aim rather than living in the present. Being into an operative space that became the urban planning, those researches joined both artistic and productive technique matters to offer operational and behavioral models in connection with the technological and scientific emergent conditionings («*modelli operativi e comportamentali in connessione con l'emergente condizionamento tecnologico e scientifico*»).

However, Cesare Brandi<sup>155</sup> - whose essay *Le due vie* was awarded - destroyed the feeble ideological arguments of New Tendency. He borrowed from the Theory of Information by Moles and Bense<sup>156</sup> conceptual couples like “message-artwork” and “spectator-user”.

According to Brandi, the message was not given by artwork structure but rather it was due to different messages that were transmitted by the artwork itself. The spectator was the user whom experienced - according to Dewey - the message like meaning itself and the object like the medium of message.

As a consequence in the industrial object, as was meant by the new-constructivist gestalt programmed («*neo-costruttivista-gestaltico-programmato*») trend, the information and meaning were dropped to their project and every single variant of the original design. In consequence of that, the “arte programmata” (programmed art) was not a subversive or a conservative but rather marginal trend. In contrast, Informelle painting was the real experience field in which the spectator collided with a maximum of originality.

Therefore, the spectator and artwork had to complement each other to understand its secret and messy forms. Although the devaluation against programmed and kinetic researches did not drive them off the Italian artistic panorama, New Tendency showed its degradation - which also was due to its commercial aims - of being a simple art trend among the others.

§ *The second fortune of the contemporary Italian art in Yugoslavia. New Tendency was reborn. Alviani and Apollonio in Beograd.*

The fortune of Italian art - in its different forms like Pop, Op and continuity of Informel - through the exhibition activity of the Autonomous Body La Biennale di Venezia, was revitalized in Eastern Europe in the early 1960s. In accord with Bucharest Government, the Autonomous Body set up a largest Italian art show on the latest trends, titled *Artisti italiani d'oggi* (Italian

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<sup>155</sup> C. Brandi, *Le due vie*, Editori Laterza, Bari, 1966, pp. 101- 139.

<sup>156</sup> A. Moles, op. cit., 1958; M. Bense, op. cit., 1960.

Artists today)<sup>157</sup> which included some of artists like Alviani, Baj, Birolli, Capogrossi, Castellani, Deluigi, Dorazio, Guttuso, Rotella, Santoro, Schifano, Vacchi and Vedova.

Since art works needed to pass through Yugoslav borders, Beograd Government asked to Venetian Autonomous Body for a permission to host the show<sup>158</sup>.

The Italian art exhibition opened in April 20<sup>th</sup> at the Museum of Modern art of Beograd. Guido Ballo, like Italian delegate, and Aleksa Čelebonovi, the most important Serbian art critic, took part in. According to Čelebonovi, the exhibition offered the possibility to know the most recent Italian researches to young Yugoslav artists within the Confederation borders. From Italian artworks, they draw their inspiration as they used to make since the post-war years when Italian art became an important point of reference.

In the exhibition, also Apollonio worked to edit the catalogue in his capacity as the Curator of the Contemporary Art Archive of Autonomous Body La Biennale di Venezia.

The underlying assumption was that New Tendency became an Italian art product as well as the others and was due to its artists and the establishment stooped to a compromise. Also Italian culture was opening up the Eastern Socialist countries while they was beginning to look at the Western ones<sup>159</sup>.

Furthermore, in Beograd there had just been interest in the Italian and Croatian New Tendency, especially since the Italian exhibition *Perpetuum Mobile*<sup>160</sup>, opened in Rome in 1965. Then *Artisti italiani d'oggi*, the relationship among Italy, Beograd and Zagreb increased.

In fact, a few months later in December 16<sup>th</sup> 1966 at the Galerija Doma Omladine (Youth House Gallery) opened an exhibition depicted activities of the Deposito Gallery. Vera Horvat-Pintarić told about the Carmi's Gallery as the most example of an art centre was sharing the contemporary art in all Europe. The displayed artworks were silk-screens – the main trade of the Deposito – made by Brano Horvat printmaking works of Alviani, Capogrossi, Carmi, Castellani, del Pezzo, Fontana, Gaul, Costantini, Lohse, Morandini, Perilli, Pomodoro, Soto, Šutej, Vasarely and Wachsmann. The catalogue texts were dedicated to Soto and Vasarely, respectively were written by Germano Celant and Gillo Dorfles.

Afterwards, in March 1967 at the Galerija Doma Omladine were called Lia Drei, Francesco Guerriri and Hans Jörg Glattfelder<sup>161</sup>. That works line, close to New Tendency but not for the same aim, was just exhibited in Italy at the *Strutture significanti* between 1965 and 1966. On the Serbian catalogue, the first writing was by Argan whom suggested that art pieces of Drei, Guerrieri and Glattfelder were newer trend than Gestalt art ones. Other texts were by Emilio Garroni and Claudio Popovich, whom had set the preceding Italian exhibitions up.

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<sup>157</sup> *Artisti italiani d'oggi*, catalogue, February – March, 1966, Bucarest, Ente La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 1966.

<sup>158</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found. Series Visual Arts, Unit 198. Folder «Mostre d'arte italiana all'estero, Artisti italiani d'oggi Belgrado 20 aprile – 10 maggio 1966»; Folder Italian Embassy in Beograd. [See appendix.](#)

<sup>159</sup> B. Fowkes, *L'Europa Orientale dal 1945 al 1970*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2004, pp.111-156.

<sup>160</sup> D. Kalajić, *Povodom Perpetuum mobile*, «Umetnost», no.5, January-March, Beograd, 1966, pp.90-93.

<sup>161</sup> *Drei, Glattfelder, Guerrieri*, catalogue, March 6– 15<sup>th</sup>, 1967, Galerija Doma Omladina, Beograd.

The third was the Alviani's<sup>162</sup> solo exhibition took place from April to May 1967 and there were displayed art pieces made between 1960 and 1966. In respect of the early exhibitions in Ljubljana and Zagreb, the latter backed the Alviani's success in Yugoslavia up<sup>163</sup>, also thanks to the public of Beograd.

On the catalogue, Alviani<sup>164</sup> wrote on his own lighting and tactile research, he had applied to making metals, mirrored reflection plays and optical silk-screens. The following one was titled *L'iperluce di Alviani* (The Alviani's hyperlight) by Maurizio Fagiolo – just edited it in 1966 on the Italian newspaper «l'Avanti!» - whom told about his grinded textures made on metal surfaces. The last text, was by Carla Lonzi, whom just wrote it in 1965 and published during the exhibition at the Turin Notizie Gallery in February 1966. She explained the interchanges between Alviani's works and spectators.

Vice versa also the Western European cultural milieu were taking interest in Eastern art as well as was showed in *Ricerche d'arte visuali nell'Europa orientale* (Visual artistic researches in the Eastern Europe)<sup>165</sup> by Apollonio on the art magazine «XX Siecle» in June 1967. He drew a directly link between Constructivism of the later Twenties and new researches of New Tendency, that took place among Moscow, Prague and, in particular way, Zagreb.

In fact, if the conditions had been favourable, there would happen the fourth *Nova Tendencija* Biennial in 1967. Several organizational matters, were caused both by critics and artists, joined with economical ones and prevented from making the edition.

However, nowadays we can suggest a partial reconstruction through some factors. On the one hand, we must consider *Nova Tendencija* had to happen every two years as a Biennial and was established by several letters exchanged among organizers, critics and artists between 1965 and 1966<sup>166</sup>. On the other hand, in the MSU archive we can see three handwritten papers<sup>167</sup> in which noted the plan for the *Nova Tendencija 4* down.

The first was made in January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1967. It showed that Putar, Basicovic and Kelemen would be the only organizers and the event would happen from May to June 1967. Also was a schedule of activities articulated by four sections: (1) multiple objects, (2) kinetic art, (3) the best art works of New Tendency and (4) environments by artists like Dvizenje, MID and an unspecified «jugoslavia».

Both the second and third papers were dated back to the following December: the second one was written in December 6<sup>th</sup> in which Picelj joined to other organizers and NT4 was planned on 1968. Sections of the event became three: for the first was scheduled a retrospective exhibition of NT making at the Gallery, one on the kinetic art and artistic production of objects and a topic

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<sup>162</sup> *Getulio Alviani*, catalogue, April - May, 1967, Galerija Doma Omladina, Beograd.

<sup>163</sup> J. Denegri, *Getulio Alviani: površine s vibrirajućom teksturom*, «Čovjek i Prostor», no. 173, August, Zagreb, 1967, p.7

<sup>164</sup> G. Alviani, *Economia nella produzione plastica pura 1962/1965*, «Il Verri», no.22, October, Milan, 1966, pp.115-116.

<sup>165</sup> U. Apollonio, op. cit., 1979, pp. 158-166

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Chapter V, paragraph 3.

<sup>167</sup> MSU Archive, Zagreb. NT Found, NT4 1967-1968.

borrowed from the Aleksander Srnec's<sup>168</sup> artworks (figs. 89,90), in other word on mechanic and kinetic forms. For the second section, they suggested several subjects: multiples, kinetic art and a tribute on NT. Finally, for the third section they thought on an exhibition would have been close to the 1965 previous one and have called artists and critics coming from Italy, Swiss, France, Germany, Russia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, England, USA and Holland. For a meeting to argue about the artistic production of New Tendency.

The third and last paper, dated back to December 18<sup>th</sup> 1967, showed that organizers became five, because Richter joined to them and they, with respect to the second paper, added two new suggestions: the first concerning Computer art and the second one the relation between NT and industrial production. In order to make it, they would set up a meeting, calling scientists, mathematicians and engineers to join with scholars, filmmakers and musicians.

