

**Roy Lichtenstein Sculptor**

**Emilio Vedova ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...**

**Venice**

**Magazzino del Sale and Spazio Vedova**

**From 28th May to 24th November**

The Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova will be hosting two extraordinary exhibitions at the Zattere from 28<sup>th</sup> May to 24<sup>th</sup> November: **Roy Lichtenstein Sculptor**, curated by Germano Celant at the Magazzino del Sale and **Emilio Vedova ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...** at the Spazio Vedova, curated by Germano Celant with Fabrizio Gazzarri. With these two new exhibitions, the Fondazione continues in its approach of placing Vedova's work in dialogue with that of leading exponents of contemporary art.

**Roy Lichtenstein Sculptor**

Considered one of the greatest exponents of American Pop art, the exhibition of Roy Lichtenstein's work focuses on the sculptural production of the artist.

Consisting of 45 works on loan from the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation in New York as well as from private collections it ranges from drawings, collages, sketches, wooden *maquettes*, bronze and a painted fiberglass sculpture made between 1965 and 1997. The collection of works is being presented in Europe for the first time to document the artist's vast and complex sculptural production.

Lichtenstein's interest in sculpture dates back to the 1940s, with experiments with carved wood and stone, terracotta and various assemblages some featuring painted-on layers of plywood, but it was not until 1964 that his sculptures began to reflect the mature language of his Pop idioms begun in 1961 when he started to use images drawn from the mass media, and from cartoons. Those paintings led to his interest in ceramic figurative works based on three-dimensional female mannequin heads and molds for piles of American diner style coffee cups and mugs and eventually to turning the two-dimensional explosions featured in *Men at War* comic serials into three-dimensional forms. These were all motifs transferred from a popular iconic source, initially insignificant and with no aesthetic

character, to which the artist gave an artistic value, as though they were constants within a modernist culture leading from Brancusi to Calder. This theme was developed until his premature death in 1997 via dozens and dozens of sculptures oscillating between various styles that informed his production after the Sixties.

A constant in this activity was the stress on surface in his sculptures, but after 1965, the flattening treatment of the volume became more pronounced with his introduction of Art Deco style pieces begun in 1967 fabricated in brass with glass elements that evoked the stair railings and décor of New York City's Radio City Music Hall. After 1976, a similar procedure led to "profile" sculptures, in which the depth and shadows of the object treated – a lamp, a mirror or coffee pot, or a face, nude or house – are all placed on the same plane, as though they were crushed and flattened on a single surface. Volume is transformed into compact line and colour, despite its depth often only being an inch thick, as though his sculpture had been cut-out from a newspaper or magazine.

This attunes them to the artist's paintings, in which perspective differences are cancelled in favour of a play of full and void, transparency and opacity, leaving no room for any sense of depth, if not the insignificant flatness of the message drawn from the cartoon or the history of art.

This reflection on the two-dimensional vision is critique of the heroic gesture which underlies the dramatic, spectacular brushwork of the Abstract Expressionists. Lichtenstein's sculptures are both rich in irony and visual refinements where the popular image overcomes its banality to affirm itself as a sublime treatise on popular culture.

Skira Editore will be publishing a catalogue edited by Germano Celant and including a foreword by Dorothy Lichtenstein and Jack Cowart and texts by Alfredo Bianchini, Clare Bell and Ian Wallace, it illustrates the complex, rich evolution of Roy Lichtenstein as sculptor and contains some of his own declarations about his work.

The exhibition layout is by Francesca Fenaroli of the Studio Gae Aulenti Associati, Milan.

### **Emilio Vedova ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali*...**

Works from Emilio Vedova's cycle of **...*Cosiddetti Carnevali*... (...So-called *Carnivals*...)** will be on display in the Spazio Vedova.

The exhibition, curated by Germano Celant with Fabrizio Gazzarri, for the first time brings together works from this partly unseen cycle in a wide-ranging and significant manner, revealing the surprising and inexhaustible poetic force of Emilio Vedova, considered one of the most authoritative protagonists of the international informal movement.

The **...*Cosiddetti Carnevali*...** groups together works realised between 1977 and 1991 under a single title, bearing witness to a particularly original period within the artist's career, and expressing an unusual artistic experience.

Provoked by that intense relation he felt with the most genuine aspect of the carnival spirit, Emilio Vedova began to explore this theme, in part using materials that from time recall those used in other periods of his work. The **...*Cosiddetti Carnevali*...** represent, since the late Seventies to the early Nineties, a parallel research to other experiments within the magmatic flow of Vedova's oeuvre. The declared thematic indication intended by the artist, and the skilled use of collage and *assemblages* of masks, cords, papers, prints, plastic and wood on the most varied supports, immediately characterised the nature and problem of this cycle in a highly evident manner. The entire cycle is formed of a wide variety of supports and forms of installation, and the marked technical and linguistic differences enrich the conspicuous plurality of Emilio Vedova's pictorial language. An initial group of works, one belonging to the end of the 1970s, is characterised by asymmetrical fragments typical of Vedova and an oblique, unstable dynamism. These are surfaces of surfaces of double-fronted forms, laid out in space on reflective steel bases and prevalently painted in white, black and metallic grey, at times encompassing also photo-collage, graffiti and combustion; through the use of *assemblage*, Vedova provoked a shift on these on to further poetic planes. In later years, in the *Carnevali* we see a return to a painting of a great gestural and chromatic impact, whether on canvas, wood or plastic, in which the interesting link between a newly and directly expressionist way of producing art and the almost metaphysical suspension provoked by the mask are increasingly evident.

From a historical point of view, the first reports on Emilio Vedova and the Carnival date from 1954 when he remained for three months in Bra-

zil, after winning the São Paulo Biennale. At Rio, he produced a series of drawings and pastels during the carnival, revealing an intense, colourful vitality; these subsequently won him a prize at the Venice Biennale. This experience, almost a need to regenerate himself through a visionary, liberating fervour after the years of the *Geometrie '46/'50*, helped to mature the complex development of Vedova's style. At the same time, his voyage to Mexico in 1980 was fundamental for Vedova's resourcing a new creative energy after the suffered expressive silence of the *Plurimi/Binari* in the *Lacerazione '77/'78* cycle. The encounter with that distant world, which he nevertheless felt very close in terms of its symbolic and archaic power, facilitated the start of an exceptionally fruitful decade for the Venetian artist: from the large *Teleri* of the 1980s to the *Tondi*, from the *Dischi* to the *Oltre*, and from the Continuum to the sculptures.

Skira Editore will be publishing a catalogue edited by Germano Celant and including unpublished texts and notes of the artist, with illustrations of all the ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali*...

The installation project is by Francesca Fenaroli of the Studio Gae Aulenti Associati, Milan.

**Roy Lichtenstein**  
**Sculptor**  
**Magazzino del Sale (Zattere 266)**

**Emilio Vedova**  
**...*Cosiddetti Carnevali*...**  
**Spazio Vedova (Zattere 50)**

**from 10.30 am to 6 pm**  
**closed Tuesdays**

**[www.fondazionevedova.org](http://www.fondazionevedova.org)**

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### **Roy Lichtenstein Sculptor**

In the spaces of Emilio Vedova, at the Zattere in his Venice, in the Magazzini del Sale, beautifully restored by Renzo Piano, Fondazione Vedova will display the sculptures of Roy Lichtenstein, with the intelligent exhibition design by Francesca Fenaroli of the Studio Gae Aulenti Associati. Why here? Why Lichtenstein?

As a first answer, we may hear the echo of the sharp reflections by Germano Celant, who not by chance is the curator of the exhibition: “[...] *today art is made everywhere with everything, with no linguistic or geographical boundary. It is a widespread making process in absolute mimesis with the world, with no obligation to respect any language or environment based criteria [...] the field of art is a place of infinite hybridization of languages.*” In Venice, a town that is inevitably confined in its urban structure, immutable in its *forma urbis*, in the Magazzini del Sale, the place where one of the treasures of Venice – salt – was kept and which has now, through an extraordinary metamorphosis, turned into a solemn and austere, almost sacred, space, the message of the great Maestro of *pop art* confirms and testifies the attitude of Venice to promote and spread a current scientific and cultural thought, always new and renewing, which crosses the enclosed spaces, the walls, the time, the waters, the stones of the city. All in all, isn't it the artists who mostly concur in creating the image of the cities through their *presence*?

