





Remo Bianco
The Imprints of Memory,
exhibition at the Museo del Novecento, Milan, 2019

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EDITORIAL

Milan in the years after World War II and then the years of the economic boom, was in a creative ferment with important artistic discoveries and innovations. Just think of the research conducted by Lucio Fontana or Piero Manzoni and many other artists, architects and designers who fostered the city's artistic development and cultural heritage. It was in this culturally, and not just economically, productive atmosphere that the young Remo Bianco trained at the Brera Academy and, thanks to his teacher Filippo de Pisis, made contact with the artistic avant-gardes of the time. Bianco was profoundly a child of his age and "had made free experimentation a way of life and above all work, always ready to test new ideas, the fruit of his fervent imagination" (A. Altamira, 2001). This ability to "invent" and explore new paths made him a very special artist for those times, the proponent of many visions of art and new perspectives, with an amused but also inspired approach to materials and expressive insights. And today Bianco's eclecticism can be seen as a sign of great modernity and he can truly be described one of the most contemporary of modern artists. Remo Bianco passed away in 1988 and since then much has been done to prevent history from effacing his memory and importance: the birth of the Remo Bianco Foundation created in 2011 thanks also to the will and support of Lyda Bianchi, who passed away on 19 December 2013 and whom we remember with affection, and the holding of major exhibitions (the last being the anthological at the Museo del Novecento in Milan in 2019), with the aim not only of making Bianco's artistic output known to young people or recalling it for those who already knew it in the past, but also to restore it to the great art history of the 20th century.

Riccardo Gianni President of the Remo Bianco Foundation

Remo Bianco Foundation

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FOUNDATION

The Remo Bianco Foundation was established on 15 July 2011 and legally recognized by the Lombardy Region by DPGR no. 12291 of 13 December 2011. The Foundation's purpose is to keep alive the memory of Remo Bianco and his work. Active from the 1940s until his death in 1988. Remo Bianco was one of the leading figures on the Milanese and Italian art scene of the 20th century. The Foundation's objective is to study, protect and enhance Remo Bianco and his achievement through the organisation, preservation and cataloguing of archival records, the works, and any other documentary material useful for the study of the artist and his works. It promotes studies, publications and exhibitions, independently but also in conjunction with other institutions in Italy and abroad. Intended as a study centre, the Foundation engages in collaboration with scholars and support for students who wish to explore the artist's work. A library has been formed devoted to Remo Bianco's work and the artistic setting in which he created. The Fondazione Remo Bianco is active in archiving his works for the purpose of cataloguing, research and study and also strives to "protect the artist's works from falsification and/or forgery of any kind, by conducting all actions, including judicial ones, to protect the artist and the authenticity of his works" (Statute Art. 2).

REMO BIANCO

Remo Bianchi, aka "Remo Bianco", was born into a family of modest origins in Milan on 3 June 1922. A twin brother died prematurely at one year old. With his elder sister Lyda, a future ballet dancer, he would have a close bond for the rest of his life. In 1937, after taking various jobs to support himself, he enrolled in the evening courses at the Brera Academy. Here he was noticed by Filippo de Pisis, who would become his master. Enlisting in the navy during World War II, he left Milan for a period, returning in 1944. Between the late forties and early fifties, he made his first Imprints of objects such as marks left by tyres, cracks in asphalt or other simple everyday objects taken for their value as traces, and his first 3D works in glass. film, wood and iron, in which the image was the result of the combination of figures lying on different planes placed in succession. In the early fifties he moved closer to Lucio Fontana's Spatialism and the cultural environment of Carlo Cardazzo's Galleria del Naviglio and the Nucleare movement. In 1952 he had his first solo exhibition at the Galleria del Cavallino. This was the start of his important and enduring relationship with the Galleria del Naviglio and Galleria del Cavallino throughout his career. From 1953 dates his important encounter with the Milanese entrepreneur Virgilio Gianni, who was close to the milieu of Carlo Cardazzo and whom he met through de Pisis. Promoter of the Premio Gianni in 1952 at the Galleria del Naviglio, "the first real meeting point for the whole group of Spatialists" (Luca Massimo Barbero, 2020), Gianni would become his patron. In the same year Lucio Fontana presented his first exhibition of 3D works at the Galleria Montenapoleone 6A. In 1955. Bianco travelled to the United States on a scholarship. where he met Jackson Pollock and the Abstract Expressionists, after which he began the cycle of Collages which he presented for the first time at the Galleria del Cavallino in 1959. Returning to Milan, he wrote the Manifesto dell'Arte Improntale (1956) and the following year he began work on the successful cycle of the Tableaux Dorés, exhibited for the first time in 1961. In the same year he travelled to Iran and Iraq and presented the Pagodas, works that he created by following the inspiration arising out of his travels in the Middle East.