We could include in the same chronology a fourth document, a typewritten *memorandum* made up of nine pages<sup>169</sup>. We could claim Putar wrote it or, perhaps, dictated it because the memorandum was found in the his personal papers archive. Also, Putar was among the organizers in January 1967 and that typewritten was made in May.

A later clue, concerning the matter of the essay was in Croatian *Materija za NT*, meant proposal for New Tendency and was marked by its initials as used to make. In addition, the subject was in regard to making basic units of the industrial system. Putar analysed every practice and theory about the planning, processing and production.

As a consequence, we could hypnotise that essay was preparatory to make objects of New Tendency, in a very similar way Mari thought on in 1965. In fact, according to Mari, to spread objects of New Tendency artists had to follow not the artistic way of production but the industrial one, as happened during the third *Nova Tendencija*.

Furthermore, we could put that memorandum and the paper dated back to December 18<sup>th</sup> 1967 together, because both documents told about New Tendency involved in the industrial system. Unfortunately, changes happened in the European New Tendency, in Italy and Croatia above all, gave these ideas an obsolete, unfashionable and impracticable look. However, the last exhibitions both in Beograd and Modena was dedicated to New Tendency.

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<sup>168</sup> J. Denegri, "Luminoplastika" Aleksandra Srneca, «Umetnost», no.11, July-September, Beograd, 1967, pp. 63-65.

<sup>169</sup> MSU archive, Putar Found, Folder Putar\_razno. *Materija za NT*, May 1967. See appendix.

§ 1967. *Latest exhibitions of New Tendency: provincial manner and artistic establishment between Modena and Beograd.*

In Beograd, the interest in the idea of Croatian New Tendency was just due to the success of *Nova Tendencija 3* in 1965.

Indeed, during the followed December happened a Juraj Dobrović's<sup>170</sup> solo exhibition at the Doma Omladina Galerija. The text on catalogue was *Possibilità di Divulgazione* by Enzo Mari such as was in Zagreb in 1965. Also, were critical essays by Matko Meštrović, Radoslav Putar and Jesa Denegri, whom was the gallery's curator. Two months later, several exhibitions about New Tendency followed.

In February 14<sup>th</sup> 1967, Ivan Picelj's<sup>171</sup> solo exhibition was opened and showed some serigraphic art pieces. On catalogue were three interesting texts. The first one was by Gillo Dorfles, titled *Picelj: programirana dela* (Picelj: programmed artworks), the second by Umberto Eco, titled *jedan mogući predlog: programirana umetnost* (one possible suggestion: programmed art) – that was quoted from the *Arte programmata* catalogue – and the last was by Jesa Denegri, titled *Picelj: reliefi i programirane slike* (Picelj: relief and programmed paintings). The texts had a common the point of view on Picelj's researches and claimed his works as being close to the Italian programmed art.

A few of months later, in July 1967, was published an essay by Umbro Apollonio on the art magazine «Umetnost» to draw a parallel between programmed art and exhibitions at the Doma Omladina Galerija. Apollonio's<sup>172</sup> essay titled *Arte programmata*, just edited on the art magazine «SipraUno»<sup>173</sup> in May 1966, was in translation from Italian into Serbian-Croatian.

In addition, efforts by Vera Horvat-Pintarić<sup>174</sup> perhaps were able to help Apollonio to publish, according to a letter in 1965. However, Apollonio's essay was translated as *Nova Tendencija u Italiji* and in that way Italian artists were included in New Tendency, as a link between Italy and Yugoslavia.

At the same time the Apollonio's article could be read as a preparatory speech to the Croatian New Tendency section at the Third Triennial of Yugoslavian contemporary art that was happening in Beograd (figs. 91-93).

In January 1968, the Triennial Committee send to Boris Kelemen<sup>175</sup> a report on the organization and its expense account. The *Savet* (Committee or council by Croatian) of *Treći*

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<sup>170</sup> Juraj Dobrović, *Structure Autonomna vizuelna istraživanja Otvaranje situacija*, catalogue, December, 1965, Doma Omladina, Beograd.

<sup>171</sup> Ivan Picelj (*serigrafije*), catalogue, February 14-24<sup>th</sup>, 1967, Galerija Doma Omladina, Beograd.

<sup>172</sup> U. Apollonio, *Nova Tendencija u Italiji*, «Umetnost», no.11, July-September, Beograd, 1967, pp. 27-32.

<sup>173</sup> U. Apollonio, *L'arte programmata*, «SipraUno», no.3, May-June, Turin, 1966.

<sup>174</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Vera Horvat Pintarić to Apollonio of May 25<sup>th</sup> 1965.

<sup>175</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. Kelemen Found. Letter from Aleksa Celebonovic to Boris Kelemen of January 18<sup>th</sup> 1968.

*Trijennale Likovnih Umetnosti* (Third Triennial of Fine Arts)<sup>176</sup>, was chaired by the well-known Croatian painter Krsto Hegedušić (1901-1975). It took place on March 16<sup>th</sup> in Ljubljana and 17<sup>th</sup> in Zagreb, from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> in Beograd and came in other towns of Yugoslavian Confederation, for going in Beograd back again in April 5<sup>th</sup>.

To make that event the Committee called among the artistic trends the newest ones, which come from each countries of Yugoslavia. Moreover, the Triennial set up an its own exhibition of graphic artworks, following the example of the most famous Biennials of Ljubljana and Zagreb. The Triennial was between July and September 1967. The first three prized artists were Serbian Marko Čelebonović, Croatian Vojin Bakić and Slovenian Riko Debenjak, respectively for painting, sculpture and graphic.

Vojin Bakić was the main character of Croatian New Tendency, whose other artists like Richter, Dobrović, Knifer, Picelj and Šutej were showed there by Boris Kelemen (figs. 94-98). In fact, Kelemen<sup>177</sup> told on the history of New Tendency that began in 1960 with Jean Tinguely's *Hommage a New York* - as the deaf of Classical art - and since that event, New Dada, Pop Art and New figurative painting became new artistic trends.

However, the real outcomes were by the revival of Constructivism which made in 1961 a revolution in modern art: the *Nova Tendencija* in Zagreb<sup>178</sup>. Although it rose in success and since 1967 it was knew as "Op art", "sistemic art", "optical abstraction" and "pattern art", its climax was in 1965. From Kelemen's critic point of view was innovative, because he was close to Lucy Lippard's one, whom in the exhibition *Eccentric Abstraction*, took place in New York in 1966, showed to European critics a new interpretation of the art.

The aim of Kelemen's essay was to link the former generation of Richter, Picelj, Knifer and Šutej with the latter one of Mladen Galić, Drago Hrvacki, Eugen Feller, Tomislav Kauzlarić and Ljerka Šibenik. They, in fact, were younger than the others and although applied the gestalt theory and geometrical patterns, were able to mix the New Abstraction painting and Minimalism, blending Optical and Pop art forms (figs. 99,100).

On the Serbian art magazine «Umetnost», art critics took a lot of interest in the New Tendency. The critic Oto Bihalji-Merin<sup>179</sup> searched its historical reasons and interchanges with European contemporary art. Also, the critic Jerko Denegri<sup>180</sup> specifically wrote on the Nova Tendencija and the Third Triennial in Beograd.

Both essays claimed the main characters of Croatian New Tendency were Aleksander Srnec – whom revised mechanical and lighting art works by Schöffer – and Miroslav Šutej – whom although in 1963 made visual illusions on the two-dimensions surface of the canvas, few years

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<sup>176</sup> *3t – Treći Trijenale Likovnih Umetnosti*, catalogue, July 6<sup>th</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup> 1967, Beogradski Sajam – Hala III, Beograd, 1967.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-115.

<sup>178</sup> *Putevi ka trijenalu*. (B. Kelemen), editorial, «Umetnost», no. 12, October-December, Beograd, 1967, pp. 34-52.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, (O. Bihalji-Merin), *Vreme Svetlost Pokret*, pp. 4-25.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, (J. Denegri), *'Nove Tendencije' na III Trijenalu*, pp. 33-34.

later he preferred making optical and three-dimensions changeable structures by the spectator. As a consequence, the Croatian New Tendency became an official art trend in the Yugoslavian fine arts.

Whilst that was happening in Beograd, in Italy Apollonio, whom could not exhibit New Tendency during the artistic season in 1965-66, was engaged to set up an exhibition in 1967.

Today, the Municipal Historical Archive of Modena (ASCMO) maintains documents concerning the exhibition titled *Nuova Tendenza: arte programmata italiana* (New Tendency: Italian programmed art). They permit us to understand the means of that critic operation in respect of Italian panorama and artistic dimension of New Tendency<sup>181</sup>.

In May 1966 Oscar Goldoni (Modena, 1942-1992), whom used to arrange cultural events at Modena, called Apollonio to plan an exhibition of New Tendency that would be in the following year. In April, Apollonio suggested through a specific morphological researches to articulate the exhibition by three parts: the first concerning artists whom used to paint by traditional way, like Dorazio, Nigro, Calderara, Guarneri, Nangeroni, Simeti and Ballocco. The second part was on regard to artists, like Fontana, Manzoni, Castellani, Bonalumi, Scheggi and Lo Savio, whom used to work by the monochrome and relief painting. At last, the third was dedicated to show groups and single artists whom used to utilize industrial materials and electromechanical instruments like Munari, Mari, Costa, Alviani, Chiggiò, Morandini, Grignani, Dadamaino, Calos, Fabro, MID, N and T groups.

The case of Fabro was interesting because he, working in Milan, since 1965 was close to Apollonio. He realized by himself an interpretation of gestalt researches made by New Tendency, but his efforts were misunderstood<sup>182</sup>. As a consequence, for instance, he was turned away from the exhibition *Nova Tendencija 3*. However, Apollonio knew his potentialities and engaged him in other New Tendency events.

