

TOMMASO CALABRO

GALLERIA D'ARTE

PIETRO CONSAGRA

Immagini Vaganti

Curated by Paola Nicolin

Opening
September 29, 2022
11 am – 7 pm

Exhibition dates
September 30 – December 10, 2022

"The one thing I was able to do for myself, my personal way of living, my house, my numerous empty houses, was to cover their arid and solitary walls with bed sheets on which I would cut and draw images."

Pietro Consagra, 1974, Multicenter grafica, Milan

The Galleria Tommaso Calabro is pleased to present *Pietro Consagra. Immagini Vaganti*, a solo exhibition dedicated to an innovator of abstract modern sculpture, **Pietro Consagra (1920-2005)**, unveiling overlooked aspects of his oeuvre. The project is the third in a series of exhibitions curated by **Paola Nicolin**, where dialogues between modern masters fostered unprecedented readings of their work.

Pietro Consagra. Immagini Vaganti stems from the curator's interest in a specific body of works by Consagra, known as *Lenzuoli (Bed sheets)*: cotton fabrics painted with washable colors, which the artist produced from 1967, the year he arrived in Minneapolis, where he moved to teach at the School of Arts. By looking at Consagra's exhibition history, one can see that a series of intuitions in his research and changes in direction have converged into this thin, volatile production. In parallel to the artist's development of a practical and theoretical discourse on the issue of thickness in sculpture, in *Lenzuoli* Consagra exploited painting as a free and liberating means of expression. He was painting a flux of "immagini vaganti" (wandering images) – as he himself wrote in 1974 in the introduction to the exhibition *Variazioni di Pietro Consagra. Quattro lenzuoli dipinti a mano* at the Multicenter Gallery in Milan – in contrast with his radical choice of a rigorously frontal sculpture.

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In the 1967 exhibition at Beatrice Monti's Galleria dell'Ariete in Milan, Carla Lonzi – who followed Pietro Consagra in the US – perceived this change of sensitivity, which also emerges from the works on display in the present show. Alongside five *Lenzuoli*, a selection from Consagra's series *Piani sospesi*, *Piani appesi*, *Sottilissime*, *Mobili bifrontali*, *Paracarri*, *Controluce*, *Giardini*, *Inventari* – executed between 1965 and the 1990s – presents an intimate journey, both personal and emotional, into the domestic universe of Pietro Consagra, face to face with the viewer.

The exhibition starts with a reproduction of two photographs by Ugo Mulas – who worked with Consagra on the writing of *Fotografare l'arte* (1973) – of the artist's aforementioned exhibition at the Galleria dell'Ariete. In the following rooms, Consagra's works visualize his joyful freedom in experimenting with colors, shapes, surfaces and air. The pieces have been selected among the most intimate and personal of his production: one bed, bedsheets, a jewel, a photograph.... In this way, the exhibition underlines the "volatile" research of Consagra, in contrast with the usual reading of his work as materic and dialogic.

Carla Lonzi: "In the past two, three years you moved from *Piani sospesi* to *Ferri trasparenti girevoli* and *Piani di alluminio*, works that hang on the wall as if they were paintings. These new aspects of your work have a peculiarity that seems rooted in certain first premises of your production. What is this link?"

Pietro Consagra – The most obvious link is a technical link that comes from Constructivism. I have always constructed a sculpture. I draw it, I choose the material – like metal slabs or wooden planks, I cut them out, glue, weld, and nail them; consequently, from a technical point of view, my sculpture differs from all other types of modeled sculptures. Yet, the main aspect of my work is the frontality, which coincides, on the one hand, with my unique sensitivity of a sculptor; on the other hand, with a conscious, ideological choice of the numerous possibilities of sculpture [...] Frontality was born within me as an alternative to the totem, that is to a sculpture meant to arise from the center of an ideal space. By presenting a different use of space, that of frontality, I refused to fill it with a specific element at the center that would act as a converging point of attention. I feel frontality as a downsizing of the claims that have accumulated around sculpture, being them religious, social, past or future; I wanted to set sculpture free from all symbols to create a more direct, frontal relationship, face to face, with the viewer. (C. Lonzi, "Intervista a Pietro Consagra", in *Consagra*, exh. cat., Milan, Galleria dell'Ariete, opening June 8, 1967).

The gallery is grateful to the Archivio Pietro Consagra and the Archivio Ugo Mulas for making this exhibition possible.

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OPENING TIMES

Tuesday - Saturday / 11 am - 7 pm

Monday / by appointment

PRESS REQUESTS

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