In 1964 he published the Manifesto dell'Arte Chimica and in the same year organised the exhibition-performance Impronte Viventi at the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice. In 1965 his "superstructural" period began (Hot Sculptures, Snow Sculptures, Piercings, Appropriations, Flags). In 1969, on the occasion of an exhibition in Milan, he distributed an edible 3D to visitors. In 1970 the new "sadistic-mystical-elementary" period began, to which belong the cycles of Sadistic Art and Elementary Art. From 1972 his interest in performances and works requiring the active participation of the public was accentuated (Ideas for a Staircase, an autobiographical installation at the Galleria del Naviglio; Sadico Mistico Elementare, a spectacle-performance at the Teatro Angelicum in Milan; various Appropriations in Venice and Appropriation of the Restaurant La Coupole in Paris). Also from this period date the Talking Paintings, which he exhibited in 1973 at the Galleria Bon à Tirer in Milan together with the Living Cemetery project. He also strengthened his relations with Paris - already begun in the previous decade – and in particular with the critic Pierre Restany, the artist Raymond Hains and the Galerie Lara Vincy, where in 1982 he organised the exhibition Bianco su Bianco wholly devoted to the Snow Sculptures. In the same year he was hospitalised in Trento because of his already precarious state of health and sketched an attempt at an autobiography. Again at the Galerie Lara Vincy he exhibited the latest cycles of The Joy of Living (1979) and Flags (1987). In 1984 and 1985 he travelled to India. In 1987 his health continued to deteriorate. The donation of a group of works to the city of Bourges in Central France also dates from this period.

He died in Milan on 23 February 1988.



ARCHIVE

At the Foundation's offices there is a library and an archive of documents offering an exhaustive collection of materials on Remo Bianco, including numerous catalogues of solo and group exhibitions, brochures, leaflets, essays, invitations to exhibitions, newspaper articles and hundreds of posters from the 1940s to the present. It is also possible to find significant information about the artist through letters and writings on Bianco from art critics and historians who have studied his work. The Foundation's bibliographic collection to date has more than 1.000 titles. An important corpus of historical photographs - portraits of the artist, works, exhibitions and exhibit designs - digitally acquired through high-definition scans, a video library with recordings of performances, exhibitions and interviews given by Bianco to TV stations over the years and, finally, a sound library with the audio tracks of the Talking Paintings and the Living Cemetery. A search is being made for all the historical documentary sources relating to Bianco's life by contacting the people who knew him and worked with him, to enrich the study of Bianco's figure and work with precious testimonies. documented with photographic, audio and video footage.

Those interested can visit the premises by appointment and access the archive for consultation by submitting their research project to the Foundation in advance.

ARTISTIC RESEARCH

Remo Bianco's artistic output covers a long time span ranging from the late 1940s until his death. His research stands out for his experimental approach and constant striving to renew it. His open-ended way of working in 1988 was characterised by the contemporary development of cycles of works that differed by the techniques and materials used.

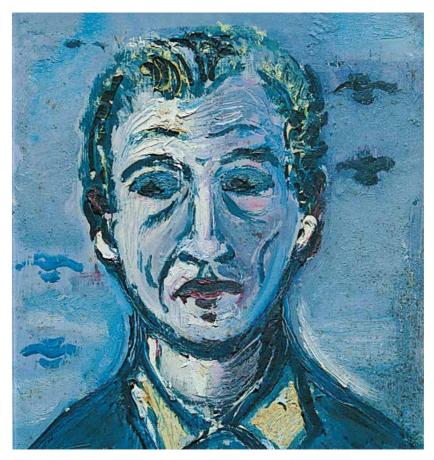


"OF COURSE I CAN NEVER SAY 'I'M WORKING ON THIS'. YES, I'M ALSO WORKING ON THIS, BUT IN THE MEANTIME THE RESONANCES OF OTHER MOMENTS, OF OTHER PERIODS THAT I HAVE TO WORK ON CONTINUE WITHIN ME".