After a brief silence, only in October 1966, Goldini recalled Apollonio and asked him for two questions: the first one concerning whom artists inviting and the second one was in regard to the text to publish in the catalogue. At the beginning Apollonio chose to follow his own ideas he had just designed on the above-mentioned article, *Arte programmata*, edited in 1966.

Italian critic included the New Tendency movement in the stream of the vanguard tradition that took place during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He claimed was initially a phase which programmed art works borrowed their forms from historical vanguards like Neoplasticism, the Bauhaus school and

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<sup>181</sup> ASCMO archive, Modena. Galleria Civica Found – Sala di Cultura 1965 – 1967. Folder 183 (today 2). Folder Arte Programmata. Correspondence between Oscar Goldini, Apollonio, artists and galleries from March 1966 to February 1967.

<sup>182</sup> ASAC archive, Venice. Historical Found, Curators, Folder Umbro Apollonio, Unit 9. Letter from Luciano Fabro to Apollonio of June 16th 1965. «Caro professore,[...]nel complesso mi considero contento della personale alla Vismara.[...] Ciò che mi ha meravigliato è come abbiano facilmente scisso le mie esperienze dalle correnti ricerche visuali, nonostante la veste similare. Anche le situazioni spaziali determinate dall'incidenza degli spazi rispecchiati negli spazi che traspaiono, e viceversa, sono risultate chiare[...].»

Constructivism. Also – the first time in Italian art critic – programmed works were linked with painters and sculptors coming from the first Italian abstraction.

Directly connected with that, a second phase showed the changeable art work was experimented by artists coming from both MAC and Forma 1 as pioneers of the art synthesis. Then, the third phase began with utilizing new technological instruments by which younger visual operators gave the «*messianic utopian message*» of MAC up. Producing objects in which the perception «*was guided through its phenomenological activities*» by structures.

The last phase, therefore, was taking place in the period of New Tendency; it was due to the Munari's and especially – as the character of the movement - Mari's art pieces because they gave up the traditional way of making art.

Also, the same was by Alviani, Castellani and Scheggi whom used to built an exact order of programmed surfaces and to give them dynamism by lighting articulation. Then, following artists were MID, T and N groups that were interesting to «*built the space by visual events to make it as an environment set up*». In addition, the spectator experimented the lighting and rhythmical changeability by their environments.

In his conclusion, Apollonio remembered artists like Nanda Vigo, Lilian Caraian, Antonio Valmaggi, Saverio D'Eugenio, Kiki Vices Vinci, Massimo Bottecchia and Giulio Paolini were just at the beginning of their researches. For instance, Paolini was an artists whom then tried making an his own art form that was very successful at the overcoming the deadlock of New Tendency and Pop art.

Artists' participations come between December 1966 and January 1967. Among the called galleries to rent artworks were the Naviglio Gallery with works by Fontana, Manzoni, Bonalumi and Scheggi, the Marlborough Gallery with Dorazio's paintings; the Lorenzelli Gallery with Bonfanti's and Nangeroni's art pieces. The formation of artists was in accord with Apollonio's will, whom also called the Uno Group but it could not involve in.

The exhibition *Nuova Tendenza: arte programmata italiana*<sup>183</sup> opened from 29<sup>th</sup> January to 20<sup>th</sup> February and then was moved on Reggio Emilia in March (figs. 101-104). In the catalogue Apollonio claimed the main difference between New Tendency and Futurism, Constructivism and Russian Suprematism was the former did not have the machine-worship as the latter had.

However visual operators of New Tendency looked up to science and its method to investigate the natural world, which was considered by itself as moving and changeable.

The later Apollonio's statement, on the other hand, was in direct contradiction to his previous one that suggested New Tendency as a specific way to be the visual art in the technological society.

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<sup>183</sup> *Nuova Tendenza: arte programmata italiana*, catalogo, January 29<sup>th</sup> - February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1967, Sala della cultura, Modena, Comune di Modena, 1967.



Also, Italian press<sup>184</sup> quickly caught the allusion to the “nature”. Perhaps, was an effort by Apollonio to release New Tendency from the hackneyed relation between “programmed art” and technology; especially in aftermath of the 1966 Verucchio Congress.

However, when one decade later Apollonio published an anthology that collected his essays – edited between 1961 and 1967 - about New Tendency, the one dedicated to the exhibition in Modena was left out; in spite of the fact the exhibition met with the interest of Palma Bucarelli<sup>185</sup> and A.I.C.A., and Lea Vergine<sup>186</sup> remembered it among the main artistic events in 1967 year on the «Almanacco Bompiani 1968».

In conclusion, we remember the monographic issue of the magazine «Il Verri» - edited by Gillo Dorfles in 1966 - which was dedicated to “Arte programmata” in view of its historical and morphological meanings<sup>187</sup>.

There were collected several essays by main aesthetic and art critics: Max Bense, Paolo Bonaiuto, George Rickey – by an essay was excerpted from *The Nature and Art of Motion*. Also, were the well-known text by William C. Seitz, whom wrote for the exhibition *The Responsive Eye*, an historical synthesis by Filiberto Menna and at last the same writings by artists made from 1961 to 1965. Were written by Colombo, Devecchi and Boriani whom explained their artistic environment that were showed during *Nova Tendencija 3*.

Altogether the history of *Arte programmata* was outlined as a changeover from object to environment, viewed like a new operational art form.

Two examples of that changeover and as artists worked for industries were the *Strutturazione Cinetica* (Kinetic structure) by N Group (figs. 105,106) - made in 1964 and exhibited at the contemporary Venice Biennial – and the *Ambiente stroboscopico programmato sonorizzato* (resounding programmed stroboscopic environment) by MID Group with S 2F M Group which coming from the conservatoire of Florence (fig. 107).

The first example – N Group’s art piece – made an experiment chromatic changes of mobile objects that were filmed by the first Italian colour television camera. That was produced by Magnete Marelli, the largest television set company in Italy<sup>188</sup>.

The second example – by MID with S 2F M groups - was an elaborate environment which different lights and sounds worked to join – by an architectural dimension – the visual and the acoustical perception of the spectator through his motion across the space. That was directed to

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<sup>184</sup> L. Leonelli, *Nuova Tendenza – Arte programmata*, «Il Resto del Carlino», February 16<sup>th</sup>, Bologna, 1967, p.5.

<sup>185</sup> ASCMO archive, Modena. Galleria Civica Found – Sala di Cultura 1965 – 1967. Folder 183 (today 2). Folder Arte Programmata. Letter from Palma Bucarelli to Umbro Apollonio of June 6<sup>th</sup> 1967.

<sup>186</sup> Lea Vergine, *Nuova Tendenza. L'annata artistica*, «Almanacco Bompiani 1968», November, Milan, 1967, p.167.

<sup>187</sup> G. Dorfles (edited by), *Arte Programmata*, «Il Verri», no.22, October, Milan, 1966.

<sup>188</sup> V. Feierabend, L. Meloni, op. cit. 2009, p.93.

planning furniture and was exhibited at the *Sala Espressioni* for the 1966 Idealstandard pavilion<sup>189</sup>.

At the same time, in the 1966 Biennial Venice was the first Italian exhibition dedicated to interesting features of the early abstraction painting. As a consequence, Munari became the link between new vanguard of the Sixties and historical abstraction vanguard.

Finally, the continuity between these two vanguards was built up, because - according to De Micheli<sup>190</sup> on the newspaper «L'Unità» - that in Italian art critic lacked. However, in Venice that link was only hinted in respect of other Italian or European events.

For instance, in Milan the exhibition titled *44 protagonisti della visualità strutturata*<sup>191</sup> at the Lorenzelli Gallery held in 1964 showed the abstraction painting line from Balla, Mondrian, Albers, Italian Concrete Art to Alviani and Nangeroni. But the exhibition – on the contrary it was happening between Abstract Expressionism and New Abstraction in the US - lacked of an Italian abstraction idea.

The aim would be able to show that Italian abstraction did not owe only a debt to a new international style, but also it would be a continuity of Italian artistic values. In fact, New Tendency could be read as a “tradition of new”. In addition, from the art critique point of view the Brandi's essay<sup>192</sup> – that was introduced at the 1966 Verucchio Congress – completed the thinking on the industrial society, on the relation between new artistic researches and Informel Art, and at last on their development across Pop and Op art.

In fact, those two artistic trends changed their relation from a dialectical relationship to a mere visual opposition, especially when Gestalt art became Optical. In that way, on the «Almanacco Bompiani 1968», Eugenio Battisti was able to compare Optical art and so called - since 1966 - Primary Structures as he claimed the latter were a monumental synthesis between Op and Pop art. Those objects led the way to the spectator could have a tactile and visual experience by their joining painting, sculpture and architecture.

Also, shifting from microcosm of programmed art works to the macrocosm of primary structures was able to show up experimenting, as said Battisti, on the most general goals of the art («*sui generalissimi compiti dell'arte*»).

Consequently, it could be a manner how the artistic research was using a single style directly related to New Tendency. The matter was the way which New Tendency was changed, from the United States to Europe, into an Optical style - according to Battisti<sup>193</sup> – that used to encode a few of glamorous shaped elements applying to decorate daily common objects. Artistic and

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<sup>189</sup> *Arte e ricerca*, editorial, «Rivista Ideal-Standard», April – June, Milan, 1966, pp.41-54.

<sup>190</sup> M. De Micheli, *I veicoli lombardi di Gropius e Mondrian*, «L'Unità», September 20<sup>th</sup>, Bologna, 1966.

