

# INDEPENDENT 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Mario de Luigi

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**PREVIEW**

Thursday 07.09.2023, 10 am – 8 pm

**DATES**

08.09 – 10.09.2023

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The Galleria Tommaso Calabro is pleased to announce its participation to the art fair **Independent 20th Century** in New York for the second consecutive year.

The gallery will showcase a monographic presentation dedicated to the Italian artist **Mario de Luigi (1901-1980)**, who was one of the major exponents of Spatialism in Italy. The gallery's booth will focus on a selection of paintings from the series of the so-called **grattage**, which De Luigi executed across a long period of time, from the 1950s to the 1970s.

In the **grattage**, the artist developed the technique of generating luminosity by methodically scratching marks into the monochromatic surface of his canvases. They are luminous vibrations where light is not painted, but originates from within the painting. First presented at the 1954 Venice Biennale, the **grattage** came to define De Luigi's production, epitomizing his **lifelong research on color, light and space**. They are the most famous series by one of the most important Italian post-war artists, whose work is yet to be fully rediscovered and acknowledged.

## **MARIO DE LUIGI (Treviso 1901 – Venice 1980)**

Mario De Luigi (or, as he signed himself, Deluigi) was born in Treviso (Veneto, Italy) on June 21, 1901, from Eugenio Deluigi and Alceste Pasti. Together with his twin sister Maria, he is the last of eleven children. In 1925, he enrolls into the Venice Academy of Fine Arts, where he attends the painting classes taught by Ettore Tito and, later, by Virgilio Guidi, a pivotal figure in the artist's education. To this period dates the start of De Luigi's friendship with Carlo Scarpa, a fellow student at the academy.

In 1928, De Luigi exhibits his work for the first time at the XIX Collettiva dell'Opera Bevilacqua La Masa and, in 1930, participates to the Venice Biennale.

In around 1934, he becomes interested in Cubism and Synthetic Cubism above all. He experiments with sculpture, working as assistant to Arturo Martini at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts from 1942 to 1944. In this year, he has his first solo show at the Galleria del Cavallin in Venice. In 1946, together with Carlo Scarpa and Anton Giulio Ambrosini, he founds the Scuola Libera di Arti Plastiche and he begins teaching set design at the Venice Istituto Universitario di Architettura (IUAV), where he would remain until 1971. In 1946, he wins the Premio Burano and the Premio Abano the following year.

In the early 1950s, De Luigi moves towards abstraction. In 1951, he signs the *Manifesto dell'arte spaziale* in Milan, and, in 1952, the *Manifesto del movimento spaziale per la televisione*. He continues his investigation on connections between space, light and colour, which becomes the predominant theme in his oeuvre. Light is conceived as a structural device: it is not painted, yet it is built within the painting through scratching its surface. It is the **grattage** technique, which would characterize the whole of De Luigi's subsequent output and is epitomized by the

# TOMMASO CALABRO

works he presented at the 1954 Venice Biennale, the *Motivi sui vuoti* (Motifs on Voids).

During the 1960s and 1970s, De Luigi continues his research on light, and is the protagonist of significant solo exhibitions, including the one organized at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in 1966 and a retrospective in the Sala delle Cariatidi at the Milan Royal Palace in 1975. He takes part in international exhibitions including the Venice Biennale of 1930, 1932, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1954, 1962 (presented by Carlo Cardazzo, with a solo exhibition room designed by Carlo Scarpa), 1968 (presented by Guido Ballo, with a solo exhibition room designed by Carlo Scarpa) and in the Rome Quadriennale of 1959 and 1972.

In 1980, the Venice Biennale stages a retrospective of De Luigi's work in the Church of St Stae, followed by those organized at the Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ca' Pesaro in 1991 and at the Palazzo Regazzoni-Flangini-Biglia in Sacile in 1997.

Works by the artist can be found in the collection of the Museo Revoltella (Trieste), MART (Rovereto), Ca' Pesaro – Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna (Venice), Museo del Novecento (Milano), The Vatican Museums – Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art (Vatican City), Fondazione Biscozzi Rimbaud (Lecce).

## INDEPENDENT 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The art fair Independent New York was founded in New York in 2010, as an independent art fair dedicated to lesser-known and innovative aspects of the international contemporary art scene. In September 2022, the fair launched a new edition, Independent 20<sup>th</sup> Century, aiming at challenging the traditional canons and narratives of twentieth-century art, presenting artists and avant-garde movements yet to be fully rediscovered. The fair, now in its second year, will take place at his usual location in the Battery Maritime Building in Cipriani South Street and will count thirty-two international participating galleries.

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## INDEPENDENT 20TH CENTURY

Battery Maritime Building at Cipriani South Street  
10 South Street, New York  
NY 10004, USA

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## OPENING TIMES

Thursday 07.09.2023 | 11 am – 8 pm (by invitation)

Friday 08.09.2023 | 11 am – 8 pm

Saturday 09.09.2023 | 11 am – 7 pm

Sunday 10.09.2023 | 11 am – 7 pm

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## PRESS REQUESTS

Galleria Tommaso Calabro

Elena Caslini | [elena@tommasocalabro.com](mailto:elena@tommasocalabro.com) | +39 02 49696387

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## INSTAGRAM

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## WEBSITES

[tommasocalabro.com](http://tommasocalabro.com)

<https://www.independenthq.com>