



ABC - ARTE  
Contemporary Art Gallery

Via XX Settembre 11 A  
Genoa 16121 - Italy

[www.abc-arte.com](http://www.abc-arte.com)



## **Nanni Valentini.**

### **The interspace between the visible and the tactile**

**4 October 2019 - 5 January 2020**

curated by Flaminio Gualdoni

ABC-ARTE is dedicating a large retrospective to the three-dimensional work of Nanni Valentini (1932-1985), one of the most singular and lively personalities in the artistic explorations of the postwar period. The title 'The space between the visible and the tactile' is taken from a text by the artist published in 1975. The exhibition will focus on a reconstruction of the crucial ten years from 1975 to 1985. After a long period of recognition as one of the most important living ceramic sculptors - in the late 1950s one of his collaborations was with Lucio Fontana on the monumental Melandri Tomb in Faenza, he won the Faenza Award in 1956, 1961 and 1977, the prize of the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts in 1958 - this was the period in which he moved among a large and lively intellectual circle, from Tancredi to Scanavino, from Arnaldo and Giò Pomodoro to Sottsass. His breakthrough in Milan came in 1976 with the memorable one-man show of paintings and sculptures in Carla Pellegrini's Galleria Milano.

His approach to material, colour and figure immediately marked him out as unique in the contemporary debate. His learned and wise approach, combined with the dry potency of his sculptural visions, had no parallel among them.

The early 1980s witnessed a series of one-man shows in major galleries: Babel in Heilbronn in 1981, Vera Biondi in Florence and Galerie -e in Munich in 1982, the Venice Biennale, and a participation in 'La sovrana inattualità' in the Museum des XX. Jahrhunderts in Vienna. In 1984 he had a large-scale one-man show in the Padiglione d'arte contemporanea in Milan (his *Cratere* entered the permanent collections of the Milanese Civic Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Palazzo Reale), shows in the Museu de Ceràmica in Barcelona and once again in Galerie -e in Munich. In 1985 he was represented in the Galleria San Luca in Bologna. He died unexpectedly on 5 December 1985.



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The present exhibition under the patronage of Genoa's Municipality presents some thirty works that document the intense and ramified period of his maturity, featuring the sculptures, some of them of large dimensions, such as *Muro grande del vaso e il polipo* and *Cerchio*, and extremely rare works, such as some unpublished big works on paper and a series of *Garze*, exercises in the physical properties of monochrome, from 1975-1976.

During the inauguration of the exhibition, a new book will be presented to accompany it. This volume in the bilingual (English and Italian) series ABC-ARTE edizioni comprises the critical text by the curator Flaminio Gualdoni, photographs of the displays and of the works, and a rich collection of historical documentation.

**Nanni Valentini. The space between the visible and the tactile**

Inauguration Friday 4 October 18:30-21:30 hrs

5 October 2019 - 5 January 2020

Open: Tuesday to Saturday 9:30 - 13:30 and 14:30 - 18:30 hrs

Sunday and Monday by appointment

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## Brief biography of the artist

### **Nanni Valentini**

(Sant'Angelo in Vado 1932 - 1985 Vimercate)

Nanni Valentini began by attending the art academy for ceramic decoration in Pesaro in 1945 before moving on to the institute of art in Faenza, where he continued until 1953. He started to collaborate with Bruno Baratti's studio in Pesaro and to attend the academy in Bologna. In 1956 he was admitted to the circle of Liverani's Galleria La Salita and formed friendships with Gastone Novelli, Emilio Villa and Gino Marotta. He won the first prizes at the XIV Faenza Competition and the XI Vicenza Ceramic Exhibition, followed by many other awards in the subsequent years.

In autumn 1957 he moved to Milan, where he exhibited at the **Triennale** and began to project the *Serie natura* with Luigi **Massoni**. He associated with Arnaldo and Giò **Pomodoro**, Ettore **Sottsass** and Lucio **Fontana**. The latter organised the first one-man-show for Valentini in the Milanese Ariete gallery in 1958. In 1960 Valentini exhibited with Giò Pomodoro in the Galleria del Giorno in Milan and had a one-man show in the Salone Annunciata in the same city. In 1967 he was represented in Milan with a one-man exhibition of paintings and sculptures in the Salone Annunciata, followed by a one-man show in the Galleria Segnapassi in Pesaro. He began to teach in the art institute in Monza, where he was remain until 1985.