<sup>191</sup> *44 protagonisti della visualità strutturata*, catalogue, April – May 1964, Galleria Lorenzelli, Milano, 1964.

<sup>192</sup> C. Brandi, op. cit. 1966, p. 169-187.

<sup>193</sup> E. Battisti, *L'ultimo gusto: le strutture primarie*, «Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1968», op. cit., 1967, pp. 51-53; *Ibid.*, E. Battisti, *L'op art*, pp.90-92.

commercial values became more dominant than previous ideological claims, because the latter were vain.

Just after the exhibition *Nova Tendencija 3* in 1965, its participants gave those two chances. In that period, between 1966 and 1967, among the members of New Tendency arose a huge discrepancy between whom felt themselves as primarily artists and whom became also industrial designers. As a consequence, the comparison between art works and industrial design – accorded to Radoslav Putar -, planned for the fourth *Nova Tendencija* never took place in 1967.

Actually, New Tendency would be not able to give its ideals a concrete reason: the utopia of an artistic trend that had the capacity for making a new world.

In addition, the internationalist hypothesis disappeared in both Italy and Yugoslavia as well as was showed by two later exhibitions of New Tendency. The first one was in Beograd and the second in Modena, both became only a regional events within their each own artistic national panorama. The programmed, kinetic and visual researches became one trend among others by artistic trade<sup>194</sup>.

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<sup>194</sup> M. Fagiolo Dell'Arco, *Rapporto 60. L'arte oggi in Italia*, Bulzoni Editore, Roma, 1966.

**Chapter 7<sup>th</sup>. General statements on the Italian and Croatian artists' course. The *Nove Tendencije* goes back without 'nove': *Tendencije* from 1969 to 1978.**

§. 1. *After 1967: from the environmental art to the cultural protest, new artistic ways between Italia and Croatia. 1969 Tendencije 4.*

In 1967 New Tendency artists passed off from the pioneering phase – soon after their experience with the team work and the industrial and technological system – to another in which they joined with the galleries and the international exhibitions rules.

N and T Groups were considered as historic examples in the current situation, when the aesthetic of the team work had ceased to be alternative as regards the individual art form. Moreover the industrial and technological culture was in a turning point, because its enthusiasm was replacing by a critical approach that several times engaged in the political arena of the European Left wing.

As Donald Egbert<sup>1</sup> conceded, the coming in the Left wing of the “Nouvelle Tendance” art was caused by the rediscovering of the Bauhaus during the early Sixties, but the circumstances changed between 1966 and 1968. The great European communist Parties, in France, in Italy and in Germany, become more moderate than the New Left wing – such as Egbert called it - that had admitted students, anarchists, Maoists, Leninists and Titoists, with the aim to fighting the bourgeois establishment.

At the same time, the philosopher Herbert Marcuse<sup>2</sup> become a reference point for university students in the whole Europe. He told about the ‘end of the utopia’, in other wise, the end of history like the failure of the Marxist idea of the social improvement. Marcuse, in opposition to Marx, suggested a new human anthropology directed to free men from the capitalist consumerism and from the repressive society. As a consequence, the scientific and technologic progress become again negative and so New Tendency was viewed also in the same way.

In Italy, Germano Celant warned that was a dangerous occasion – referring to important exhibition like *Lo spazio delle immagini* in Foligno and *Nuove tecniche d'Immagine VI Biennale Internazionale d'arte* in the San Marino Republic, both in 1967 - because he claimed a new dialectical opposition between “rich art” (*arte ricca*) – the New Tendency art – and “arte povera”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> D. D. Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the arts*, Albert A. Knopf publisher, New York, 1970, pp.688-711.

<sup>2</sup> H. Marcuse, *La fine dell'utopia*, Laterza, ed. Ita. 1969 (ed. or. 1967), p.9 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> G. Celant, *Im-spazio a Foligno*, «Casabella», no.318, September, Milan, 1967, pp. 59-61; G. Celant, C. Guenzi, *Nuove Tecniche d'Immagine*, «Casabella», no. 319, October, Milan, 1967, pp. 59-61; G. Celant, *Lo spazio dell'immagine*, pp. 46-48; G. Celant, *Nuove Tecniche d'Immagine*, pp. 48-50, «La Biennale di Venezia», no.63, January-March, Venice, 1968.

The “arte povera” was showed by Giulio Paolini, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Luciano Fabro, Jannis Kounellis, Giovanni Anselmo, Giuseppe Penone, Pino Pascali and others, whom handled industrial objects but there was a huge discrepancy between “Arte povera” and Op or Pop art.

Indeed, the Op art used to employ technologic instruments to build abstract geometric surfaces and objects. The Pop art used to employ industrial objects with the aim of denouncing the mass media consumerism. In contrast, the “Arte povera” took objects and materials of industry towards an anthropological environment.

The anthropological theory of Marcuse was able to justify the environment work by Luciano Fabro, that he exhibited in *Lo Spazio dell'Immagine* in Foligno<sup>4</sup>. Italian artist made a white cubic space in which he neutralized the real environment and the human dimension of connections between body and space that was caused by the needle's cardinal points.

At the end, that work was opposite to the strobe lighting setting by MID and T Groups, e.g. *After Structures* (1966-1967) by Gianni Colombo (figs. 1,2).

After all, Colombo, Devecchi, Boriani, Alviani, Biasi and Scheggi got another chance of success by means of the environment but their materials came from the industrial production and, as Celant said, their works were inhuman. The steel, i.e., was employed by Alviani to make *Interrelazione speculare* (1967), there elements were polished and eternal (fig. 3).

The result of all changes was that a second exhibition, titled *Nuove Tecniche d'immagine*, seemed a requiem dedicated to the decade of the Sixties. In that case the tributes to Piero Dorazio, Roy Lichtenstein and Victor Vasarely gave examples of the monochrome painting, New Tendency researches, Pop and Op art pieces.

At the same time, Giulio Carlo Argan admitted that the exhibition showed the specific artist role, whom would be a technician among the technicians, the artist was included in the industrial society without a redemption of the capitalist economic system<sup>5</sup>.

That exhibition also was due to the interchange of the ideas closely connected with the *Oltre l'Informale* and the preview exhibition planning by Umbro Apollonio in 1965<sup>6</sup>. However, on the one side there were several differences, e.g. the Pop artworks showed. On the other side the two planning exhibitions shared many items like the tribute to Vasarely or the presence of Uno Group, Mari, Massironi, Colombo, Morellet, Sobrino, Alviani and Picelj.

In addition, we could regard Picelj and his colleagues as representatives of the Diaspora arouse out of the Fourth edition of the *Nova Tendencija* lacked in 1967.

Apollonio also called them to take part in *Trigon 67*<sup>7</sup>, the second international exhibition in Graz, to connect Austria, Italia and Slovenija (Yugoslavia in 1965) . Its topic was, like in Foligno,

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<sup>4</sup> *Lo spazio dell'immagine*, catalogue, July 2<sup>nd</sup> – October 1<sup>st</sup>, Palazzo Trinci, Foligno, 1967, Alfieri, Venice, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> *Nuove tecniche d'immagine*. VI Biennale Internazionale d'Arte di San Marino, catalogue, July 15<sup>th</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>, Palazzo dei Congressi, San Marino, Alfieri, Venice, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Chapter VI, paragraph 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Trigon 67. Ambiente/Environment*, catalogue, September 5<sup>th</sup> – October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1967, Künstlerhaus, Graz, Neue Galerie am Landmuseum Joanneum, Graz, 1967.

the environmental structures and the other art curators were Zoran Krzisinik and Wilfried Skreiner whom engaged Italian artists as Colombo, Fabro, Mari and Uncini or Croatian ones as Picelj, Richter and Šutej (fig. 4).

*Trigon 67* exhibition led to the end of the New Tendency ideology and those artists became conscious that their role was only an artistic approach to change the urban or natural landscape. Indeed, as Celant suggested, a return to human dimension emerged as a new goal and e.g. Mario Ceroli made the environmental work in which the spectator, through his own body, replaced the Vitruvio's man shape (fig. 5).

Consequently, after 1967, the artists had to chose the right way to follow the New Tendency ideology: on the one hand they could get a political engagement, on the other hand they could make art as human aim.

That dilemma was evident during the 1968 Venice Biennial<sup>8</sup>, when Mari, Castellani, Massironi and Boriani wrote a manifesto against group exhibitions. They claimed exhibitions, as the Venice Biennial, worked together the art trade, were mystified (as *Lumière et mouvement* in Paris, 1967) and confusing or inconclusive ( as been *Nova Tendencija 3*).

On the contrary, other artists like Colombo – by the work *Spazio Elastico* that won the award of the critique – or Miroslav Šutej – whom got a whole room in the Yugoslavian pavilion – showed the artist role without vanguard rhetorical poetic.

The manifesto of Mari, Biasi , instead, was taken from the establishment of art system, e.g. was published on «Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1969», and outcome that Celant's ideas were right.

§. 2. *First time: French art critique “rediscovered” New Tendency while its achievements headed Computer Visual art in Zagreb.*

The decline of New Tendency was due to its artworks were compared with historical vanguard ones and to a changeover process that opposed the early international project to the later regional proposal. The above-mentioned exhibitions in Modena and Beograd showed that. In addition, although New Tendency was admitted as a phase within the art history speech, it missed the chance to become part of the everyday life.

Indeed, the art critic Frank Popper set up the exhibition named *Lumière et Mouvement*<sup>9</sup>, at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, from May to August 1967. There were only French artists or whom had displayed in the Parisian galleries; e.g. from the Denise René Gallery come Victor

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<sup>8</sup> XXXIV Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte, catalogue, June- October, 1968, Giardini di Castello, Venezia, Ente La Biennale di Venezia, Alfieri, Venice, 1968.