In this way we realise the idea that it is possible to overcome the mere conservative idea of Venice and of its relationship with art. Such idea is realised not by forgetting the past of course, but on the contrary with the aim of constantly renovating its life and its understanding, transforming the city into a generator of linguistic experiences: the combination of ancient and modern languages, in an ancient setting, not only does it help to reconsider the idea of Venice and its mission, but it also entails intriguing linguistic and environment contaminations of art, through the connection of the object of Lichtenstein and the austere sixteenth century walls and archways of the Magazzini del Sale.

But the question “why here? Why Lichtenstein?” finds a second, more specific, answer: the dialogue between Emilio Vedova and the great artists of our time is one of the most important goals of the Foundation, which in the last few years has brought to global attention not only the works of Vedova, but also never-seen-before pieces by Louise Bourgeois, by Anselm Kiefer and *The Theatres of Aldo Rossi*, in a fascinating encounter of forms,

of techniques and of images. This year the presence of Vedova is testified, again in the spaces of the Zattere, by the display of the *...Cosiddetti Carnivali...*, a cycle conceived and realized between the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, displayed for the first time in an interesting installation by Germano Celant with Fabrizio Gazzarri.

The presence of Roy Lichtenstein in Venice would not be possible without the work of many people: first of all the collaboration of the Roy Lichtenstein foundation in New York, who I thank in the persons of its President Dorothy Lichtenstein, Jack Cowart and Clare bell. I must also underline the precious help of Ian Wallace, in assisting the art director of the exhibition, and the friendly and generous intervention of Larry Gagosian. Maurizio Milan and Agnese Alfonsi have worked together with Francesca Fenaroli on the exhibition design. Adriana Vianello and Andrea de Marchi of Studio Systema and Marco Camuffo of CamuffoLab with Giorgio Camuffo have worked with efficiency, respectively on communication and graphic design. The entire Studio Celant in Milano has put great effort into this project, and a special thanks goes to Marcella Ferrari and Marivì García-Manzano. Of course, the activity of the entire Fondazione Vedova of Venice was great and important, and for all I have to thank Fabrizio Gazzarri, Elena Bianchini Oyelami, Maddalena Pugliese, Sonia Osetta and Bruno Zanon. At last, it is my pleasure to thank Germano Celant for the curation of the exhibition and of the catalogue, and together with him Massimo Vitta Zelman and Stefano Piantini at Skira.

*Alfredo Bianchini*

Presidente Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova

### **Emilio Vedova ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...**

*"I shall stand in front of your face, but thou will not see me..".* This was said by an unknown venetian citizen from the Seventeenth Century, in an extravagant poem dedicated to the masques of the Carnival. Indeed, at the time the Carnival of Venice was the most important in Europe.

This was the peculiar, rather eccentric, record of a city where a centre of power in the hands of sovereign did not exist, nor did a proper Court, with its rituals and its plots, exist within the Palace of the Doge: therefore, as was the power not centralised but spread among the noble families, so where the public feasts spread throughout the entire city, in a mixture of nobility and peasantry, rear phenomena in Europe at that time.

The Carnival was the most important event of these feasts. It even became an institutional occurrence that lasted a considerable amount of time, from October to the first day of Lent, with a short interruption during Christmas time. Everybody during that period was allowed to wear a mask, and the mask even went beyond the Carnival season: it became a sort of institution, that could be worn during special events, for example during the election of the *Doge*, during the entrance of the Patriarchs in the Cathedral of San Pietro di Castello, during the visit of the Apostolic Legate to San Francesco della Vigna, and during many other occasions: silk *tabarri*, *baute*, *larve*, *tricorni*, these are some of the names of the masques which can still be seen in Venice today. In a decadent and, in the end, corrupt Seventeenth Century the Carnival became the occasion for important earnings for the masques' artisans (the *mascarari*), for the coffee bodegas, for the organisers of the parties in theatres (many at that time in Venice) and in the fields, where in Autumn bull hunts were organized, and in snowy winters sleds of elegant dames were pulled by idle noblemen. There were also the "*machine*", ephemeral machines on water or on the fields used to celebrate the arrival of famous foreigners (the "*foresti*"), or to host dances and parties. Fire works and the flying exhibition of the *Angelo* and the *Colombina* (dangerously tight to church towers with copper ropes) periodically attracted crowds of people, during the night-time or day-time, in a huge general confusion. Private parties and gambling houses were also particularly popular at that time (extremely famous was the Casino Venier in the premises of the *Baretteri* Bridge).

Venice was at the time a city of pleasures and the pleasure of the Carnival was a way of life, for many an idea of life imagined in the exchange of



the roles of the everyday routine. As usual, when a social custom becomes significantly established, *Culture* takes its part, also in an ambiguous way, both as a source of inspiration and the record keeper. Carnival indeed has been portrayed and recorded in music, literature, and of course it has left a clear trace in visual art and sculpture. How to forget the inside of the Teatro di San Beneto by Gianbattista Canal, the enjoyable representations by Longhi and the neat engravings by Gabriele Belli about Shrove Thursday (*Giovedì grasso*)? Nevertheless, the most relevant and original contribution is the one of Giandomenico Tiepolo with its representations of the Carnival, its compositions centred on the comic and grotesque character of *Pulcinella*, portrayed in a white vest, half of the face painted black, and its high conical hat: its tight connection with the Carnival is frequently expressed in its role of gentleman, a cavalier in love with noblewomen, immersed in a crowd of peasants and swindlers, a masque among masques. Emilio Vedova was inevitably attracted by a world such vital, confusing, contradictory, mysterious, even perverted, like the one of the Carnival: a world of lights and shades, unveiled covers, hidden faces, disguised visages, sumptuous vests. A world which is parallel to reality, but which in the end becomes real, in a contrast of situations where game, reality and imagination are constantly interchanging. As Fabrizio Gazzarri reminds us in the introduction of this catalogue, when Vedova conceived the ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali*..., between the end of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s, he had been fascinated by the masques and the Carnivals he encountered in his trips to Northern Europe, Brazil and Mexico. Therefore, Carnival of Venice, and Carnival *beyond*.

The title of this cycle, who was given by Vedova himself, is very important, because the indication "so-called" tells us that the Artist didn't want to portray the feats of the Carnival, but rather the condition of those who during the Carnival want to escape from themselves through the dramatic device, not the playful game, of the masque. The masque is immovable, inexpressive, and its apparent coldness cannot hide the pains and confusion of the human nature: Vedova's eternal theme of contrast of situations, both psychological and objective.

Fondazione Vedova displays for the first time, in the space of the Zattere of Venice, the unreleased cycle of the ...*So-called Carnivals*..., curated by Germano Celant and Fabrizio Gazzarri, who I thank deeply. The scenery was realised by Francesca Fenaroli (of the Gae Allenti and Associates Studio), with whom have worked Maurizio Milan and Agnese Alfonsi: to all of them I



# FONDAZIONE EMILIO E ANNABIANCA VEDOVA

express my deep gratitude. Studio Systema and Camuffo Lab with Giorgio Camuffo have worked, with the usual efficiency, respectively on communication and graphic design. Thanks also to Marcella Ferrari of the Celant Studio in Milano, who has worked with Fondazione Vedova in Venice, who on the other hand has devoted a considerable effort into this project thanks to Maddalena Pugliese, Sonia Osetta, Elena Bianchini Oyelami e Bruno Zanon: to all of them, many many thanks. Germano Celant has curated the catalogue, edited by Skirà, who I thank in the person of Massimo Vitta Zelman and Stefano Piantini.

*Alfredo Bianchini*

President of the Emilio e Annabianca Vedova Foundation

We might say: "It all began with *House II*." That is, this 2013 project by our dear friend Germano was launched, innocently enough, by our support of his appeal that Roy Lichtenstein's radical *House II* sculpture completed just before his death in 1997 should be returned to Venice as a reprise of this work's premiere exposure in Germano's 1997 Venice Biennale.

One thing leads to another and now there is this wonderful lateral expansion well beyond *House II* into the fascinating history of Lichtenstein's sculpture process and objects, over many years and manifestations. We are delighted that the Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova has become a parallel communication with the latest Venice Biennale, on behalf of Roy Lichtenstein.

We have long felt that Lichtenstein's sculptures are one of those over-looked areas of his art and reflect many of his long-held interests. We have spent the last fifteen years expanding the documentation and presentation of all his sculptural oeuvre, from his first sculptures in the 1940s to his later and last monumental public sculptures to smaller editions to rare unique pieces. To have the particular venue of the Magazzini del Sale of the Fondazione is both a challenge and a delight and we appreciate the indulgence of the Fondazione and the energies of Germano Celant and his team.

