

Achille Perilli

January 19 – February 28, 2026

Alfonso Artiaco is pleased to present the first solo exhibition by Achille Perilli at the gallery.
The show will open on January 17 from 11:00 am.

The exhibition presents a selection of works by Achille Perilli belonging to the cycle that, beginning in the late 1960s, marks one of the most concentrated and continuous phases of his research. To fully grasp its scope, it is essential to recall the context from which it emerged: the experience of *Forma 1*, co-founded by Perilli in 1947, which initiated a sustained reflection on form as a dynamic process and on space as a conceptual dimension, never conceived as a mere support or representational field. Within this framework, form is understood as a condition of permanent tension and transformation, a premise that underpins the artist's subsequent developments.

At a moment defined by the crisis of traditional perspectival systems, Perilli articulated a rigorous theoretical position, set out in his text *Indagine sulla prospettiva* (1969). Perspective is questioned as a coercive device of vision and replaced by an unstable structure based on the interaction of color, line, tone, and form. The work thus renounces the presentation of a legible image or identifiable space, reducing visual information to the point of becoming an open, ambivalent experience, devoid of definitive resolution.

It is at this juncture that the notion of the labyrinth emerges – not as an iconographic subject, but as a constructive principle. In the *Manifesto della folle immagine nello spazio immaginario* (1971), Perilli describes it as a configuration of simultaneous paths, in which “no law can be accepted other than that of its contorted unfolding into many paths, all alike and all different.” Conventional spatial coordinates are suspended: above and below, interior and exterior, object and distance dissolve, and each element of the work becomes at once eye, space, and form.

The works in this series unfold as networks of minimal passages – sequences that proliferate without ever arriving at a final synthesis. Line abandons any descriptive function to become movement, a mental direction; forms expand, recede, and thin out, deliberately avoiding spatial stabilization. Volume is suggested and immediately destabilised, maintained in a condition of controlled precariousness.

Color assumes a foundational role. It no longer supports form but incorporates it, ultimately coinciding with it. Rather than proceeding through tonal modulation, it operates through subtle variations and chromatic tensions that regulate the internal rhythm of the work. Over time, this research expands: in the 1980s, the image appears to extend beyond the limits of the canvas through invisible movements and merely perceived trajectories; in the 1990s, color asserts itself as a dominant element – autonomous and intense – further dissolving the formal structure.

In the later works, irrational geometry gives way to a vibrant pictorial surface composed of minimal, almost imperceptible shifts. Depth is compressed into a unified field, akin to a concave surface that absorbs the third dimension. Color infiltrates the interstices, expands where line recedes, ultimately becoming line and space itself.

As Perilli writes in the manifesto *L'irrazionale geometrico* (1982), it is the internal tension of form that determines its gradual dissolution. The works on view fully embody this continuous slippage from the perceptual to the mental plane, offering the viewer an open experience, free of hierarchies and fixed orientations—a visual field in which disorientation is not a lack, but a necessary condition of seeing.

The exhibition also devotes a focused section to Achille Perilli's works on paper, conceived as a privileged site for the elaboration and sedimentation of his artistic research. Spanning from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, this corpus guides the visitor through a trajectory that traces the evolution of the artist's thinking, offering a preparatory and complementary reading to the paintings. From the early sheets linked to the *Forma 1* experience—where line functions as a primary experimental tool—a gradual shift emerges in the conception of paper as an autonomous space of construction. The sign, initially essential and almost regressive, develops into unstable structures in which order and disorder coexist in a precarious balance. Lines, chromatic fields, and geometric forms with fluid boundaries dissolve and reassemble, generating visual tensions and mental pathways. In these works, Perilli's visionary impulse becomes unmistakable: an imaginary space, free of hierarchies and traditional perspectives, in which form becomes process and perception oscillates between rationality and intuition, incisively anticipating the later developments of his practice.

Achille Perilli was born in Rome in 1927. He graduated in Literature from the University of Rome with a thesis on Giorgio de Chirico. In 1947, he was among the founders of the Forma 1 Group, a leading force in Italian postwar abstraction. In 1948, he took part in the International Congress of Art Critics in Paris and joined the MAC (Movimento Arte Concreta). He exhibited at the São Paulo Biennial in 1959 and at the Venice Biennale in 1962 and 1968, the latter featuring two solo rooms. During the 1960s, he showed his work at major international institutions, including the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Kunsthalle in Baden-Baden. Alongside his artistic practice, he pursued an intense theoretical and editorial activity and taught visual communication. From the 1970s onward, his work has been the subject of numerous retrospectives in Italy and abroad. In 1997, he was awarded the Premio Presidente della Repubblica. He returned to the Venice Biennale in 2010 and, in 2018, exhibited at the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg. He passed away in Orvieto in 2021.