<sup>9</sup> *Lumière et mouvement*, catalogue, May-August, 1967, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, Paris, 1967.

Vasarely, GRAV and foreign artists like Takis, Tinguely, Agam and Berlewi. The only Italian was Nino Calos, whom was forgotten in his own homeland.

Frank Popper, like the American critic George Rickey, eluded ideological issues and he choose to show only the technical elements in the displayed works. As a result, he reviewed critically the history of New Tendency and wrote an essay titled *L'immagine en mouvement depuis 1861*<sup>10</sup>, that explained the French origins of *Nouvelle Tendance*. So the New Tendency became only French and Popper did not consider both the roles of Italian artists and the *Nova Tendencija* in Zagreb like the main source of that.

Moreover the Popper's version got success in the aftermath; e.g. at the present time the essay by H. Foster, R. Krauss, Y.A. Bois and B.H.D. Bucholoch, titled *Art since 1900*<sup>11</sup>, shows French elements and the role of the Denise René Gallery like the ultimate factors in the development of New Tendency.

After all, Mari and his colleagues believed in the manifesto that they set at the 1968 Venice Biennial and for that reason they did not take part in the *Tendencije 4*, when the exhibition was at the Zagreb Gallery of Modern Art in 1969.

The prelude of *Tendencije 4* was in summer 1968, when the international congress of visual and computer art happened in Zagreb. The philosophers Abraham Moles – whom was the organizer - and Max Bense were among guests and artists; also, Biasi elucidated New Tendency situation up to 1967 and his paper was published on a new magazine titled «BIT» - like the unit of information expressed as either a 0 or 1 in binary notation.

Exactly, on «BIT» n°3<sup>12</sup>, Biasi told about the three New Tendency main failures: the overgrowth of the trade that had influenced artists, New Tendency works had become a simple opulent handicraft or, by the kinetic mechanisms, only a joke perception for the mind and at last, artists did not have been consistent in applying New Tendency claims. Furthermore, Biasi challenged his colleagues to think that computers would subjugate artists to the technological power rules.

The main topic of the congress in Zagreb was close to the London exhibition *Cybernetic Serendipity* – opened in August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1968 - in which were displayed, the first time in Europe, several works made by computers<sup>13</sup>.

The Zagreb congress, also, was preparatory to set up the exhibition *Tendencije 4*<sup>14</sup> would be in May 1969, so called because the adjective “nove” was removed from title and it meant in the

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<sup>10</sup> F. Popper, *Origins and Development of Kinetic Art*, (eng. transl.) New York Graphic Society, 1968.

<sup>11</sup> H. Foster, R. Krauss, Y.A. Bois, B.H.D. Bucholoch, *Arte dal 1900*, Zanichelli, Bologna, pp. 379-384.

<sup>12</sup> A. Biasi, *La situazione nel 1967*, «BIT», no.3, Winter, Zagreb, 1968, pp.31-33.

<sup>13</sup> R. Putar, *Cybernetic Serendipity* (izložba u Institutu suvremene umjetnosti, London), «BIT», no.1, Summer, Zagreb, 1968, pp. 89-98.

<sup>14</sup> *Tendencije 4*, catalogue, May 5<sup>th</sup> – August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1969, Galerija Suvremena Umjetnosti/Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb, 1970.

exhibition – Umberto Eco<sup>15</sup> was called to involve in the jury - would show not only of New Tendency but also computer art and visual poetry researches.

However *Tendencije 4* wanted to be a crossing of new art trends, the Committee set a retrospective of the previous three editions by works were displayed from 1961 to 1965 (figs. 6,7). That exhibition shared in the Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, while the computer art and visual poetry researches were set up in the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti.

Furthermore, Almir Mavignier, Matko Meštrović and Enzo Mari<sup>16</sup> - whom participated as theoriser rather than artist - were invited to give a paper on the results of the *Nove Tendencije*, *Nove Tendencije 2* and *Nova Tendencija 3* respectively. The papers were important to present an historical reconstruction of New Tendencies instances.

Indeed, Mavignier told about the origins of new tendencies as he made in 1961<sup>17</sup> and then in 1963<sup>18</sup>; Meštrović<sup>19</sup> showed the interchanges between art, science and left-wing ideology as he had just written in 1963. At last, Mari – close to what Biasi had affirmed in 1968 - warned that the misunderstanding between medium and goal, or in other wise between computer researches and their uses, was dangerous for the new tendencies movement, as happened during *Nova Tendencija 3*. The same would happen for *Tendencije 4*.

The great interest to computer art in Zagreb – in which was strong the influence of Meštrović, Moles and Bense theories - was due to two mains causes.

The first concerning in Yugoslavia there was not a dilemma between art and ideology, in according to Giulio Carlo Argan's speech at the 1965 Rimini Congress, because of the Communist Party had just interested in ethic matters and permitted artists and intellectuals to thinking about science and art interchanges without has to think on.

In contrast, the above-mentioned historian Egbert said that those sorts of researches were able to happen in Zagreb because the Government acknowledged that intellectuals theorized about art and technology, but they could not have interest in political affairs.

There was a world of difference between Argan and Egbert opinions although the real question was the historical process involved in popularizing New Tendencies. In fact, in Italy Ernesto Francalanci<sup>20</sup> on the art magazine «N.A.C» - Bulletin of Contemporary Art – explained that the computer art could vanish the traditional idea of artist as computers made artworks close to New Tendencies ones.

For instance, in 1965 the electronic engineer Michael A. Noll<sup>21</sup>, whom was employed by the Bell Telephone Laboratories, built an image named *Mondrian experiment* by computer from a

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<sup>15</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, NT 01-27\_1-349\_1969\_tendencije 4. Letter from Božo Bek to Umberto Eco of February 11<sup>th</sup> 1969; Reply letter from Eco of February 17<sup>th</sup> 1969.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Letter from Boris Kelemen to Enzo Mari of March 14<sup>th</sup> 1969; Reply letter from Mari of March 26<sup>th</sup> 1969.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter Second, paragraph 3.

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter Fourth, paragraph 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Nuova Tendenza 2*, op. cit., 1963.

<sup>20</sup> E. Francalanci, *Il difficile futuro. Avanguardie a Zagabria*, «N.A.C.», no. 16, January-June, 1969, p.8.

<sup>21</sup> Michael A. Noll, *The digital computer as a creative medium*, «BIT», no.2, Autumn, Zagreb, 1968, pp. 51 – 62.



Mondrian painting (fig. 8). As a result he compared the human and artificial creativity and showed the myth of the technologic society was by means of New Tendencies works.

Another Italian author, in contrast to Francalanci, was Filiberto Menna whom in 1969 published *Arte cinetica e visuale* (Kinetic and visual art) in the series called *L'arte moderna*, edited by Franco Russoli. Menna told about New Tendency – among its artists was reminded Picelj, Richter and Šutej - in relation to their interchanges between industrial design and urban development.

According to Menna, new tendencies aim was to build the utopia of the new society and as he wrote in *Profezia di una società estetica* (Prophecy of the aesthetic society) the main goal of New Tendency or so-called “arte programmata” was the utopian way to build the Marxist idea of the History as the continuous development of the human being<sup>22</sup>.

However, according to Menna, the real programmed art utopia – and in the same way the other similar researches – was to influence the environment structures by means of a method borrowed from the technique. As a consequence the utopia as a method («*l'utopia come metodo*») was the main overcome reached by programmed research which opposed to fantastic and futile ones.

In addition, New Tendency aim was to be within the human history, according to Argan, in contrast to newer conceptual researches which, encouraged thanks to 1968 political protest, focused works only on in their own present meaning<sup>23</sup>.

At the same time Italo Tomassoni published in 1970 a collected essays untitled *Lo spontaneo e il programmato*<sup>24</sup>, in which he told about the difference between the idea of History and Nature.

On the one hand there were artists of “arte programmata” whom used to built artificial, mechanical and technical objects. On the other hand there were painters from Abstract Expressionism trend whom were spontaneous by free gestures and chaotic outcomes. But both the programmed and spontaneous artists were in the same artificial environment caused by the technological changes; so the great difference was in the way artists taken part in their own society development.

Although Tomassoni's essay was closer to the previous critic debating made in the early Sixties than the contemporary critic one, in his investigation he utilized the word “programmato” by its original means the last time in Italy.

On the contrary, Umbro Apollonio with Dietrich Mahlow set up an exhibition title *Ricerca e progettazione*<sup>25</sup> (Research and planning) at the 35<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale in 1970.

The exhibition showed kinetic, visual and programmed researches did not were a epistemological metaphor such as Umberto Eco suggested in 1962. In according with Apollonio,

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<sup>22</sup> F. Menna, *Profezia di una società estetica*, Lerici Edizioni, Milan, 1968.

<sup>23</sup> G.C.Argan, *L'Arte Moderna 1770/1970*, Sansoni, Milano, 1970, pp. 661-687.

<sup>24</sup> I. Tomassoni, *Lo spontaneo e il programmato*, Laboratorio delle arti, Milano, 1970.

<sup>25</sup> U. Apollonio, D. Mahlow, L. Caramel, *Ricerca e progettazione. Proposte per una esposizione sperimentale*, Ente autonomo La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 1970.

those researches were in the aesthetical panorama of the Constructivism vanguard but in the same time New Tendency, as a way to investigating the Nature, was near others art concepts like the computer art, video art, “arte povera” and conceptual art.