Despite our being currently submerged in the midst of an encyclopedic traveling Lichtenstein retrospective, we were persuaded that this handsome exhibition with its permanent, evocative monograph will touch many hearts and stimulate future discussion and inquiry.

Yet, in the end, for Germano and Roy it all began well before *House II*. We thank Germano for his many prior years of interest and energies not only with Lichtenstein but on behalf of so many American contemporary artists and his help in the dialogues between Europe and America. And now we thank the Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova and those in Venice for launching another recognition of these grand international relationships.

*Dorothy Lichtenstein*

President, Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

*Jack Cowart*

Executive Director, Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

### **Roy Lichtenstein Sculptor**

In the 1960s the relationship between the imaginary, on the one hand, and concrete reality, on the other, was polarized in relation to the social and political events that involved a gradual *de-realization*<sup>1</sup> caused by the massive diffusion of the media expressed via TV and advertising, as well as by all the new artificial and virtual tools of the cultural industry. By using “virtual” means of communication such as TV and publicity, what was concrete and real became increasingly less important with respect to this new dimension of immaterial communication. Although the new interpretations of the social were critical and radical, the subversion of values between the real and the imaginary was total. Indeed, the emotionality and experience of reality made way for information that was visual and conceptual, whose configuration was indeterminate and indefinable, devoid of identity because it was multiform and open. The real was volatilized and developed into an alternative imaginary, one that escaped all identification, apart from that of being repeated ad infinitum: an interpretation of reality that thrived on appearance more than on substance.

Within this dynamic of the valorization of the repeated image that bore no reality was the elaboration of Pop research, which, by focusing on the propagandizing fundamentals of advertising and TV, comics and billboards, revealed the seductive and falsifying factor of reality itself. By fixing it in paintings and sculptures, the linguistic, skeptical and nihilistic characteristics of the mass media proclaimed their metaphysical nature, which was solely of use to the religion of consumerism. What the Pop artists did was to shift their attention away from the physical object towards the virtual dimension of the advertising message, which bestowed value on the object with ends that were merely commercial. The advertising message was so powerful that it disrupted the balance that had at one time existed between an object and the knowledge of it: at which point the latter served only for the assertion of a virtual world, where the thing was replaced by the virtual image. It was no longer a question of feeling and concrete experience, but rather of the communication of abstract and immaterial values, which reached the public by way of mass instruments capable of being included in the network in order to disseminate the new vision.

In the early 1960s artistic culture took hold as a territory of exploration and the recording of a society of the media, nurtured by uselessness and superficiality. It was a detector of spectres and ghosts that haunted – no

longer in a marginal way – the everyday habitat. It did not present itself either as an alternative value or as an instrument of change, but rather as the reflection of contemporary society's process of *dematerialization*. It found its own dimension in the nothingness and the void of the mass media, whose foolishness only bestowed value on goods, emptying of its meaning any suggestion that was instead addressed towards the less superficial and more profound dimensions of the human being (seeing and feeling). It was an exclusively economical vision of all activity, including art, which was increasingly based on the nothingness and the void that inform the dimension of living.

If all this was possible, then what happened to the artistic imaginary that, accompanying the world in parallel, had now been made lighter and airier, freed from the burden of serving the concrete reality of the existential and social day-to-day? A new dimension was produced, fueled by insignificance and the banal, in which the twofold visual and plastic channeled a flattening effect that brought it closer to images that were artificial, not factual. And as the transmission of knowledge was no longer connected to a pragmatic dimension, but to a decorative situation instead, the same as the one put forward by the mass media and by communication, then art too became committed to reflecting the ghosts and spectres that haunted the social. In around 1964 the contemplation of the world ventured down two paths, one where reality was eradicated in favor of an ideal and abstract process, which overlapped with the research that ranged from Programmed Art to Minimal Art, and one that witnessed an enthusiastic involvement, from Neo-Dada to Pop Art, in the illusory dimension of the products that were magnified by the consumer industry.

In both cases, the choice was to focus on a communicative and informative structure that no longer concerned the unique and genuine original, but the copy, the one circulated by industrialized society by means of serialization. The world of the real and the world of reproduction by images could no longer be distinguished. The apparent, the geometric, and the figural became real. In the case of Programmed Art and Minimal Art, research laid claim to a pure, iconoclastic idea, so that the material was invested with a Messianic and moralistic function, while in the case of Neo-Dada and Pop Art, a profound link was established with the material and iconic representation of reality. Its absolute equivalence and resemblance was sought: from metaphysics to the hyperrealism of a recording of the images that only existed as copies.

In the arts, the historical response was aimed at Abstract Expressionism, whose individual protagonism and material heaviness were rejected. The process aimed at stripping down so as to eradicate the thickness and density of the elements used, from color to objects, denying the active depth of the gestures and the vital actions. This was seen in the work of Jackson Pollock and Francis Bacon, Lucio Fontana and Willem de Kooning, Alberto Burri and Lucian Freud. These artists were no longer interested in pictorial fleshiness and its sensual essence with its reassuring relations in respect to the corporeality and the existence of the individual. Rather, they now turned to the opaque quality of metal and industrial surfaces, the transparency and the cold and impersonal dimension of the object built industrially, on the one hand, and to the flat and epidermal feeling of paint with the smooth and compact layering of their colors, on the other. Painted epidermis was replaced by the sensual and carnal tactility of materials, by the chromatic dripping of the assemblage of burlaps and objects. Everything became more liquid and fluid, glistening and radiating. What counted was the light and homogeneous layer of the acrylic or spray paint that offered an extreme technical virtuosity owing to the delimitation of the lines and contours. More than with the enunciation of an event, a gestural and irrational one, the rapport was with a caress and a slipping of the gaze that could not linger on the rough and the chaotic, on the primitive and plural of the painting; rather, it ran along its flatness and clarity. It was a wholly epidermal art, made up of frozen and aerial material which was penetrated solely by the light. Actually, a reflection: on the one hand, as related to the industrial and mechanical process, linked to the impersonality of the technology, while on the other, to the visual impact of the TV screen as well as to the plenitude of the paper media, from photography to comics, from advertising to glamour magazines.

If we examine the works that have been classified as Pop Art, on the surfaces of those by Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Tom Wesselman, and James Rosenquist, the application of the paint is no longer the deposit of an action charged with sensuality and emotional-gestural activity. Rather, it is the impersonal, doubled and overturned repetition of a figure or a story that once shone on some screen or piece of glossy paper. At the same time, while the painting itself seems to be continuous, the discourse and the storytelling by images is discontinuous. The narrative of these Pop artists is broken up and fragmentary, unlike the material continuity that instead charac-

terizes Action Painting and the *Informel*. At the same time color is the fullness and substance of the statement made by the immaterial nature of the media. The chromatic excitement does not correspond to an immersion into the material, but – in line with the process of *dematerialization* – into the *coloration* of the figures and the stories by images. It is as if the artist's personality had nothing to do with the work: his or her objective is not self-expression but merely the anonymous representation of a piece of merchandise-fetish known to the rest of the world through mass communication.

The loss of the sacredness of the artifact, inspired by industry, transforms them into the temporary instruments of the daily dissemination of signs and stories so that they are eventually identified with advertising and TV messages. At the same time the media's *culturalization* of art creates a dissolution between *high* and *low*,<sup>2</sup> so that the avant-garde, which had been the territory of the few, becomes a space for many, a mass phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> The investment of the artist, as well as of his patron – the market – becomes increasingly clear in a value of use that is functional to the channeling of values that were at one time religious and are now a stimulus to consume.

This intertwining between the autonomy and functionality of art is also fused with the transformation of the object into a communicative stimulus, which no longer needs the concrete proof and presence of the thing, but just its inconsistent and temporary presence, as appears on billboards and screens, in the pages of newspapers and on TV. The shift is therefore from density to typographical and electronic liquidity, which is translated into condensed colors or dots, lines or surfaces; by means of development techniques ranging from screen printing to projection, these produce compact and flat coagulations.