Remo Bianco



EARLY WORKS



| Early Works | Self-Portrait, 1951, oil on board, 40x32 cm

Produced between the early 1940s and early 1950s, these early works mainly consist of oil paintings influenced by both French Post-Impressionism - in particular Georges Rouault's painting - and Picasso's research.

On the left: Remo Bianco, 1965

SPATIAL AND NUCLEAR WORKS



| Spatial and Nuclear Works, | *Nuclear-Spatial*, mixed media on masonite, c. 1952, 37.5 x 37.5 cm

The artist's "spatial" and "nuclear" works reflect his reception and development of the themes of the intense post-war Milanese artistic debate, animated by Lucio Fontana's research into "Spatialism" and the "Nuclear" Movement of Enrico Baj and Sergio Dangelo.



| Spatial and Nuclear Works, | Spatial, mixed media on canvas, c. 1952, 59.5 x 50 cm

Mainly produced in the first half of the 1950s, these works feature a strong tactile impact and by the use of extra-pictorial materials.

IMPRINT ART



Imprint art, c. 1956, imprint in plaster 35.5 x 58.5 cm

Begun in 1948, research into the imprint "constitutes a poetic recovery of the reality that surrounds us, especially of the humblest things that are usually lost" (Remo Bianco). From these series of works, the concept of which is expressed in the Manifesto dell'Arte Improntale (1956), are Imprints that consist of casts of objects in relief made in plaster, pressed cardboard







Imprint art
Imprint, 1956 c., pressed cardboard, cm 51 x 58

or rubber of objets trouvés and the Bags-Testimonials, which are samples of everyday objects – coins, shells, small toys, fragments of little value – arranged inside plastic bags fixed in accordance with a regular arrangement on a support (canvas or board). According to the notes in the artist's diary, the first plaster imprints and the first bags date from the mid-fifties.



Imprint art
Testimonials, 1956 c.,
various objects in plastic bags applied on board, cm 100 x 80

3D THREE-DIMENSIONAL



3D, 1952-1954, mixed media on layers of plastic, cm 60 x 50





3D, 1958 gold foil on canvas and layers of wood shaped, cm 90 x 60 Koelliker Collection

The first three-dimensional works were made by Bianco from the late 1940s, when he began to paint compositions on glass and plastic whose image was the result of the combination of figures painted on different planes placed in succession. Displayed for the first time in 1953 at the Galleria Montenapoleone in Milan, the 3Ds aroused the interest of Lucio Fontana who in the presentation at the exhibition wrote: "The 'dimensions' take on 'real' values beyond the scenographic effects.



3D, 1956 layers of wood shaped and enamelled, cm 90 x 60 Koelliker Collection

The depth gives life to the beginnings of three-dimensional research." Subsequently, in the mid-fifties, Bianco combined these works with new versions of 3D using layers of shaped wood, sheet metal and Plexiglas, in which the final composition arises from the alternation of voids and solids.

COLLAGES







Collage *Untitled*, 1976 c., cm. 84 x 73

The Collages series began in 1955, following the trip that Bianco made to the United States, where he had the opportunity to learn about Pollock and Action Painting, and developed into the 1980s. The Collages are works made using a variety of different materials (canvas, paper, fabric) that Bianco painted with rapid and instinctive brushstrokes and then cut out into regular squares which, combined in a checkerboard rhythm, recreate an image different from the initial one, bringing order and rationality back into the informal randomness. Not infrequently the collages also included "tesserae" of different works, so expanding the combinatorial possibilities of creation, so that the final image is the "cold reconstruction of an instinctive act" (Remo Bianco).