That critical point of view had parallels in the one by the American art critic Guy Brett<sup>26</sup>. In 1968 Brett read the kinetic, visual and Optical art as a studying of the natural and physical forces in spite of the fact these works of art could be geometric or free shapes, have electronic or mechanic movements and build by artificial or natural materials. On account of that, the ideas of Apollonio and Brett were really far from what in Zagreb happened.

§.3. *Second Time: artistic historiographies on the Nove Tendencije (1973-1978). From Tendencije 5 to Tendencije 6.*

Once again, *Tendencije 4* called the attention of Italian critics and therefore they held in high regard Zagreb as the most suitable place to set up an international meeting of great minds.

In the following years several exhibitions of Gianni Colombo<sup>27</sup> and Alberto Biasi<sup>28</sup> both held in 1971 in Zagreb, and one of Vjenceslav Richter held in Venice in 1972<sup>29</sup> aided to increase that.

In 1973, hence the Zagreb committee, composed of Radoslav Putar, Boris Kelemen and Božo Bek, managed to achieve *Tendencije 5*<sup>30</sup>, with the aid of the A.I.C.A. which also celebrated the Twenty fifth anniversary since its foundation.

As Putar wrote a missive mailed to Colombo<sup>31</sup> in February 19<sup>th</sup>, the aim of the exhibition would make a comparison between rational and irrational meanings in the contemporary art; it would be divided in three sections: constructivist, computer and conceptual art researches. As consequence the new tendencies become a constructive approach to the art and Enzo Mari - at the beginning also Gianni Colombo and Bruno Munari were invited<sup>32</sup> - was the only Italian artist of New Tendency called.

In addition to him were also Giovanni Anselmo, Giuseppe Chiari, Jannis Kunellis, Giulio Paolini and Giuseppe Penone, whom come from the conceptual or “arte povera” researches.

Obviously, Germano Celant was engaged to introduce those artists and in Zagreb he met Argan (fig. 9), whom was there as a delegate of A.I.C.A.; and there was an ideal changeover from the old art critic system to an innovative one. As a matter of fact, the comparison between rational

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<sup>26</sup> G. Brett, *Kinetic Art*, Studio Vista, London, 1969.

<sup>27</sup> *Gianni Colombo*, catalogue, March 6 – 21<sup>th</sup> 1971, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1971.

<sup>28</sup> *Alberto Biasi*, catalogue, September 14<sup>th</sup> – October 10<sup>th</sup> 1971, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1971.

<sup>29</sup> M. Susovski, *Venecijanski Biennale i jugoslavenska moderna umjetnosti 1895-1988*, Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti, Galerije grada Zagreba, Zagreb, 1988.

<sup>30</sup> *Tendencije 5*, catalogue, June 1<sup>st</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup> 1973, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1973.

<sup>31</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, NT 1973\_01\_konstruktivizam\_a. Letter from R. Putar to G. Colombo of February 19<sup>th</sup> 1973.

<sup>32</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb. NT Found, NT 1973\_01\_konstruktivizam\_b. Typewritten undated list.

and irrational art researches did not was as in the previous decade, because that confrontation was able to mirror the Enlightenment crisis took place since 1968.

As a consequence, the researches were able to show abstract concepts by visual media like the photography or industrial and natural objects were as rational as New Tendencies ones – for instance art pieces by Mari, Richter, Picelj, Šutej and Vladimir Bonačić, whom had just exhibited them at the *Tendencije 4* in 1969.

As computer art, in fact, searched human mental working in the rational way (fig. 10), such Paolini, Penone, Anselmo and others revealed human beings in the same way (fig. 11). After all, they had interest in the anthropological aims of their artworks and as consequence that was the main meaning of the *Tendencije 5* exhibition.

With regards to that issue, the philosopher Jürgen Habermas, in the early 1970s, highlighted lack of agreement between rationalism and social behaviour. He suggested a theory of the communicative action that for us was able to show New Tendency and conceptual art as two similar ways to realize the gap between human and social communication<sup>33</sup>.

The year 1973 was the end of a decade began in 1963 just after the *Nove Tendencije 2*, and in Italy was the year in which first interpretations of the new tendencies history happened during two conferences at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome.

In February, Manfredo Massironi<sup>34</sup> told about international visual art researches of New Tendency. He admitted he agreed with efforts of the 1965 Brezovica meeting, but he claimed the failure of New Tendency goals was due to the foolish ambition of changing the society.

According to Massironi, 1966 was crucial to the success of their works, although artists had to choose between following their original purpose – the fight against the establishment art world - or yielding to the art trade.

Consequently, they had a dilemma that caused the unresolved crack within the New Tendency group. Also, Massironi highlighted the deciding factor in New Tendency's development that meant the severance of the *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions and the New Tendency movement.

One month later, in the same place Lea Vergine<sup>35</sup> argued that “arte programmata” works by Mari, N and T groups did not are directly outcomes of the technological society, because Italian art critics misunderstood their original efforts. Vergine, however, forgot New Tendency artists had benefits of that. However, we could admit her critical interpretation stemmed from the ideological and cultural changing occurred since 1968.

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<sup>33</sup> J. Habermas, *La crisi della razionalità nel capitalismo maturo*, Laterza, Bari, 1975.

<sup>34</sup> M. Massironi, *Ricerche visuali, Conferenza tenuta il 25 febbraio 1973*, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Roma, Soprintendenza alle Gallerie Roma II Arte Contemporanea, Arte e società, Roma, 1973.

<sup>35</sup> L. Vergine, *L'arte cinetica in Italia, Conferenza tenuta l'11 marzo 1973*, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Roma, Soprintendenza alle Gallerie Roma II Arte Contemporanea, Arte e società, Roma, 1973.

Another interpretation of the New Tendency history was made by Gillo Dorfles<sup>36</sup> whom published the second edition of the *Ultime tendenze nell'arte d'oggi*. Dorfles wrote about that, more or less, in the similar way he made in 1961, but he disagreed with the art form of New Tendency as connecting same units to produce boring works.

However that essay, nowadays, is important because in its glossary we find the explanations of the follows terms: *Arte programmata*, *Kinetic art*, *Cibernetic Serendipity*, *New Tendencies* and *Op art*. That means Dorfles's essay had an historiographical aim.

We could put close to the above-mentioned critic interpretations also one by Giovanni Anceschi<sup>37</sup> whom was a student at Ulm Hochschule für Gestaltung until 1966 when he became a visual art teacher.

In 1974 Anceschi translated the most important essay by Max Bense, titled *Aesthetica*; the reviewed edition by Bense in 1965. Anceschi also, wrote a brief introduction to Bense's essay in which he told about the relationship between Italian Mari, Alviani, N and T groups, and the Bense's aesthetical theory on the programming art.

According to Anceschi, new tendencies had two phases. In the first they were close to constructivist vanguard, then in the second one they adopted the programmed art theory.

On balance, several artists of New Tendency – except Anceschi himself and Mavignier whom were student in Ulm – did not know Bense's theory in the early Sixties as well as it was knew since 1966. In that year, for instance, in Italy the early translation of a Bense's essay was on the magazine «Il Verri»<sup>38</sup>.

As a consequence, we admitted the Bense's aesthetics was knew, but also Anceschi could have followed the *Tendencije 4* outcomes that since 1969 were published in the magazine «BIT», wherein New Tendency artworks were meant through the Bense's programmed art theory.

However, Umbro Apollonio stated what was only hinted by Massironi. In 1973, Apollonio<sup>39</sup> admitted the “arte programmata”, kinetic and visual researches converged to Zagreb, but they became an international art movement called Nuova Tendenza (New Tendency). Its disappearance within 1970 was due to the Conceptual art that replaced the relation among art, life and nature – as was in the Kinetic art - with the statement of “a thought” or with pictures signified differently than their original meanings.

In other words, Apollonio's discourse was closely related to the *Tendencije 5* exhibition, when constructivist and conceptual researches –according to Apollonio - were compared without a true dialectical opposition. In addition, he edited the first historiographical studies on New

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<sup>36</sup> G. Dorfles, *Ultime tendenze nell'arte d'oggi*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1973, pp. 194-201.

<sup>37</sup> G. Anceschi, *Intorno all'estetica di Bense*, in M. Bense, *Estetica*, Sansoni, Milano, 1974, pp.5-23.

<sup>38</sup> M. Bense, *La teoria dei segni come fondamento della nuova estetica (progetti di estetica generativa)*, «Il Verri», no.22, October, Milan, 1966, pp. 9- 23.

<sup>39</sup> U. Apollonio, *La ricerca cinetica*, «Ulisse», vol. XIII, no. LXXVI, November, Rome,1973, pp. 144-153.

Tendency, thanks to his graduates at the University of Padua, were published on the art magazine «Interarte» in 1975<sup>40</sup>.

The above-mentioned critical discourses made by Dorfles, Anceschi and Apollonio were discussed by Filiberto Menna, whom came out from the Argan's critic point of view.

In the end of 1974, Menna wrote his the most successful essay titled *La linea analitica dell'arte moderna*<sup>41</sup>, in which he told about the analytic approach in the modern art since Impressionism. He meant the opposition between the Constructive approach – since Mondrian to the “arte programmata” - and the Conceptual one to art could be settled.

Although they were very much alike rational investigations, the true difference was in *medium* between the two methods. The deductive one was replaced by the analogical one, like photography, and as a result it was rational but not rationalist such as the tradition of Enlightenment claimed.

On the one hand the Menna's essay completed an important phase in Italy and on the other hand it was able to the first stage to set up a new historiographical thinking about New Tendency.

Another Italian critic, Italo Mussa, began to make a study on N Group and its Italian or foreign colleagues. Although he got his planning since 1974, he could published only two years later his essay untitled *Il Gruppo N e la situazione dei gruppi in Europa negli anni '60*<sup>42</sup>.