If we were to find a historical trace of this overlap between mass communication and transparent and narrative chromatic crystallization, the most concrete manifestation might be that of medieval stained glass windows, where the sacred communication is established via the inconsistency of the glass, whose colors and figurations are linear and perimetral, as well as being absolutely flat and compact in shape. These are dematerialized colors, crossed by the light, whose visual limits are wholly definable, in which ritual and religious events are told. It is a process of information and communication, which varies depending on the season and on the light of a particular day, and this is not so different from the electronic emissions

that flow upon a TV screen or a computer. It is the filtered message itself that, through screen printing, makes the photographic images in the works of Andy Warhol as well as in those of Robert Rauschenberg flow past, or else it uses dots, in Lichtenstein, to define the stories of comics as well as art illustrations taken from books and magazines. The function of the glass panes is twofold: decorative and communicative; they are tools used to recount the sacred, integrated into the architecture, from the gothic to the modern,<sup>4</sup> from Canterbury Cathedral, c. 1180, to Chartres Cathedral, c. 1194–1220, on down to Chapelle du Rosaire des Dominicaines, Vence, 1947–1951 whose stained glass windows are the work of Henri Matisse.<sup>5</sup> Lichtenstein first began to use one-dimensionality and an overall flattening of the images in 1961 by producing paintings in which the definition of the image did not allow for penetrability. Everything took place on the surface in line with the opaqueness and the inexpressiveness of the comic strip. Although he used a representative system, the artist indeed aspired to exploit an anti-representative system, visible in works from Kasimir Malevich to Piet Mondrian. The flatness he uses for *Emeralds*, 1961, or *Washing Machine*, 1961, tends to avoid the mimetic aspect of the representation of the portion of the newspaper or magazine. He tries to shatter the “realist” passage of the recording of an object, for a direct transposition akin to Malevich’s *Black Square*, 1915, and Mondrian’s “Compositions,” 1917–1919. What was important was the erasing and the absolute information of the color, which was not relative or a-functional, and seen as being pure communication. In Lichtenstein as well, the surface is carefully crossed by lines that are no longer vertical or horizontal, but curved, inside which he places a mass of color that can have one of two features: it can either be compact or it can be translated into dots.

The emotional element is totally absent, and this might recall the participation of Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting. But all we have is the simple *demonstration* of the flatness and the abstraction of the subject as recorded by the media. It is the lucid and exhaustive linguistic contribution of a method of communicating that developed historically in the 1950s within the masses: hence, the citation of the typographic dots. Indeed the relationship between colors and lines, just as in Mondrian,<sup>6</sup> leads to the establishment of the plane, almost as if the result were a zero sum.

It is interesting to note how this relationship between chromatic quality and quantity is typical of the typographical process that is born out of the sum of colors, which, when combined, provide the result required by the image



to be reproduced. Akin to Mondrian, Lichtenstein sought the same impersonal and objective relativity,<sup>7</sup> as he did not want to participate emotionally in the pictorial process. The same can be said for the generation that Mark Rothko and Franz Kline belonged to. Lichtenstein only intended to reproduce the mere process, which was *a priori*; it did not imply any participation on the artist's part. It was an elimination of the biases which, through subjectivity and sociability, influenced the visual to solely focus on objective and impersonal conventions, thus restoring a pure state to the act of viewing. Unsurprisingly, Lichtenstein looked to Fernand Léger whose figures stand out against a compact and homogeneous background. No doubt he was attracted to the refusal of a type of painting that is a window on the real, this work instead refers to an entity, the painting, which is an object in itself, immersed in a monolithic space, akin to the figures in a mosaic decoration.<sup>8</sup> It is in the perfect equivalence and in the balance between lines and planes that the uniformity of the typographical print is activated. By leading to a nothingness and to an expressive void, which are antithetical to the work of the Abstract Expressionists, Lichtenstein's painting is inspired by this almost mathematical process. Indeed, although it appears to be narrative and figural his painting lays claim to a territory of the abolition of any attention proper to the forms that make up the story, drawing attention to the primary components: white and black at the beginning in paintings such as *Transistor Radio*, 1961, reminiscent of Malevich, and later in the absolute reds, yellows and blues of *Head: Yellow and Black*, 1962, and *Blam*, 1962, a nod to Mondrian instead.

The surface application that constitutes Lichtenstein's painting is in harmony with the fast consumption of the media, from the printed poster to the TV screen. It reflects a way of showing things that is quick entertainment without any depth. So in 1964–1965, when the artist first became interested in sculptural language, the issue of the flattening effect was not solved right away. Lichtenstein's first *Ceramic Heads*, 1964–1965, were still reminiscent of a cast representing the actual features of the body. Although they refer to the mannequin-heads for wigs of different colors, these ceramics are still reminiscent of the fragment of a statue. It is a dual reality that can also be seen in the series of cups covered by solid colors and dots entitled *Ceramic Sculptures*, 1965. This was the artist's first attempt to take possession of an object by engulfing a two-dimensional vision. It was an attempt to make the superficial prevail over the sculptural, the two-dimensional over the three-dimensional, underlying the aspira-

tion to zero out, as if to make the object cross over into the virtual and media replacement.

As if Lichtenstein wanted to cover the everydayness of everyday things with the signs of the new power of mass communication: print. The thing becomes stuck in the image, something that is stronger than everything else. Almost a funeral mask that will inevitably cover the entire cadaveric and obsolete body of objects, to sublimate them in a void that is only nurtured by effigies, though influential and powerful ones. The immersion of one element into another for a rebirth of the image from physical to immaterial, from concrete to impalpable. It is a moment of transition in which the artist accompanies the object to its grave, causing its remains to enter the new space of consecration, that of the *mass medium*.

This crossing over into a new monumentality moves through the explosion of the image: *Wall Explosion II*, 1965. This transmutes the compact, circumscribable and recognizable image into fragments and pieces without boundaries. It is the passage of the bewilderment of the real and the concrete which is translated into an archipelago of invisible entities, where all that really counts is the power of the impact and the visual effect. It is a declaration of supremacy of the strong over the weak, in the latter case, the physical over the real. We begin to see the replacement of the object with the powerful and explosive energy of the image: *Varoom!*, 1963. Here begins the gradual victory and affirmation of the supremacy of the new energies of living and experiencing. Within this perspective the series of "Explosions," 1965, can be seen as a stage in the *disintegration* of "realistic" sculpture. Here the emphasis results in the explosion of the three-dimensional image which ends up erecting a wall for itself, *Wall Explosion*, 1965, and is triggered from a series of drawings that seem to conjure up the world of film and TV animation.<sup>9</sup> While working on a reduced accumulation of effects, Lichtenstein conquers for himself a *graphic* field of sculpting, very close to the expressive ways of posters and cartoons, both American and Japanese, where the artifact tends toward the utmost wall-like flatness. Although still built up three-dimensionally, visually it is two-dimensional, just like his paintings.

The new condition of sculpture, which is born by the subtraction of the third dimension, encourages the represented real toward decoration. The annulment of the realistic value of art plays in favor of its insignificant alternative: the thing produced by the artist is no longer a critical or conscious mirror of the world; rather, it comes ever closer to a disguise and

a farce, which magnifies what exists: artistic research becomes decor. In this sense it enters the world of the useless and the superficial. It becomes pure spectacular fact turned into a furnishing: applied art. Aware of this change in sign, Lichtenstein then accomplishes the shift to a subject from applied art: art *deco*. An expressiveness that had sought to eliminate the contrast with pure art, functionally useful, to instead assert its possible usefulness. Going back to the motifs of 1930s decorative design, such as *Modern Sculpture with Horse Motif*, 1967, and *Modern Sculpture with Three Discs*, 1967, the artist suggests a linguistic universe that had eradicated the difference and the opposition between pure art and applied art, the autonomy and use of the image, so as to make his sculpture coincide with a trade that is no different from that of the cartoonist and the advertising artist, the TV director and the graphic artist at the service of the media. Moreover, the search for this coincidence is underlined by the refusal to create new configurations, but rather, such as in the paintings, to reiterate a *style*, which manifests the cosmetic nature of the sculpture, almost as if it were aware – in an anticipatory sense – of the future overlap between art and economics, artifact and luxury good.

The identification of Lichtenstein's sculpture with a previous and pre-existing style coincides with the process of equivalence between pictorial representation and mass communication, and therefore with the possibility of an equal exchange between historical and contemporary, artistic and industrial signs. Hence, it is ultimately transformed into a formally flat and surrogate process of the reference model. As of 1976, the object, industrially produced to a design by the artist, took on a painting's formal features. It tended to be two-dimensional, with strong graphic and linear connotations, similar to many of the motifs that appear in the artist's paintings of still-lives or interiors, for instance, *Still Life with Goldfish Bowl and Painting of a Golf Ball*, 1972, which inspired the sculpture entitled *Goldfish Bowl*, 1977. Nonetheless, the objects made of painted and patinated bronze, executed between 1976 and 1996, are not surrogates for paintings, but an extension toward sculpture. They are equivalents, they absorb the motifs, but akin to the comic strip and the poster, their existence is artificial because it is defined by lines and contours that are graphic elements rather than things. They act as a *trait d'union* with printed communication. They are not bodies but *silhouettes*.

