

## CASEY KAPLAN

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Giorgio Griffa

*The 1990s*

May 5 - August 21, 2020

*"I myself am but one instrument among others."*<sup>1</sup>

Casey Kaplan is pleased to announce *Giorgio Griffa: The 1990s*, the artist's fourth solo show with the gallery, from a series of exhibitions focusing on the artist's practice by decade.

For over fifty years, Giorgio Griffa (b. 1936 Turin, Italy) has developed a painting practice that records "the memory of material," a process the artist believes is "constant, and never finished," allowing brush, paint, and canvas to dictate the outcome of his work. By eliminating perspective and narrative, Griffa transcribes the process of painting into simple repeated marks and gestures. Starting with unprimed, unstretched raw canvas laid out like sheets on the studio floor, Griffa works slowly across them, crouching and kneeling on the material in a way that aligns him with his tools as the canvas becomes the ground for water-based acrylic paints, mixed thinly, to seep and bleed upon application. The rawness of the resulting color fields, along with large areas of unpainted canvas, gives Griffa's paintings a provisional feel, emphasizing his convictions about the independent life of materials. The paintings are then displayed unframed, pinned to the wall with small nails along their top edge, and when not exhibited, are folded and stacked by year, creating an underlying grid for his compositions.

Driven by notions of time, rhythm, and memory, Griffa reflects on the faculty of the anonymous, restrained gesture and its capacity to be both distinctive and integral. Beginning in the 1990s, Griffa introduced the use of numbers as a new formal element within his compositions, as a method to sequence his canvases both inside an individual work and within an infinite series. Numbers determine an internal logic within the paintings, designating the order in which each line, marking, or sign is painted. Griffa describes this process as a "dynamic dimension in which time coexists, similar to what happens when we occupy space by walking."<sup>2</sup>

Planning for this project began in earnest in November 2019 with a visit to Griffa's studio in Turin where canvases stored in his archive, unseen for nearly thirty years, were unfolded again. Flat on the floor for review, echoing the artist's daily painting practice, a selection of nearly twenty artworks was made. This curation was then followed by the paintings being folded once more, stacked neatly into a pile (a modest stack, no higher than one foot), ready for transport and the entirety of our forthcoming exhibition.

Giorgio Griffa lives and works in Turin, Italy. In 2015 and 2016, Giorgio Griffa was the focus of a retrospective that toured institutions including Fundação de Serralves, curated by Andrea Bellini and Suzanne Cotter, Porto, Portugal (2016); Fondazione Giuliani, curated by Andrea Bellini, Rome, Italy (2016); Bergen Kunsthall, curated by Andrea Bellini and Martin Clark, Bergen, Norway (2015); and Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, curated by Andrea Bellini, Genève, Switzerland (2015). A monograph titled *GIORGIO GRIFFA: WORKS 1965 – 2015* was published by Mousse Publishing on occasion of the exhibition. Additional recent solo exhibitions include: Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (2020); Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Switzerland (2020); Tate Modern, London, UK (2019); Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nancy, Nancy, France (2019); Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (2018) (solo); Viva Arte Viva, 57th International Art Exhibition, Arsenale, Venice, Italy (2017); Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy (2017); Fondazione Carriero, Milan, Italy (2015); Fondazione Palazzo Albizzini Collezione Burri, Perugia, Italy (2015); a group show curated by Ugo Rondinone at Secession, Vienna, Austria (2015); Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal (2014); Mies van der Rohe Haus, Berlin, Germany (2013) (solo); MACRO, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy (2011) (solo); Museo d'arte contemporanea, Lissone, Italy (2010); and Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy (2009). Griffa's work can be found in permanent collections including Tate Modern, London, UK; Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, Rivoli, Italy; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas, US; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, US; Frac des Pays De La Loire, Carquefou, France; Fundação de Serralves, Porto, Portugal; Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Rome, Italy; Galleria di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin, Italy; Grand Duke Jean Museum of Modern Art, Luxembourg; and Museo del Novecento, Milan, Italy.

1. Laura Cherubini, *GIORGIO GRIFFA, WORKS: 1965-2015*, ed. Andrea Bellini (Mousse Publishing, 2015), p67.

2. *Giorgio Griffa: Fragments 1968-2012*, (New York: Casey Kaplan, 2013), p34.