The delay was due to troubles arose out of the New Tendency breakdown.

The most important consideration was that Mussa maintained the development of New Tendency from 1957 to 1965. In 1957, according to him, were born the first European groups, like Equipo 57 and Zero Group, and afterwards they met the other artists in Zagreb for the 1961 *Nove Tendencije* exhibition. Then, the following two exhibitions in 1963 and in 1965 were crucial to the success of the team work idea and at the same time to define their aims.

Furthermore, Mussa pointed out that the great aim was the relationship with the society as result of the straight connection between artworks and users. He claimed also the year 1961 had a great importance because the *Nove Tendencije* and *Twelfth Lissonne Award* exhibitions gave New Tendency a remarkable critical achievement.

The 1963, moreover, was the ultimate occasion joined art and industry efforts. New Tendency researches discovered the environmental dimension as a new chance of transforming the programmed works as it took place in the 1964 *Nouvelle Tendance* exhibition in Paris, in 1965 *Nova Tendencija 3* and at last, in 1967 *Lo spazio dell'immagine*.

According to Mussa, then, New Tendency crisis was not due to *The Responsive Eye* in 1965 but to decreasing of the relationship between art and industry, to dissolving of the Groups and to failure their team work ideology.

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<sup>40</sup> U. Apollonio (a cura di), *Arte cinetica*, «Interarte», no. 4, April, Bologna, 1975, pp. 5-34.

<sup>41</sup> F. Menna, *La linea analitica dell'arte moderna*, Einaudi, Torino, 1975.

<sup>42</sup> I. Mussa, op. cit. 1976.

Mussa wrote his essay with the aim to enhance reputation of N Group as a better model of the artistic engagement than T Group or others. In fact, Mussa – such as Lea Vergine made in 1973 – sustained programmed works by N Group were able to show the aesthetic and social efforts of the “arte programmata”. In the same time, his discourse would exalt new environmental researches by New Tendency as the exactly blend of the user intervention and the social interest.

In addition, the Mussa’s essay was close to several team works that, by the conceptual art approach, were in the political and aesthetic militancy like Gruppo di coordinamento in Rome (1972) or Laboratorio di Comunicazione Militante in Milan (1975).

As a consequence the history of N Group was an ideal link between art researches of the Sixties and new artistic experiences in the Seventies.

Indeed, 1976 Venice Biennial<sup>43</sup> was an important meeting point between the environmental art and team works. Its main topic was *Ambiente/partecipazione/strutture culturali* and opposed to the technological point of view was in Zagreb. At Venice, as a result, was favoured an idea of art as the making of the social engagement and further Germano Celant set up using conceptual and kinetic art pieces the section concerning the urban art environment.

The consequence of the setting was that *Ambiente Elastico* (1966) by Gianni Colombo shared Giardini del Castello with a remake of the *Salon de Madame B.* by Mondrian, whom built it in 1926 (figs. 12-14). Thus, Mondrian came back at the Venice Biennial twenty years later and his work supported interchanges with the roots of New Tendency. Although both works owed to flatness of painting, *Spazio Elastico* gave a dynamic conception of real life whereas *Salon de Madame B* showed a metaphysical idea of fixity.

1976 Venice Biennale was considerable event concerning the Croatian art because Radoslav Putar was the chef curator of Yugoslavian pavilion and he invited Julie Knifer for an exhibition. In that way, Putar and Knifer represented the historical Croatian New Tendency.

Radoslav Putar experienced the Venice Biennial and since February 1977 he set up the schedule of the next *Tendencije 6*, whose topic would be *Art and society*<sup>44</sup> as had just happened in Venice. Main events he planned were a symposium and an exhibition of performance, video and team work art.

Since *Tendencije 6* was scheduled from September 27<sup>th</sup> to October 30<sup>th</sup> 1976, we were able to think it would just set before. Indeed, Putar had showed it in the original meaning of the *Nove Tendencije* as was showed by means of an another paper written in 1975<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> XXXVII Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte, catalogo, June-October, 1976, Giardini di Castello, Venezia, Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 1976.

<sup>44</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb, Putar found, Razno Putar, NT6\_Putar. Typewritten schedule for *Tendencije 6*, February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1977.

<sup>45</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb, Putar found, Razno Putar, NT6\_Putar. Typewritten schedule for *Tendencije 6*, November 17<sup>th</sup> 1975.

However, there were many differences between the former schedule and the latter, which was wrote in 1977. The latter was more close to the venetian topic than the former. Unfortunately, *Tendencije 6* would not take place in 1977, owing to bad economic situation and as a consequence the event was deferred for one year.

In 1978 Putar organized only a symposium that happened in October from 13 to 14<sup>th</sup>; just before the important *Nova umjetnička praksa*<sup>46</sup> exhibition which focused on the Yugoslavian contemporary art from 1966 to 1978. For the symposium Boris Kelemen called Italo Mussa, Germano Celant, Filiberto Menna, Ugo La Pietra and Laboratorio di Comunicazione Militante, with the aim of the interchanging information each other. Nevertheless in 1977 Putar had just invited Enzo Mari to come in Zagreb but he did not go<sup>47</sup>.

In the Putar's archive, we found several papers which were wrote by Mussa, but only in Croatian translation. Others come from Laboratorio di Comunicazione Militante and Ugo La Pietra<sup>48</sup>. In the first paper Mussa told about the relationship between the idea of creativity and the individual approach to art. Then, he analyzed the art pieces from Futurism to Postmodern art. The other papers were only proposals to making conceptual performances.

In addition, Ugo La Pietra – whose works Putar directly knew during the Biennale of Venice in 1976 – seemed to linking with later researches of New Tendency. In fact, on regard his earlier works made in 1966 and titled *Strutturazioni Tissurali*, he involved his own work with industrial design – building futuristic design objects – and at last with conceptual art form (figs. 15 – 19)<sup>49</sup>. Consequently he represented the complete development of new tendencies.

After all, the *Tendencije 6* symposium was the latest artistic meeting between Italy and Croatia, seventeen years later the 1961 *Nove Tendencije* exhibition.

#### §. 4. Results and interpretative proposals.

Although critics and historians often agree with the development of the artistic panorama we have showed and named it as new tendencies. In fact the definition was borrowed from the *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions and became the word to cover both artists and works. Artists from their own point of view asked to get a political, educational and aesthetical role in the society but their works and speeches did not correspond with the art critics' theories.

They were against the well-known art form called Informel, whose main matter was the messy, obsolete and vulgarized language. The best artistic models, on the contrary, were by Lucio

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<sup>46</sup> M. Suvoski, *Nova umjetnička praksa*, op. cit., 1978.

<sup>47</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb, NT found, 1977-79\_T6. Letter from Boris Kelemen to Italo Mussa of September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1978; Letter from Kelemen to Celant of September 11<sup>th</sup> 1978; Letter from Kelemen to Menna of September 12<sup>th</sup> 1978; Letter from Kelemen to La Pietra of June 28<sup>th</sup> 1978; Letter from Kelemen to Laboratorio di Comunicazione Militante of June 27<sup>th</sup> 1978; Letter from Putar to Mari of March 15<sup>th</sup> 1975.

<sup>48</sup> MSU archive, Zagreb, Putar found, Razno Putar, NT6\_Putar. Undated typewritten pages series.

<sup>49</sup> V. Fagone, *Ugo La Pietra. La sinestesia delle arti 1960-2000*, Mazzotta, Milano, 2001.

Fontana, Jean Tinguely, Piero Manzoni, Victor Vasarely, Bruno Munari and previous vanguards like Futurism and Russian Constructivism.

Even so, Italian and Croatian artists claimed Piet Mondrian was able to be a perfect synthesis among painting, architecture, ethic and poetic qualities.

As a consequence my study has underlined a parallel history of the Mondrian's critical success during the last seventy years - according to Italian art historian Jole De Sanna<sup>50</sup> whom said that the Dutch painter had a strong influence on abstract painters since the Forties.

Mondrian as a link between New Tendency and historical vanguard gave rise to think about another question on art as European science crisis (*«arte come crisi della scienza europea»*) as in 1970 Argan suggested.

Indeed, in Europe during the Sixties the science - like an independent subject - grew in parallel with the technological and political development. For instance a crucial crossing point of artistic and scientific researches was the 1958 Brussels World's Fair in which a common system of artistic, philosophic and technological values was improved.

The event encouraged – as Rika Devos and Mil De Kooning<sup>51</sup> recently claimed – a new meeting between Western and Eastern culture - such as between Italy and Croatia - by different changes, ranging from the political sphere to the scientific one.

Consequently industrial design as the product of interchanges between art and industry was reviewed. The outcomes were also in the Croatian “modernism” in that way Jerko Denegri told about the “Socialist modernism” - borrowed it from the American art critique<sup>52</sup>.

The centre of the above-mentioned system was the artist whom became a visual technician without metaphysical aim for secularizing the world of art by a scientific approach. The crisis of the Informel artist, whom was a rebel as in the Romantic meaning, sparked off the general crisis of art and so every kind of lyrical goal was firmly rejected. Artists had interest in political claims to fill the metaphysical and psychological vacuum. And they borrowed from the Marxism the prospect that our society as changeable as the system of art.

However a sort of metaphysical habit remained. It was due to the belief that the mental rationality was able to better both human ethic and physical environment. That goal was achieved by kinetic factor in the art pieces led to link art and life. As a consequence, Italian artists used to make structures as countable as scientific ones.

They shared the early idea with others colleagues – or more specifically with French and Croatian ones - during the first *Nove Tendencije* in 1961. Unfortunately, the exhibition showed up through its own title the vanguard's rhetoric: the newer art tendency (in Croatian “nova”) could chase away the older.