What counts then is the profile and the silhouette, which also introduces the three-dimensional representation into a spectral state, where the

figure is reality's double. It may resemble it, but it does not have its concreteness; it is a shadow, and hence a copy and a duplicate, in the exact same way that the artist's paintings are a portion of a comic strip: images devoid of substance. Except that the silhouette is no longer a totally black ensemble of nineteenth-century origin, black being a color that recalls the metaphor for beautiful death.<sup>10</sup> Rather, it is brightly colored, such as in *Surrealist Head*, 1986, a proliferation of a culture printed in many colors that promote a showy and vibrant interpretation.

So while perusing Lichtenstein's paintings and sculptures one has the feeling that he or she is leafing through newspapers and magazines, or zapping from one channel to another on the TV screen. This fast switching is something we're familiar with (it is not a ready-made, it moves from one end to another as if it were animated, as if it were the expansion of the media, paper and electronic ubiquity).

It is a conversion of the fast and temporal modality of communication by images, both painted and sculpted, in a static and atemporal situation.

The equivalence between two universes, as previously underscored, results in the *dematerialization* and *derealization* of the image which is manifested as it empties out. Indeed, this emptiness is systematically determined in the representation of the still-lives of interiors as well as in the mirrors that show no viewer or reflection of a human being. Absence pervades these paintings. They describe an empty enclosure and a mute theater emptied out of any presence. Without an actor, the room as well as the mirror, from *Mirror*, 1971, to *Artist's Studio, Look Mickey*, 1973, are devoid of human action, and therefore correspond to an impersonal residue. Only the gaze reawakens the place and its furnishings, so that Lichtenstein comes to terms with their void, *Chair, Table and Flower Pot*, 1993, and *Interior*, 1966, on to *House II*, 1997. In their apparent motionlessness they reveal an optical and objectified vitality. It is the same energetic crossing over that is enacted in the absent interiors of Van Gogh and de Chirico, where the painting becomes an object in itself, suspended in time and impregnated with nothing,<sup>11</sup> yet active on a physical and metaphysical level. Absence is not necessarily an indication of vacuity, rather, the void and transparency manifest important rationales. With respect to volume, transparency evokes the inconsistency and absence of density. It brings the image closer to an entity that can be surpassed and made of light alone, similar to an emission projected on the wall, like Chinese shadow puppetry. What we have is almost a coagulation of space, reminiscent of

medieval glasswork, because it consists of spaces with bars or contours, but which can be crossed. Here the solid and the aerial exchange qualities. In fact, Lichtenstein's sculptures seem to be pervaded by an experience of the void, which is favored in Eastern cultures. His interest in the Japanese and Chinese worlds is evident in many paintings, such as *Oriental Still Life*, 1973, in the last series of Landscapes in the Chinese style, 1991–1997, as well as in sculptures like *Bonsai Tree*, 1992 where the decorative and linear effect is inspired by fourteenth-century scrolls.<sup>12</sup> Akin to these ancient pen on paper drawings, his sculptures create contours and landscapes using the method of the vertical and horizontal application of the lines. These are minimal interventions that form puzzles and planes. In actual fact, they offer themselves as figural calligraphies that survive on the dialectic between the darkness of the signs traced and the light-hued and threshold-like background of the wall. Following the osmosis between writing and painting, professed both in Japan and China,<sup>13</sup> these elements aspire to connect drawing and construction technique, as if the sign of the pencil were turned into metal to seek a formal affinity between the project and the construction, the technical drawing and the sculpture. It is further proof of the artist's yearning to depersonalize his contribution. The intent is to avoid randomness and exalt the precision required to trace a line and chromatically fill a surface. It is the indication of a further movement of equilibrium between the parts that make up both painting and sculpture, relative to the process from the mosaic to the glass pane, which must be coordinated in able to function. They show the courage to place the artist and the artisan with his manual and industrial virtuosity on the same level, so that they can prevail over the material to achieve surprises. We might also say that Lichtenstein – like the great nineteenth-century Japanese illustrator Hokusai – in addition to his interest in frontality, thus transforming his sculptures into decorative plastic, characterized by a high graphic synthesis, possesses a strong sense of humor which is expressed by way of his taste for the picturesque and the surprising. He fixes the gestures of life, such as in the ghostly female reflection in *Woman with a Mirror*, 1996, or joyfully translates the polish of Calder's mobiles presented anew as a fragile toy in *Landscape Mobile*, 1991. But more than anything else, he lampoons the acuteness and fast rigidness of the signs that had appeared to be free and open, devoid of any control, like the brushstroke of German Expressionism and American Abstract Expressionism, proposing it as the fallacious illusion of a Utopia that transformed the gestural mark, replete

with drama and tragedy, into seductive decor, from *Expressionist Head*, 1980, to *Brushstroke Nude*, 1993, and *Metallic Brushstroke Head*, 1994. Ultimately, it is a loss of balance in favor of an image that imposed itself by way of the technological innovations of the past century, both comic strips and artistic reproductions. It constitutes a visual that is already made and packaged. Indeed it is a tale or a message that is already in favor of a power to sell and to peddle, of ideological and ethical communication, of an advertising consent and aesthetic banalization. As it is a widespread and immaterial procedure, this system is characterized by all the possible variants of the void and the nothingness. Hence, Lichtenstein's iconic sculptures resemble the things of the world of media. They are transparent and flat, they communicate the yearning to make visible the cultural and popular sign, but appearance prevails over substance. For this reason they function like the mediation between figure and back wall, between realistic track and white wall surface. They are a passage of depth, but aspire to being graphic signs on a wall. Coming back within the process of equalization of the values produced by industry, they too are the devices of a communication that tends toward *derealization* and *dematerialization* in which the dimension of feeling and seeing is zeroed: a world of familiar flat images that erase reality.

*Germano Celant*

Endnotes

- 1 Mario Perniola, *La società dei simluacri*. Bologna: Cappelli Editore, 1980.
- 2 Kirk Varnedoe-Adam Gopnik, *High & Low*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1991.
- 3 Maurizio Calvesi, *Avanguardia di Massa*, Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 1978.
- 4 Enrico Castelnuovo, *Vetrate medievali*. Turin: Einaudi, 1994.
- 5 German Celant (ed.), *Cattedrali d'Arte*. Milan: Fondazione Prada, 1997.
- 6 Giulio Carlo Argan, *La salvezza dell'arte moderna*. Milan: Il saggiatore, 1964.
- 7 Lawrence Alloway, *Roy Lichtenstein*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1983.
- 8 Duilio Morosini, *Il fabbro della pittura*. Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1983.
- 9 Walter Alberti, *Il cinema di animazione*. Rome: Edizioni Radio Italiana, 1957; Jerry Beck (ed.), *Animation Art*. London: Flame Tree Publishing, 2004.
- 10 Emma Rutherford, *Silhouette: The Art of Shadow*. New York: Rizzoli, 2009.
- 11 Fernando Espuelas, *El claro en el bosque*. Barcelona: 1999.
- 12 *Roy Lichtenstein Landscapes in the Chinese Style*. Hong Kong: Gagosian Gallery, 2011.
- 13 Giangiorgio Pasqualotto, *Estetica del vuoto*. Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1992.



**...Cosiddetti Carnevali...**

I am particularly fond of the *...Cosiddetti Carnevali...* cycle because these works awaken now-distant memories of one of the most intense and demanding moments of my life: when I first began to work with Vedova, back in 1980. I had met him a few years earlier, when I attended his painting course at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia, as did many generations of young people attracted by the energy of that prestigious artistic point of reference. On that occasion, Emilio and Annabianca were finally leaving for Mexico, after repeated postponements because of Emilio's serious health issues, and they were busy with the preparations and organisation required.

For them, this voyage exclusively constituted an opportunity to broaden their cognitive horizons, to come into contact with especially interesting and fascinating situations in order to form some acquaintances that might enable a critical awareness and exchange of information. From this point of view, Annabianca's contribution was fundamental, for she was always careful in making evaluations to assure the best working conditions for Emilio. The decision to leave for long journeys, which were never chosen by chance, often coincided with the need to seek out some premises or find some strong motivations to satisfy Emilio's inexhaustible expressive needs; the artist received indispensable stimuli for his research from experiences he lived through. In this sense, the journeys were almost always precise turning points for him, encouraging new expressive forms with a powerful acceleration.