Collage, 1955 c., cm. 100 x 80



Assemblage Untitled, 1970 c., cm. 100 x 67

ASSEMBLAGES

Made between the mid-fifties and the eighties, the Assemblages are closely related to the Collages. Created mainly on wrapping paper, they consist of the assemblage of fragments and heterogeneous scraps of fabric (cotton, denim, velvet, snippets of garments...) whose arrangement on the support creates different visual patterns.*



Assemblage Untitled, 1979 c., cm 70 x 40



Assemblage
Untitled, 1960 c., cm 74 x 47



Assemblage Untitled, 1960 c., cm 74 x 47

^{*} The term "Assemblage", adopted by Altamira (2001), refers to works found in the artist's studio after his death.

TABLEAUX DORÉS



Remo Bianco with Lucio Fontana at Bianco's solo exhibition at the Galleria del Naviglio in 1964

Developed out of the Collages, the first Tableaux Dorés were produced from 1957 until the 1980s. They form one of the artist's best-known cycles, as well as the most enduring. The two-colour ground, treated with oil or enamel on which the gold foil in arranged, frequently presents a white part, mostly combined with red, blue, or green, but also other colours. We also find Tableaux dorés in monochrome or made from straw or cloth.



Tableau doré, 1960, tempera and gold foil on wood, cm 205,5 x 100,5 Private collection



Tableau Dorè (gilt straw), 1957, gold foil, mixed media and straw on canvas, cm 197 x 100, Private collection

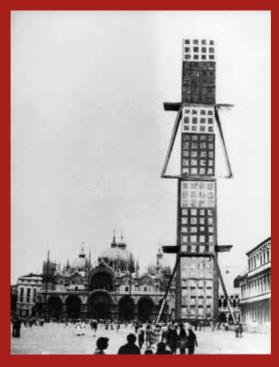
These works "shine like an altar, like the lights of a Greek twilight", according to the poetic definition given by Mark Tobey (1972) and are notable for the light that emanates from the golden tesserae, whose irregular surfaces, not infrequently veiled by shadows, act as a counterpoint to the refinement and frailty of the gold foil. At the same time the golden grid suggests the arcana of the tarot cards placed on a table and there evokes an



Tableau doré, 1968 gold foil and oil on board, cm 182,5 x 182, Private collection

autobiographical note, since Bianco's mother practised cartomancy. Expressions of a "contemplative maturity", the Tableaux dorés are "a sort of curtain that the artist lowers for the eye to investigate in it and beyond it, avoiding any theatricality, however, in the presentation [...] of an absolute silence" (P. Biscottini 2005).

PAGODAS



Lost opportunity. Pagoda to replace the campanile of San Marco, photographic collage, 1972.

"The Pagodas came from a long journey in Persia. They were midway between a minaret and a bell tower, but very stylised, practically very tall buildings, completely painted on the outside or gilded" (Remo Bianco)

Made in 1961, upon returning from his trip to Iran, the sculptures called Pagodas were creating by superimposing rectangular wooden panels that resemble castles of cards ideally tending towards infinity. The panels are then covered with the collage technique or with the golden tesserae of the Tableaux dorés or, again, shaped with motifs reminiscent of the wooden 3Ds. In 1972, Bianco also created and installed a Pagoda in Piazza San Marco made up of luminous neon tubes and 5 meters high.



Pagoda – *Untitled*, 1961 c Mixed media on collage of papers on shaped wood cm 228 x 75 x 37





Pagoda – *Untitled*, 1956 Mixed media on collage of papers on shaped wood cm 210 x 70 Ø

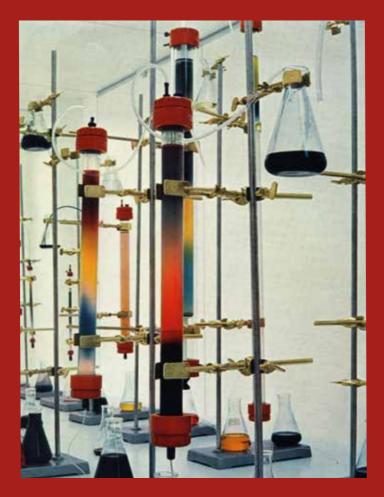




Talking Painting, Untitled, 1972, cm 110 x 99

In the 1960s, Bianco began research focused on the relationship between art and science and between art and technology, which included chemical art and experiments with Sephadex (a chemical gel that has the properties of dividing substances in keeping with their specific weight), which Bianco presented in Stockholm in 1969, the Unstable Sculptures and other experiments. The Talking Paintings, created starting from 1972, are also part of this line of research, as they exploit the potential of the technological means. Made of canvases, black or white or with photographic reproductions, and a system consisting of a Stereo 8 player and speakers applied to the back, they transmit recordings of voices, mostly with an autobiographical theme, both by the artist himself and ordinary people.

