

THE MAYOR GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

EMILIO TADINI

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Color & Co., 1969, acrylic on canvas, 100 x 81 cm

Emilio Tadini (b. 1927 - d. 2002 Milan, Italy) is considered one of the most original personalities of Italy's post-World War II cultural landscape. A Poet, novelist, essayist, art critic, journalist and painter, he was, in the words of friend and contemporary Umberto Eco, "A writer who paints, a painter who writes."

In 1947 he debuted with a poem in Elio Vittorini's magazine *Politecnico*, which was followed by intense critical and theoretical writings on art. From 1963 to 1993 Tadini published four novels and a volume of poems. It was alongside his critical and literary work, from the late 1950s Tadini began to paint. His first solo exhibition was in 1961 at the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice, followed by a group show with Mario Schifano, Valerio Adami and Lucio Del Pezzo at the newly opened Studio Marconi, Milan in 1965.

Although stylistically 'Pop', Tadini, rather than the Consumerist American Pop Art, was drawn to the more introspective, personal, and at times, intellectual British Pop Art such as Ronald Kitaj, Peter Blake, David Hockney and Allen Jones, but also to that of Francis Bacon, Patrick Caulfield, and the figurative narratives of Valerio Adami and Hervé Télémaque.

Tadini developed a distinctive graphic painting style producing thematic cycles of works like serialised novels—each telling a story; *Color & Co.* (1969), *Journey in Italy* (1971) and *Archaeology* (1972), examples of which are exhibited here. We tentatively follow the protagonist in 'Life of Voltaire' (1967) the first large scale cycle into a fantastic, dreamlike world, the everyday characters and objects are juxtaposed with the surreal, the comic with the tragedy and the fantastic with the mundane. With influences of Cubism and Surrealism, seemingly simple, straightforward images hide a multiplicity of meanings, deal with metaphysical principles and philosophy, pictorial streams of consciousness that develop over the entire series: from one image emerges others that modify and alter it. With a masterly ability Tadini controls two kinds of languages, the visual and the literary, his work is a place of convergence for the two forms of expression.

During the 1970s he had solo exhibitions in Paris, Stockholm, Brussels, London, Antwerp, the United States and Latin America, both in private galleries and in public spaces and museums. In 1978 and 1982 Tadini participated in the Venice Biennial, and in 1986 he had a large solo exhibition at the Rotonda di via Besana in Milan. From autumn 1995 to the summer of 1996 a major retrospective travelling exhibition took place in the museums of Stralsund, Bochum and Darmstadt. In spring 2005, the Villa dei Cedri Museum in Bellinzona had a large posthumous retrospective of his work.

His extraordinary range of disciplines also included sculpture, textile and furniture design, as well as advertising; collaborating with various companies such as Renault and *Gazzetta dello Sport* creating for example the image of the 84 Giro d'Italia. Emilio Tadini is in the permanent collections of Civic Gallery of Modena, National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rome, Museum of the twentieth century, Milan, and Mambo - Museum of Modern Art, Bologna.

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Opening times: Monday – Friday 10 am – 5.30 pm