The first evidence of an interest in the Carnival on Emilio's part dates to 1954, during a long stay in Brazil during the São Paulo Biennale, where he was awarded the Morganti Foundation Prize. The experience in Brazil enabled Vedova to experience a particularly complex reality marked by strong social contradictions that were extremely significant to him and on which his poetic was based. Assisted by old friends who accompanied him in situations of great emotive impact, Vedova was also profoundly impressed by the prodigious power of nature in Brazil, as he wrote in a moving, harrowing page in his diary before returning to Venice. During this trip, he participated in the Rio Carnival, where he produced a series of completely new drawings that clearly expressed the strong bond between his temperament as artist and the authentic, liberating spirit of the Carnival rituals. However, almost 30 years were to pass before Vedova decided to produce a cycle of works resulting from the Carnival and dedicated explicitly to this

celebration which in his own town, Venice, for many centuries represented the most important event of the year.

Nineteen-eighty was a particularly significant year as it marked the start of a new phase in Vedova's long-lasting artistic research thanks to a rediscovered creative energy. During the 1980s, Vedova produced some cycles of works that assured him renewed and flattering international recognition after the success attained some time before with the *Plurimi* from Berlin of 1964 and with the *Spazio/Plurimo/Luce* of Montreal of 1967.

In the many voyages they enjoyed together in northern Europe, they often met artists who would greet Vedova with great esteem and admiration, recognising the importance of his contribution in Germany and Berlin in particular, where he lived a fairly long time, during the difficult years of the Wall and the reconstruction characterized by a generational void without roots of historic memory. Vedova always felt very close to a certain nordic culture, which he studied carefully and passionately, in a search for a possible meaning for the individual within society. His reflections on the suffering, overwhelmed human condition provided the basis for his work, and it is from this that developed his youthful love for the expressionism of Kirchner, Beckmann, Grosz, Dix, Dada Berlin and also for the work of artists which interested him for some particular aspects, and which he often cited in relation to the *...Cosiddetti Carnevali...* and the intangible fixity of the mask: James Ensor and his violent critique of society of the time using the powerful material of his visionary and disturbing theatre, and Emil Nolde, with his primitive, grotesque eruptions.

Emilio was just then emerging from a decade, the 1970s, that he found very hard because of the strong contradictions they provoked in him from an intellectual and political point of view, in which areas he had always put himself unsparingly in the front line, fighting to support his ideas. The results of his stance were the rarefied silences of *Lacerazione '77/'78*, of the *Frammenti e Schegge '78/'80* and of the works dedicated to Giandomenico Tiepolo, fascinated by sad masks of his pulcinellas and his melancholically grey and now lost Venice.

In 1980, invited for an exhibition of his being held at the Museo Carrillo Gil in Mexico City and for a series of conferences in the universities, the Vedovas embarked on a voyage and study of about three months, crossing Yucatan by car to visit the Mayan ruins, and including Teotihuacan, Oaxaca, Mitla, Guanajuato and Guadalajara.

He was also curious to see the work of the Mexican mural painters, which

he knew about and admired; artists like Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros who had influenced Pollock and many other American artists of his same generation, but above all Josè Clemente Orozco, his favourite. That voyage regenerated his organic, expressionist approach to art and reactivated a more confident view of reality and the future. The few photos of those days show a particularly concentrated and inspired Vedova exploring that ancient culture, intent on capturing the prime sense of those archaic features in the strong, overwhelming images.

Emilio and Annabianca returned from Mexico excited by what they had seen, and they frequently discussed the adventurous experiences and numerous acquaintances made on their journey. They brought home an extraordinary number of gifts, including large and small skulls of sugar, chocolate and bread, entire skeletons of various sizes and colour, some of which of papier mâché. All this would thrust Emilio into a new expressive adventure that would soon bring him back into operational contact with his studio.

The first works he produced in this period were in black and white, bearing precise, surprising references to faces, skulls and masks, indicating a new, significant shift in approach, but this was immediately followed by an explosion of colour and aggression in *Diario del Mexico*, a series of small pastels on paper executed in an extremely free hand, although highly structured and precise. These marked the first steps in the adventure of an artist who felt himself newly alive and ready for any challenge.

This context certainly encouraged the start of the ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali...*, helping the natural meeting between Vedova's restless "organicity" and the liberating dynamics of the Carnival. I recall that when passing through Basel or Cologne for work, Emilio would enthusiastically recount his participation in those carnivals, mentioning situations and encounters in a manner that excited his forays into fantasy and vision.

In 1979, almost two centuries after the interruption caused by the French and Austrian occupation, the Venice Carnival officially restarted and soon acquired an international fame, attracting participants from around the world. The most exciting editions, which remain firmly in the collective memory, were those of the early 1980s, during which Venice came to life suddenly with an extraordinary vital flow that filled *campi* and *calli* like a truly liberating and regenerating force, re-awakening the finest expression of the ancient popular celebration. In those days, Venice was a sort of "work in progress" in which ancient trades were quickly being rediscovered, such as that of the mask makers, some of whom were Vedova's stu-

dents at the Accademia di Venezia. Indeed, he contacted them between 1981 and 1983 to acquire the masks he needed for his own project. The carnival atmosphere was something that appealed very strongly to him because it imparted precious information and emotions; he was accustomed to diving into the crowds to capture the energy and sensations, plan forms and expressive forms.

During a Mardi Gras some time in that period, in 1982 I think, Emilio provoked a happening in his studio in the Accademia to celebrate the death of the Carnival with his students and drawing in a large number of people present. As usual, he arrived looking very concentrated and bearing a Mexican skeleton that he placed on the ground on top of an old door, and then arranged some candles around it and lit them. The lights were switched off and the space filled and echoed like a powerful drum-like instrument, provoked by the noise, voices, laments and evocations of all those present. Masked, Vedova danced in a careful, powerful manner, invoking the Carnival like an old shaman in the midst of a crowd transported by an ancestral ritual. At the end of this overwhelming moment, the door with the skeleton illuminated by candles was lifted and borne out of the Accademia as though it were a stretcher, where a long procession of young dancers and celebrants formed, following the the *calli* and bridges. It was a powerful experience that clarified Emilio's position with regard to the Carnival.

The *...Cosiddetti Carnevali...* represent a sort of open-ended work Emilio developed in parallel with other cycles and themes in which he was involved in those years. At times too, he returned to works done earlier; this is why the dates for the entire cycle are given as being between 1977 and 1991.

The technical ways in which Vedova created the *...Cosiddetti Carnevali...* are many and varied, and at times show significant differences in style which express their dating from different periods of work.

Some of the *Carnevali* were double-sided and asymmetric, supported on mirror-like steel bases; others revealed bright, saturated colours on canvas or on fragile, vulnerable materials, while others still included objects found in the *calli* and lagoon of Venice, which were always sources of inspiration and ideas.

Vedova did not like to exhibit the works he had just concluded; indeed, he was accustomed to leave them to 'mature' for a certain period, and sometimes for a long time, and to come back to them repeatedly to examine, assess and examine calmly the results attained in order to build up a strong, precise form of thinking.

In 1983, the *...Cosiddetti Carnevali...*, which had hitherto been kept hidden, became public when his friends, Luigi Nono and Massimo Cacciari, came to the studio to say hello to the artist, as they often did at the time, and they manifested all their enthusiasm on seeing those works, which were so profoundly 'Vedovian' but at the same time so evidently different and unexpected. Impressed by those works that tackled problems that ran parallel to his own work, and which were congenial to it, asked Emilio if he could publish some in the booklet for his concert, which was to be held in Cologne in the following months.

This was the opportunity Emilio needed at last to free his *...Cosiddetti Carnevali...* and make them known to the outside world.

Nevertheless, the exhibition that the Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova is presenting today, exactly 30 years after they were made and in exactly the same place, is the first public display of the *...Cosiddetti Carnevali...*

*Fabrizio Gazzarri*

### **Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997)**

Roy Lichtenstein was born in New York City in 1923. After studying at Ohio State University and teaching in New York and New Jersey, his first solo exhibition was held at the Leo Castelli Gallery in 1962. He moved to Manhattan in 1963, and then to Southampton, Long Island, in 1970, where he lived and worked until his death in 1997. Lichtenstein's work has been the subject of major retrospective exhibitions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1994), Louisiana Museum of Art, Humlebæk, Germany (2003, travelling to the Hayward Gallery, London; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), Kunsthaus Bregenz (2005), and the Art Institute of Chicago (2012, travelling to The National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Tate Modern, London; and Centre Pompidou, Paris). His works are held in major public collections internationally, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

### **Emilio Vedova (1919–2006)**

Born in Venice into a family of workers and artisans, from the 1930s onwards Vedova began an intense activity as a self-taught artist. In 1942 he joined the anti-Novecento movement known as Corrente. An anti-Fascist, he worked for the Resistance from 1944 to 1945 and in 1946, he was one of the co-signers of the Beyond Guernica manifesto in Milan. In the same year he was one of the founders of the Nuova Secessione Italiana followed by the Fronte Nuovo delle Arti.