On the left: Remo Bianco during the Chemical art exhibition, Galleria Naviglio, Milan, 1969



Chemical art Sephadex columns, Galleria del Naviglio, Milan 1969

The tape is started by a presence detection sensor when a spectator approaches. The human voice represents the attempt to go beyond the traditional dimension of painting, while opening up new possibilities for interaction with the public: "We are accustomed to seeing a painting with our eyes but we can also see it with our ears, in an equally short and immediate way, but which has the advantage of greater creative scope" (Remo Bianco).

SUPERSTRUCTURES AND APPROPRIATIONS



Snow sculpture Snow-earth appropriation of the great fire 1965 c. Various objects and artificial snow $\,$ cm 30 x 20 x 20 Private Collection

The Superstructures and the Appropriations were created starting from 1965 in relation to the statements in the Manifesto della Sovrastruttura (1965), which reveals that the superstructure is the addition of a characteristic sign of the artist to any object, or rather to a series of different objects, unifying them in a family of forms and at the same time enabling them to take part in a story usually alien to their very nature. Some cycles of works belong to this phase of research, such as the Snow Sculptures, poetic theatres in which common objects are covered with artificial snow, the Piercings, sculp-

tures penetrated by stone cylinders in an act of sadistic ap-



Refining *Untitled*, 1965 plaster with wooden cylinders, cm 69 x 70 x 39

propriation, and the Hot Sculptures, classical marble or metal busts traversed by electrical resistances that heat the surface so that "these sculptures taken from models of various eras in this heat were unified by a new superstructure, they became a new thing, my own" (R. Bianco). Flags were also part of the Superstructures - Appropriations, by which Remo Bianco created his own "heraldic emblem" of golden squares by inserting his motif "where life and reality reject it, reminding everyone that art needs its flag" (Remo Bianco).



Flags, Untitled, 1970



Appropriation, 1972, mixed media on paper, cm 92,5 x 62

Hot sculpture, 1972 c., gilded metal with resistance, h cm 41 Koelliker Collection





Towards the seventies the art of Remo Bianco also acquired a performative character, until it attained to the writing and interpretation of Sadistic Mystic Elementary, a theatrical spectacle staged in 1972 at the Teatro Angelicum in Milan with the choreography of his sister Lyda. Already in the 1960s some exhibitions had taken place that included the participation of performers (Impronte Viventi, 1964, Galleria del Cavallino, Venice) and the active participation of the public, as in the exhibition at the Galleria Vismara in Milan, 1969, at which the artist distributed an edible 3D to visitors. Some Appropriations, on the other hand, were presented in public spaces such as the Appropriation of La Coupole, 1974 an "appropriation" of the well-known Parisian restaurant through the surprise performance of dancers who danced among the packed tables waving Bianco's flags with golden squares.

The big 3D loaf distributed to the public during the inauguration of the exhibition at the Galleria Vismara in Milan, 1969



On the left: Performance Sadistic, mystical, elementary, Teatro Angelicum, Milan, 1972

CYCLE OF THE JOY OF LIFE

The cycle of the Joy of Life was developed from 1970 on. These were developed by starting from a drawing made from life combined with the golden chequerboard.



