

# Carla Accardi At Home

## Carla Accardi

MASSIMODECARLO presents *Carla Accardi at Home*, the gallery's first solo exhibition dedicated to the works of the Sicilian artist. The non-linear installation of the exhibition evokes a domestic and private atmosphere that criss-crosses the rooms of Casa Corbellini-Wasserman, the gallery's headquarters, and includes objects, photographs and decorative elements that bring together a complex and multifaceted portrait of Carla Accardi. The project is organized with the collaboration of Francesco Impellizzeri (artist and member of the Scientific Committee of the Accardi Sanfilippo Archive).

*Carla Accardi at Home* not only documents the long career of the artist, a central figure of the Italian and international art scene since the mid-twentieth century but also reflects a personal and emotional narrative about the artist. The exhibition unfolds through pivotal works that punctuate Accardi's entire career, together with archive photographs and symbolic objects from her home and studio in Rome, where the artist used to welcome friends and artists each day for aperitif, events that have since become legendary. In the spaces of MASSIMODECARLO the works are mixed together to recreate the informal intimate atmosphere that one would have experienced in Accardi home, thus works from the 1950s meet and interact with those of the following decades up to the 2000s.

Artistically trained in post-war Italy, in her practice Accardi intertwines individual and social experience, personal and collective condition, making history, reality and artifice merge and coincide. Her works combine opposing yet indistinguishable elements that coexist in color and sign, actual images of a dynamic language. Carla Accardi's art incorporates the supple sensuality of the sign, which revives static and impersonal materials with its irregular and chaotic richness, giving life to fluid and organic compositions made of signs, materials, color and shapes.

In *Negativo grande* (1954) the lines intertwine to create a free and spontaneous plot of positive over negative. Of this period are the works in casein that the artist created kneeling on the ground, placing opaque white on black, in order to overturn the hierarchies of colors and emphasize the positive individuality of an element that detaches itself from the black uniformity, without however opposing it. In *Assedio rosso n.7* (1956), white is replaced by red, creating an optical pattern with an irregular and instinctive power.

Color stabilised a primary role in the works starting from the 1960s, as in *Azzurro argento* (1964), whose surface is overloaded with a dense and luminous turquoise. Having overcome the neutral duality of black and white, the disruptive universe of the Sicilian artist emerges. On the monochrome surface, calligraphic signs are no longer intertwined but dense and rigorous, grouped and isolated in enclosures that oppose the plots of the previous works. The signs seem to be analyzed and controlled in a serial way, as if to reflect a more mature and a greater awareness by the artist. Furthermore, the juxtaposition with silver accentuates the brightness of the work.

Transparency, color and brightness distinguish Accardi's artistic research up to the 1980s. Combinations of paints and sicofoil produces limitless possibilities. The liquidity of the paints creates, in association with the translucent surfaces of the support, layers of light in which full and empty, presence and absence interweave, as exemplified by *Quadrato* (1981). In this work, the frame, by means of the sicofoil, is revealed and covered with color, becoming its primary visual element. The sicofoil, crossed by traces of colors, creates surfaces and geometries that flow into the shape of the cone or roll, then taken up again in the series of lamps. Accardi's work becomes three-dimensional and architectural, moving beyond the boundaries of the picture through the material, the transparency and the lucidity of the colors and finally through the form, placing the work in a fluid dialogue with the surrounding environment.

From the Eighties, the rough surface of the hemp canvas replaced the sicofoil and the invisible becomes visible. The weavings of signs and shapes become an ornamental motif with a musical rhythm, a reflection not only of an inner emphasis but of an ever-growing artistic path. The fields of color are homogeneous and the backgrounds blend together, with tortuous intertwining that flow from every part of the work, as in *Collisione dei Tempi* (2011) or *Luci d'Inverno* (2009). The rational image of simple geometric figures is mixed with the labyrinthine image, and sparkling and dark colors are placed side by side, as exemplified by the large work *Pavimento in feltro nero rosso e bianco* (2009-2010).

The artist has always entrusted the possibility of projecting a personality that escapes any definition and welcomes the possibility of multiple ways of being and existing to the harmony of contrasts. Carla Accardi experiments with the vocabulary of expression to convey her feminine identity, making art an instrument capable of merging dualities: architecture and painting, empty and full, material and immaterial, function and ornament, transparency and opacity, art and life. A horizontal approach well represented by the artist's will to intervene in the environment in its entirety, starting from the objects with the creation of vases, plates and decorative elements. With her art and the liturgy of her home studio, Carla Accardi invites us to enter an inner universe, conscious of her own individuality, existence and autonomy that materialises in abstract colour, shapes, lines and space.

The *Carla Accardi at Home* exhibition is accompanied by a selection of images from the Accardi Sanfilippo Archive, which will be made visible on @massimodecarlogallery Instagram account starting from the inauguration of the exhibition. The project also marks the arrival of MASSIMODECARLO on the social media Clubhouse: on May 5th, starting at 7:00pm CET, @MASSIMODECARLO will open its microphones to the voices of friends, travel companions and scholars who have accompanied Carla Accardi's life and her career, in the special *Aperitivo con Carla (Accardi)*, moderated by Massimiliano Tonelli (Editorial Director of Artribune).