In 1948 he made his debut in the Venice Biennale, the first of many appearances in this event: in 1952 an entire room was devoted to his work, in 1960 he was awarded the Grand Prize for Painting and in 1997 the prestigious Golden Lion award for Lifetime Achievement. In the early 1950s he created his celebrated cycles of works: *Scontro di situazioni*, *Ciclo della Protesta*, *Cicli della Natura*. In 1954, at the São Paulo Art Biennial he won a prize that would allow him to spend three months in Brazil, where he encountered a hard reality that would leave its mark on him. In 1961 he designed the sets and costumes for Luigi Nono's *Intolleranza '60*; in 1984 he would work with the composer again on *Prometeo*. From 1961 onwards he worked on his *Plurimi*, creating an initial Venetian series followed by works made from 1963 to 1964 in Berlin including the seven pieces forming the *Absurdes Berliner Tagebuch '64* presented at the 1964 Kassel Documenta, where he showed in many occasions. From 1965 to 1967 he worked on *Spazio/Plurimo/Luce* for the Montreal EXPO.

He carried out intense teaching activities in various American universities followed by the Sommerakademie in Salzburg and the Academy of Venice. His artistic career was characterized by a constant desire to explore and innovate. In the '70s he created the *Plurimi Binari* in the *Lacerazione* and *Carnevali* cycles followed by the vast cycles of "teleri" (big canvases) and his *Dischi*, *Tondi*, *Oltre* and *...in continuum* works. His last important solo exhibitions included the major retrospective held at Castello di Rivoli (1998) and, after his death in 2006, the shows at Rome's Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna and the Berlinische Galerie.



**Roy Lichtenstein**

**Sculptor**

**Works on display**

- 1** *Study (Explosions)* 1965  
20 x 21.6 cm  
Graphite pencil, colored pencil  
and marker on paper  
Private Collection
- 2** *Small Wall Explosion* 1965  
50.8 x 58.4 x 17.8 cm  
Porcelain enamel on steel  
The Sonnabend Collection
- 3** *Standing Explosion* 1966  
91.44 x 63.5 x 68.6 cm  
Porcelain enamel on steel  
The Sonnabend Collection
- 4** *Untitled (Explosion)* 1965  
22.9 x 15.2 cm  
Felt-tip marker, graphite pencil  
and colored pencil on paper  
Private Collection
- 5** *Drawings for Lamp II* 1976  
21 x 13.3 cm  
Graphite and colored pencil  
on paper  
Private Collection
- 6** *Drawing for Glass III and Purism  
(Studies)* 1977  
35.2 x 27.9 cm  
Graphite and colored pencil  
on paper  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 7** *Glass III (Study)* 1977  
121.9 x 62.2 cm  
Tape, painted and printed  
paper on board  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 8** *Glass III* 1977  
83.8 x 49.5 x 31.8 cm  
Painted and patinated bronze  
Edition 3/3  
Private Collection
- 9** *Maquette Glass III* 1977  
83.8 x 49.5 x 31.8 cm  
Painted wood  
Private Collection
- 10** *Lamp* 1978, fabricated 2006  
365.8 x 152.4 x 71.1 cm  
Painted and fabricated  
aluminum  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 11** *Mermaid (Study)* 1978  
63.8 x 80 cm  
Graphite on paper  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 12** *Mermaid (Study)* 1978  
52,7 x 65,4 cm  
Graphite and colored pencils  
on paper  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

- 13** *Mermaid (Study)* 1978  
182.9 x 183.5 cm  
Tape, painted and printed  
paper on board  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 14** *Mermaid (Maquette)* 1978  
150.5 x 179.7 x 86.4 cm  
Painted wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 15** *Picture and Pitcher  
(Study)* 1978  
244.5 x 119.4 cm  
Tape and painted paper  
on board  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 16** *Maquette for Expressionist  
Head* 1980  
139.7 x 104.1 x 45.7 cm  
Painted wood  
Private Collection
- 17** *Expressionist Head  
(Study)* 1980  
170.2 x 121.9 cm (irregular)  
Tape, painted and printed  
paper on foam core  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 18** *Study for Amerind Figure* 1981  
168.3 x 51.4 cm  
Tape on foam core  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 19** *Brushstrokes in Flight  
(Study)* 1981  
17.6 x 11.9 cm (irregular)  
Graphite on paper  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 20** *Brushstrokes In Flight  
(Study)* 1982  
168.9 x 81.3 cm  
Painted paper and tape  
on foam core  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 21** *Brushstrokes In Flight* 1983  
146.7 x 54 x 23.8 cm  
Painted and patinated bronze  
Edition 6/6  
Private Collection
- 22** *Brushstrokes Group  
(Study)* 1983  
84.5 x 67.3 cm  
Tape and painted paper  
on foam core  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 23** *Sleeping Muse (Study)* 1983  
76.2 x 101.6 cm  
Tape on board  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 24** *Maquette for Sleeping Muse*  
1983  
64.8 x 87 x 10.2 cm  
Painted wood  
Private Collection

- 25** *Sleeping Muse* 1983  
64.8 x 87 x 10.2 cm  
Patinated bronze Edition 1/6  
Private Collection
- 26** *The Conversation (Study)* 1984  
121.9 x 121.3 cm  
Tape, painted and printed  
paper, graphite, colored pencil  
on foamcore  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 27** *The Conversation* 1984  
123.2 x 104.1 x 29.8 cm  
Painted and patinated bronze  
Edition 6/6  
Private Collection
- 28** *Brushstrokes in Flight*  
(*Maquette*) 1984  
146.7 x 54 x 23.8 cm  
Painted wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 29** *Three Brushstrokes*  
(*Maquette*) 1984  
78.1 x 30.8 x 21 cm  
Painted wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 30** *Five Brushstrokes*  
(*Maquette*) 1984  
101.6 x 38.1 x 43.2 cm  
Painted wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 31** *Brushstroke Group*  
(*Maquette*) 1984  
64.8 x 36.2 x 15.2 cm  
Painted wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 32** *Brushstroke VI (Study)* 1985  
18.7 x 26.5 cm  
Graphite and colored pencils  
on paper  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 33** *Brushstroke II* 1986  
162.6 x 86.4 x 20.3 cm  
Painted cherry wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 34** *Brushstroke III* 1986  
162.6 x 68.6 x 29.8 cm  
Painted cherry wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 35** *Brushstroke IV* 1986  
172.7 x 76.2 x 21 cm  
Painted cherry wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 36** *Brushstroke VI* 1986  
152.4 x 147.3 x 25.4 cm  
Painted cherry wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

- 37** *Coups de Pinceau*  
(*Maquette*) 1987-1988  
101.6 x 27.9 x 24.1 cm  
Painted wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 38** *Mobile I* 1989  
76.5 x 89.5 x 25.4 cm  
Painted and patinated bronze  
Edition 0/6  
Private Collection
- 39** *Maquette for Airplane* 1990  
274.3 x 73.7 x 36.5 cm  
Painted wood  
Private Collection
- 40** *Mobile IV* 1990  
41 x 87.9 x 13 cm  
Painted and patinated bronze  
Edition 1/6  
Private Collection
- 41** *Landscape Mobile* 1991  
74 x 21.3 x 93.3 cm  
Painted and patinated bronze  
Edition 5/6  
Private Collection
- 42** *Ritual Mask* 1992  
130.2 x 55.9 x 28.9 cm  
Painted and hot galvanized steel  
Edition 6/6  
Private Collection
- 43** *Coup de Chapeau II* 1996  
231.1 x 76.2 x 34.9 cm  
Painted and patinated bronze  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 44** *Woman: Sunlight, Moonlight*  
(*Maquette*) 1996  
104.1 x 64.1 x 34.9 cm  
Painted wood  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation
- 45** *House II* 1997  
312.4x422.9x153.7cm  
Painted Fiberglass  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