Joy of life cycle La Joie de Vivre, 1973 c., cm 65 x 50



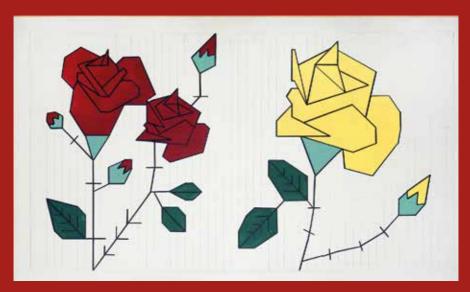
Joy of life cycle Joy of life, 1973 c., cm 119,7 x 69,5



On the right: Image taken from "Bellezza" magazine, n. 10, p.78, october 1963

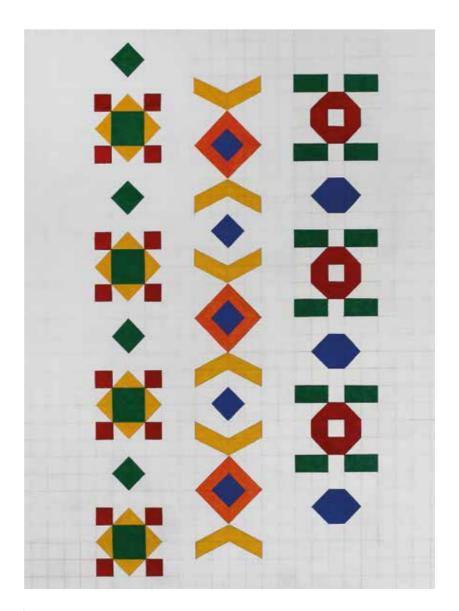


ELEMENTARY ART



Elementary art
Untitled. 1969.cm 70 x 119.5

Remo Bianco's research into Elementary Art began in 1969-70. In the "elementary" works there is a progressive reduction of the pictorial and expressive means in favour of representations inspired by children's drawings and children's books, repeating the subjects, the flat representation and often also the squares of the sheet of paper. Bianco "returned to the ABC of painting, the basis of communication" (L. Giudici, 2005). It expressed a reflection on the limits comparable to the squares on sheets of paper that impose a certain course on children's drawings and on the schemes imposed by society on the creative freedom of individuals: "Even in art, as in everything, there is a great limit to freedom. I have been dealing with this problem for ten years. How can you survive while respecting your creativity?" (Remo Bianco 1980).



Elementary art Untitled, 1971, cm 50 x 60

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The complete bibliography can be consulted at the website: www.remobianco.org

Exhibitions

Remo Bianco took part in numerous personal and collective exhibitions. Among them, many were exhibitions organised at the Galleria del Naviglio, the Galleria Montenapoleone in Milan and the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice, from 1952 to 1985. Exhibitions devoted to his work have been held in Milan (Galleria del Naviglio, Galleria Bon à Tirer, Galleria Diagramma, Galleria Vismara, Galleria Lusarte), Venice (Galleria del Cavallino), Rome (Galleria la Medusa, Galleria International Arts), Paris (Galerie de Beaune, Galerie Raymond Cazenave, Galerie Lara Vincy). Among the exhibitions in public and institutional spaces were those at the Civico Arengario in Monza (1971), the Centro d'Arte Settimiano in Rome (1972), the Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara (1978), the Museo delle Albere in Trento (1983).

Remo Bianco took part in the Biennale d'Arte di San Marino (1963), the Art Biennale for Mediterranean Countries in Alexandria (1963), the exhibition "Metafisica del Quotidiano" (Bologna, 1978), the "Opera dei Celebranti" (Ancona and other cities, 1978-79). Important anthological exhibitions followed one another after his death: in Milan in 1991 at the Arengario in Palazzo Reale and in 1992 at the Museo della Permanente. The exhibition "Remo Bianco. Al di là dell'oro" was held at the Complesso del Vittoriano in Rome between December 2006 and January 2007. In 2019 the Museo del Novecento in Milan devoted to him the exhibition "Remo Bianco. The Imprints of memory".

The complete list of exhibitions can be consulted at the website: www.remobianco.org

Public Collections

Remo Bianco's works are in the Vatican Museums (Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art), the Diocesan Museum of Milan, the Gallerie d'Italia (Milan, Intesa San Paolo Collection), the Museo del Novecento in Milan, the Maga di Gallarate, the Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna in Rome, the Mart of Rovereto, the Municipality of Bourges (France).



On the left: Self-appropriation with snow, 1965 c.

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