After years of experimentation and further development, in 1975 he presented the 'gauzes' at the Cologne Expo with Studio Casati from Merate. Here he met Carla Pellegrini, who organised his fundamental one-man show in the Galleria Milano in 1976. In the following year he moved to the studio in via Tiziano 42, Arcore and had a one-man show of sculptures and works on paper in Lo Spazio in Brescia.

In the following year he showed in the Galleria del Falconiere in Falconara with *Un ombelico per Empedocle*, and in 1979 with *Una materia per Pitagora* in the Uxa gallery in Novara, *Terra-numero* and *Terra-bagnato* in Studio Casati in Merate, and a one-man show in Galleria Rota in Heilbronn.



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In 1980 he opened a new one-man show in the Galleria Milano with his 'luoghi', then in the circle Il Cortile in Bologna, and was represented in the Galleria Ca'Vègla in Salice Terme with *Endimione e i 28 volte di Selene*. In 1982 he presented *Il vaso e il polipo* in the Galleria Vera Biondi in Florence, *L'ombra di Peter Schlemihl* in Galerie -e in Munich, and had a one-man show in the Venice Biennale. In 1983 he presented *Endimione e i 28 volte di Selene* in the Mercato del Sale in Milan.

In 1984 he inaugurated a one-man show in the Padiglione d'arte contemporanea in Milan, where he presented *Deriva, Annunciazione* and *Il dialogo*, and in May he inaugurated his one-man show on 'homes' in the **Museu de Ceràmica** in Barcelona. In the same year he had a one-man show of works on paper in the Civica raccolta del disegno in Salò, and presented ... *dove si racconta* in Studio Dossi in Bergamo. In 1985 he exhibited *L'inno della perla* in the Libreria Giulia in Rome and the Galleria San Luca in Bologna.

Among the posthumous exhibitions of his work are "Nanni Valentini", Hetjens Museum, Düsseldorf, 1986; "Nanni Valentini. Opere: 1982 - 1985", Galleria Civica, Modena, 1987; "Nanni Valentini. I segni della terra", Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Faenza, 1987; "Nanni Valentini", Palazzo Lazzarini, Pesaro, 1988; "Nanni Valentini", Centro La Pescheria, Pesaro, 2005.

Fundamental monographs: *Nanni Valentini*, "Riga", 3, Velate, 1992, edited by M. Belpoliti and E. Grazioli, with texts by M. Belpoliti, M. Cacciari, N. Cagnone, F. D'Amico, M. Ercolani, C. Fontana, U. Galimberti, E. Grazioli, F. Gualdoni, S. Natoli, R. Sanesi, G. Scabia, G. Schiavocampo, C. Sini, G. Soro, N. Valentini, M.N. Varga, and F. Gualdoni, *Nanni Valentini*, Silvana editoriale, Cinisello Balsamo 2005.

#### **Elenco immagini allegate:**

1. Nanni Valentini, *Trasparenza*, 1972-1973, 120x110cm, gauze and pigment.
2. Nanni Valentini, *Cratere*, 1980, diametro 71 cm, vitrified terracotta and iron.
3. Nanni Valentini, *Angelo (da Dove si racconta)*, 1984, 126x56x12 cm, vitrified terracotta.
4. Nanni Valentini, *Deriva (l'ansa)*, 1982-83, 60x80x60cm, vitrified terracotta.
5. Nanni Valentini, *Cerchio*, 1982, diametro 150 cm, vitrified terracotta and iron.
6. Nanni Valentini, *La casa dell'angelo*, 1982-84, 51x45cm, stoneware.
7. Nanni Valentini, *Muro grande del vaso e il polipo*, 1982, 190x120cm, stoneware.