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<sup>50</sup> J. De Sanna, op. cit., 1999.

<sup>51</sup> R. Devos, M. De Kooning, op. cit. 2006.

<sup>52</sup> J. Denegri, op. cit. 2003, pp. 170-209.



Therefore, we claim the “new” in 1961 was a vain idea. Nowadays, we can recognise works of art in *Nove Tendencije* were very similar to ones were in exhibitions like the *Konkrete Kunst* in Zurich or *Bewegen Bewogen* in Amsterdam exhibitions.

But if we considered the first *Nove Tendencije* among latest Fifties’ exhibitions, we would give it a great importance because it is a manifestation of the European artistic system crisis. Although Paris continued to be a central place in European art, Zagreb made evident the periphery was fruitful as well as the centre.

Changes consequence was artworks had to shift from the museum to the daily people lives in the urban environment. Artworks, also, were losing their own aura – according to Walter Benjamin whom fame in Italy was increased - for becoming industrial design objects.

Therefore Industrial design, whose activities as operational as artworks ones were exhibited in *Nove Tendencije*, gained an own importance.

The main question was in regard to interchanges between the paradigm of Constructivism and new tendencies works. The artists, indeed, used to apply the constructivism visual language for changing their own work shapes and for modifying them in connection with the technological society. The industrial design was complementary to new tendencies work thanks to architects or designers like Enzo Mari or Vjenceslav Richter, whom would influence its development towards an urban and architectural dimensions.

For instance, N Group began interest in Dada and Neoplasticism revival just before 1961 *Nove Tendencije* exhibition. However, then, N Group moved with the times becoming closer to the GRAV’s art form. In fact, their basic ideas were to preserve anonymity, to demystify the artwork - as if it has been a design object - and at last, to built prototypes of their works.

In 1962 the first exhibition in Olivetti’s store in Milan works by N and T groups, Munari, Mari got an engaging slogan as “Arte programmata”. Although it highlighted the relationship between programmed works and new cybernetic researches, that idea was ahead of works, because it was close to Constructivism rather than to first computers.

Whereupon the outcome critic lecture by Umberto Eco was to transform artworks into “arte programmata”. Then Milan, the exhibition went in Venice Olivetti’s store where Italian artists – whom Getulio Alviani joined in – met French ones of GRAV. In that occasion we claim an expected development happened, because then Olivetti’s Committee preferred to show original set up in the following American exhibitions.

In fact in Venice artists, coming from *Nove Tendencije*, worked together to build a common artistic vanguard by means of manifestos and homogeneous kind of works. The two exhibitions influenced one each other and in the same time new tendencies found their niche in the contemporary art panorama among the new figurative expressionism, new dada and Pop art.

Italian art critics Giulio Carlo Argan and Umbro Apollonio began to make their own point of view with different goals. Argan used to tell about the Gestalt theory and to apply a sociological approach to explain works of new tendencies as a result of the artist's technical job. Consequently the artist became a "visual operator".

On the other hand, Apollonio laid great stress on kinetic and constructive features were in programmed artworks. In addition, he appreciated the relationship between Eastern Europe and Venice as a wide range of artistic researches – were closely linked to historical Constructivism - that, especially in the former Yugoslavia, were free from trading rules of Western galleries.

A consequence of the choice was that he met Croatian critics Vera Horvat-Pintarić and Matko Meštrović, but he became closer the former than the latter.

Although the Apollonio's role nowadays is underrated, he mediated between foreign museums and Autonomous Body as conservator of the archive in Venice. In fact Apollonio was under the shadow of Argan, whom was well known at home and abroad. Argan exactly supported Alviani and others since 1963, until they were submitted to his critic theories.

However he understood that his theory - through which he meant the painting was only a perceptive process - was not be in harmony with real ambitions of artists. As a consequence, he became less close to N or T groups than to Rome artists like Uno Group, Lia Drei and Francesco Guerrieri (former Group 63).

At that juncture Apollonio put a lot of efforts into making new tendencies' success.

In Zagreb, instead, during the *Nove Tendencije 2* in August 1963 the presence of GRAV and N Group was heavier than of others, because two groups were able to import there their own experience they made by the *Arte programmata* exhibition.

As a consequence, they gave Croatian event a specific imprinting that caused the first split among new tendencies artists. For instance, on the one hand Almir Mavignier and Zero Group believed in convergence of different trends, on the other hand GRAV, N Group and Vjenceslav Richter would be one single trend.

In that way, when the exhibition happened at Venice, in winter 1963, its title was New Tendency (Nuova Tendenza) – as the singular of New Tendencies – patterned on the French *Nouvelle Tendence*. Also, it meant something was developed at Venice: the New Tendency movement was born.

In Italy, we admit Apollonio was the first whom acquainted the general public with the work of New Tendency, but his efforts failed to live up to his own expectations.

In fact, between 1964 and 1965, New Tendency missed the Venice Biennial and the Fifteenth Avezzano Award revealed itself as a provincial event. Also in 1965 the Apollonio's exhibition planning for the San Marino Biennial was rejected by the Committee.

But when he met Germano Celant, they together set up a successful exhibition named *Forme programmate* (Programmed shapes).

However the real test of New Tendency was the exhibition *Nova Tendencija 3* in Zagreb, when the presence of American and Russian artists and critics would make the New Tendency movement as internationalist. Although the possibility was encouraged by Apollonio, Mari, Putar and Kelemen, was blocked by three main factors.

Firstly, a lot of artists of New Tendency just before the *Nova Tendencija 3* exhibited at the most famous *The Responsive Eye* in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The exhibition was set up by William Seitz whom engaged several American artists whom both they came from the legacy of Chicago's Bauhaus and from the New Abstract Painting.

Moreover, Seitz claimed European's works as modernist as American's ones and generated a new misunderstanding about the real purpose of New Tendency. In fact, works there were displayed were named as Optical Art and in that way every Marxist manner was removed.

Secondly, to take away artworks from every metaphysical explanation that used to make, the critical interpretation of New Tendency works was put in charge to the Theory of Information technicians like Abraham Moles and Max Bense. They made a contrariwise *epoché* because did not give the world in brackets to attach importance to the work of art phenomenon. They did not use to consider the work of art by itself but as a result of the language processing was made up of the source-message (or channel coding-user).

Consequently, during the *Nova Tendencija 3*, the Brezovica Congress was composed of critics, artists and technicians whom told about cybernetic systems, communication and sociological theories and not about the works of art were there.

Lastly, artists understood that their efforts failed for joining the industrial product and multiple object. The main aim of the *Nova Tendecija 3* was to mass-produce artistic objects to democratize the art world, but they could not just paper over the problem.

Indeed, Mari and Richter knew to democratize the work of art, they had to reach a compromise with the industrial system. But the industry used to produce a large number of units and only by that was able to cover the cost. That meant multiple objects for becoming industrial product, they did not account as "artworks".

As a consequence, New Tendency as an united and internationalist movement progressively broke up – that happened for groups in the same way – and was token in the academic speech and on the museum threshold.

Considering what we have analysed by this study, we can outline three further questions: the relationship between the *Nove Tendencije* exhibitions and the New Tendency movement; the problem to find a real connection of the New Tendency art pieces with the historical constructivist vanguard; and at last a question concerning the shaped and ideological legacy of New Tendency.

About the first question, the exhibitions took place at Zagreb were an ideal meeting point but nowadays identifying them with the works were showed is not enough.

Therefore we can assume from 1963 to 1967 artists, Italian and Croatian ones specifically, shared each other shaped and ideological changes – obviously, without making the mistake of considering New Tendency like a new artistic label.

Concerning the second question, we should considering works not only like a merely shaped quotation from Constructivism, but - as it happens in the scientific method – we must think about a latter and better paradigm that takes over from and, in the same time, includes the former.

At last, the question concerning the shaped and ideological legacy of New Tendency we can suggest that although, since 1967 to nowadays, the legacy of New Tendency has been identified with the new electronic art, we can suppose new media in electronic art are able to cause only shaped and linguistic changes but not to transform the whole paradigm.

We could find the real legacy of New Tendency in other – outwardly antithetical - artistic researches. For instance, we have to remember art critics Germano Celant, at the beginning of his career, and Umbro Apollonio worked with artists of New Tendency. By that experience Celant changed his own perspective and he thought up the successfully idea of the “arte povera”. In the same way, Luciano Fabro believed to be close to New Tendency by means of his own works just before to become a main Arte povera character. On the contrary, Enzo Mari was the main feature of the New Tendency movement with his pure shaped abstract works. In 1973 he took part in the *Tendencije 5* exhibition by graphic works that quoted his own former paintings made during the Fifties, however in the conceptual way (figs. 17,18).

In conclusion, we have tried to take away the history of above-mentioned works from misunderstandings and mistakes to consider their artistic paradigm, so called New Tendency, as a constructive way of approaching in relation to their ultimate historical and natural backgrounds.

This is not a general statement but we are following two different and complementary theories. The first refers to an historical constructive approach, according to Jesa Denegri<sup>53</sup>, was showed by the artistic heritage of Constructivism. On the contrary, the second one, according to Guy Brett<sup>54</sup>, concerns the constructive method to search the way by natural forces – like magnetism, light or gravity - usually work, independently of their outcomes are rigorous or spontaneous.

In the same way, we finally state that New Tendency used to employ like *media* a few of features of Constructivism but in that case the *medium* was not as the message.

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<sup>53</sup> J. Denegri, op. cit., 2004.

<sup>54</sup> *Force fields. Phases of the kinetic art*, catalogue, April 19<sup>th</sup> – June 18<sup>th</sup> 2000, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, MACBA/Actar, 2000.



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