**Emilio Vedova**  
**...Cosiddetti Carnevali...**  
**Works on display**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n. 1<br>1977-1983<br>99,5x100 cm<br>Assemblage, paint on canvas  | <b>6</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n. 18<br>1977-1983<br>200x65,5 cm<br>Assemblage, painting charcoal,<br>pastels on canvas and wood |
| <b>2</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n. 4<br>(Lemuria)<br>1977-1983<br>100x70 cm<br>Assemblage, paint,<br>plaster on wood<br>Private collection | <b>7</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n. 19<br>1977-1983<br>182,5x48,5 cm<br>Assemblage, paint on wood                                  |
| <b>3</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n. 5<br>1977-1983<br>103x73 cm<br>Assemblage, paint on paper   | <b>8</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n. 24<br>1977/1983<br>100x76 cm<br>Assemblage, paint on paper                                     |
| <b>4</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n.6<br>1977-1983<br>180x88,5x18 cm<br>Assemblage, paint on canvas  | <b>9</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n.27<br>(In Tyrannos)<br>1977-1983<br>140x98 cm<br>Assemblage, paint, charcoal<br>on canvas       |
| <b>5</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n. 13<br>1977-1983<br>213x57 cm<br>Watercolors, collages, painting<br>on plastic and wood                  | <b>10</b> ...Cosiddetti Carnevali...'77/'83 – n. 28<br>1977-1983<br>140x98 cm<br>Assemblage, paint, charcoal<br>on canvas                      |

- 11** ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali...*'77/'83 – n. 29  
1977-1983  
140x98 cm  
Assemblage, paint, charcoal  
on canvas
- 12** ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali...*'77/'83 – n. 31  
1977-1983  
119x39x23 cm  
Assemblage, iron, canvas, wood
- 13** ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali...*'77/'83 – n. 41  
1977-1983  
97x101 cm  
Assemblage, paint, graffiti  
on wood
- 14** ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali...*'77/'83 – n. 44  
1977-1983  
115,5x72,5 cm  
Assemblage, paint, plaster  
on wood
- 15** ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali...*'77/'83 – n. 51  
1977-1983  
162,5x54 cm  
Assemblage, paint, spray,  
charcoal, graffiti on wood,  
steel base
- 16** ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali...*'77/'83 – n. 52  
(*Das grosse nichts der tiere*)  
1977-1983  
100,5x41,5 cm  
Assemblage, paint, graffiti  
on wood, steel base
- 17** ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali...*'77/'83 – n. 59  
*Entwicklungsfremdheit*  
1977-1983  
103x73 cm  
Assemblage, paint on paper  
Private collection
- 18** ...*Cosiddetti Carnevali...*'77/'91 – n. 65  
1977-1991  
200x200 cm  
Assemblage, mixed media

**Roy Lichtenstein**  
**Sculptor**

*Curator*  
Germano Celant

*In Collaboration with*  
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation,  
New York

*Production*  
Fondazione Emilio  
e Annabianca Vedova

*Assistant Curator*  
Ian Wallace  
*with*  
Marivi Garcia-Manzano

*General Coordination*  
Elena Bianchini Oyelami

*Scientific and Technical Assistance*  
*from Roy Lichtenstein Foundation,*  
New York  
Clare Bell, Program Manager and  
Researcher, Catalogue Raisonné  
Saskya Verlaan, Associate Registrar  
*and from*  
Estate of Roy Lichtenstein, New York  
Natasha Sigmund, Registrar  
Shelley Lee, Manager  
of Intellectual Property

*Exhibition Design*  
Gae Aulenti Architetti Associati  
Francesca Fenaroli

*Coordination and Engineering*  
Maurizio Milan  
*with*  
Agnese Alfonsi

*Communication and Press office*  
Studio Systema, Venezia  
Adriana Vianello  
Andrea De Marchi  
Livia Sartori di Borgoricco  
*with*  
Paola Castiglioni

*Graphic Project*  
CamuffoLab, Venezia  
Marco Camuffo  
Arianna Cremona  
Matteo Zago  
*with*  
Giorgio Camuffo

*Shipping*  
Arteria srl, Milano  
*and*  
Masterpiece, New York

*Insurance*  
MAG JLT SpA  
*and*  
Huntington T. Block Insurance  
Agency, Inc.

**Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca**  
**Vedova thanks for the support**  
Gagosian Gallery  
MAG JLT SpA  
Davide Groppi srl, Piacenza (IT)



**Emilio Vedova**  
**...Cosiddetti Carnevali...**

*Curator*  
Germano Celant  
*with*  
Fabrizio Gazzarri

*Production*  
Fondazione Emilio  
e Annabianca Vedova

*General coordination*  
Elena Bianchini Oyelami

*Research and curatorial assistance*  
Maddalena Pugliese  
*and*  
Sonia Osetta

*Informatic Technology*  
Bruno Zanon

*Exhibition design*  
Gae Aulenti Architetti Associati  
Francesca Fenaroli

*General coordination and  
ingegnering*  
Maurizio Milan  
*with*  
Agnese Alfonsi

*Communication and press Office*  
Studio Systema, Venezia  
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*Shipping*  
Arterìa srl, Milano

*Insurance*  
MAG JLT SpA

**Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca  
Vedova thanks for the support**

MAG JLT SpA  
Davide Groppi srl, Piacenza (IT)

## **Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova**

The main aim of the Fondazione, created by Emilio Vedova and his wife Annabianca, is to promote the art and work of Vedova and to highlight his importance in the history of 20th century art through a series of initiatives, such as studies, research projects, analyses, exhibitions, itineraries and teaching spaces, conferences, scholarships and prizes.

The activities of the Fondazione, chaired by Alfredo Bianchini, faithfully reflect the will of the great Venetian artist, who, when reflecting together with his wife on the nascent Fondazione, stressed how the safekeeping and conservation of his works should not be separated from initiatives to promote knowledge about his art, also in collaboration with major international museums and cultural institutions. Moreover, he wished these initiatives should constantly be directed at exploring the themes of “painting – space – time – history”, which are in fact the fundamental elements of his art and his commitment.

Near its headquarters at the Zattere, is the Fondazione’s permanent exhibition space for the works of Emilio Vedova in the Magazzini del Sale. The exhibition space was designed and installed by Renzo Piano with Alessandro Traldi and Maurizio Milan. The space is equipped with the latest technology for conserving and showing works of art to the public and will also host works by artists from all over the world to create a dialectical dialogue with Vedova’s works under the supervision of Germano Celant, chief curator, and Fabrizio Gazzarri, director of the Collection and Archive.

From June 2010, the restoration of the artist’s studio – again effected under the supervision of Renzo Piano – enabled the Fondazione to have available a new multifunctional space able to host events as well as exhibitions.

The Fondazione is governed by a Board of Directors with six members, including the President, who were chosen by Emilio and Annabianca Vedova.

**Fondazione Emilio  
e Annabianca Vedova**

*President*

Alfredo Bianchini

*Board of Directors*

Massimo Cacciari

Germano Celant

Fabrizio Gazzarri

Bruno Giampaoli

Guido Roncali

*Board of Auditors*

Riccardo Avanzi

Vittorio Raccamari

Michele Stiz

*Director Archive and Collection*

Fabrizio Gazzarri

*Artistic and Scientific Curator*

Germano Celant

*Assistant curator*

Maddalena Pugliese

*General organisation*

Elena Bianchini Oyelami

*Archive coordination*

Sonia Osetta

*Informatic technology*

Bruno Zanon

*Communication and Press Office*

Studio Systema, Venezia

Adriana Vianello

Andrea De Marchi

Livia Sartori di Borgoricco

*Graphic project*

CamuffoLab, Venezia

**Roy Lichtenstein**  
**Sculptor**

**Emilio Vedova**  
**... Cosiddetti Carnevali ...**

Zattere, 50 - Venice  
from 28 May to 24 November 2013  
10.30 am – 6 pm  
Closed Tuesdays

Single ticket for both exhibitions

Tickets: **12 euro**

Discounted admission: **9 euro**

Students: **6 euro**

(with current student ID)

Family (two adults with children  
underage): **18 euro**

Children under 11: free

*Discounted admission 9 €*

FAI (Fondo Ambientale Italiano)  
members, TCI (Touring Club  
Italiano) members, senior visitors  
over 65 years, turistic guide  
without group with current ID.

*Discounted admission 6 €*  
young visitors from 11 to 18 yrs.  
inclusive, students under 26  
yrs. (with current student ID),  
school groups, disabled visitors  
escort included, journalists (upon  
presentation of a valid press card  
for the current year), military and  
city police officers (in uniform or  
with an identification document).

*Free admission*

on Mondays residents in Venice,  
children under 11 yrs., journalists  
(upon accreditation via mail),  
group escort, members of the  
Associazione Guide Turistiche  
di Venezia.

**[www.fondazionevedova.org](http://www.fondazionevedova.org)**