**Carla Accardi** (Trapani 1924 - Rome 2014) is considered one of the most influential abstract painters of the twentieth century. Recent exhibitions dedicated to her work include those at: Museo del Novecento, Milano (2020); MUSMA, Matera (2013); Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow (2008); MACRO, Rome (2004); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (2002); MoMA PS1, New York (2001). Her work has been shown in numerous group exhibition in prestigious institutions such as: Fondazione Prada, Milan; MAXXI, Rome; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Palazzo Grassi, Venice; MoMA PS1, New York; MoCA, Los Angeles; Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome. She took part in Venice Biennale on several occasions (1948, 1964, 1976, 1978, 1993). Works by Accardi are part of major museum collections such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; MoMA, New York; Centre George Pompidou, Paris; MACRO, Rome; Museion, Bolzano; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.

**Quotes from a Clubhouse meeting titled *Aperitivo con Carla (Accardi)* that took place on May 5th at 7:00pm CET with many important members of Carla Accardi's enlarged community, former collaborators, curators and museum directors. The meeting was moderated by Massimiliano Tonelli (editor, [Artribune.com](http://Artribune.com))**

*"Carla visited often Milan, she came frequently, and during those occasions we had the opportunity to know each other very well, and I must say that the first thing I noticed about Carla, at the time, was a remarkable enthusiasm for a person who was not of hers generation. It was always a great lesson in humanity and professionalism to confront a woman who expressed esteem and enthusiasm without being interested in developing a working relationship"*  
Massimo De Carlo

*"I met Carla in 1983 on the occasion of a solo show hosted in Erice, in the province of Trapani, a city that unites us, because we were born there. Then for about four years we spent time together, looked at exhibitions, dined together, starting a very nice and non-critical relationship, because Carla didn't give judgments about the other artists. [...] Carla always said to me: "Don't you get tired of putting my works, my images in place?". And I replied: "Look, for me every time I take a canvas out of the warehouse or browse your catalogue it is always a strong emotion".*  
Francesco Impellizzeri, artist and board member, Archivio Accardi Sanfilippo

*"What interests me about Carla Accardi's work is the concept of writing. A writing that is like having performed, having made her painting performative, having made her research aimed at writing that is also very connected to her being a woman, a writing connected to something that is hers, personal, intimate, connected to her imaginaries. There is a living energy in her paintings, to be grasped above all in the passages between one phase and another rather than with what is historically parallel to his work. Rather than trying to understand who may have influenced her and what journey may have affected her, I prefer instead to think of her work as a way of*

*breaking free from the trends and movements around her and having freely begin to work with this sign painting. "*

Carla Subrizi, President, Fondazione Baruchello

*"Carla Accardi was a militant feminist and this is remembered less than it should be. Just by thinking about writing, which is an asemantic writing, the possibility is to frame it within a very conscious search for a language that does not adhere to the masculine and patriarchal language and that finds, from an expressive point of view, other paths "*  
Cristiana Perrella, Director, Centro Luigi Pecci per l'Arte Contemporanea

*"The first Accardi exhibition in the United States was actually only in 2001. An exhibition created thanks to a very close relationship with Italy, which tells how an Italian art giant as Carla Accardi was received in the United States only in the second part of her career. "*  
Vincenzo De Bellis, Curator of Visual Arts, Walker Art Center

*"We met with Carla every day for thirty years, to have an aperitif at her home and to go to dinner. And then we also thought of an exhibition to organize. Many years of work and many dinners. "*  
Mario Pieroni

*"I met Carla in Rome in 2005 on the occasion of an Italo Zuffi exhibition. She came with her lively gaze and did not leave me time to greet her, she went directly to see the performance. Then it started to rain and we took shelter at the Casa delle Donne, an important and active institution in Rome. Carla told me about this story and about the emancipation of women. She said to me: "Be careful here: at night you can hear screams but not of pain". She told me that there was a prison nearby where there was the habit of imprisoned visitors of screaming with joy and pain, and shout at everyone. Those were heartbreaking open-air statements. It struck me that she pointed this out to me. And it was actually a very curious note that we also discussed all night, walking. "*  
Lorenzo Bruni, independent curator

*“By being in contact with the works of Carla Accardi, you understand the absolute capacity of her sign, of this intransitive writing that continually refers to an emotional, stylistic, sentimental code, despite being a language that was born in a situation of great political debate. Unlike all her companions, Carla Accardi has managed to maintain a consistency that appointed her as an interesting artist even in other art seasons. That intransitive sign means it easily finds echo and correspondence with some sensitive themes of Arte Povera, but this doesn't mean she anticipated it. Carla Accardi goes beyond all this, in the coherence of the intransitive writing which stays in the artist's gesture, it takes us back to the artist himself. It is not a writing that declares something. “*

Gianfranco Maraniello, independent curator

*“I was lucky enough to spend a lot of time with Carla during her Roman period and the moment of these communions between high, noble, cultured reasoning and reflection...She was a cultured woman with an intellectual lucidity and surprising freshness, a vivacity and youthfulness of unsettling thought. “*

Danilo Eccher, independent curator