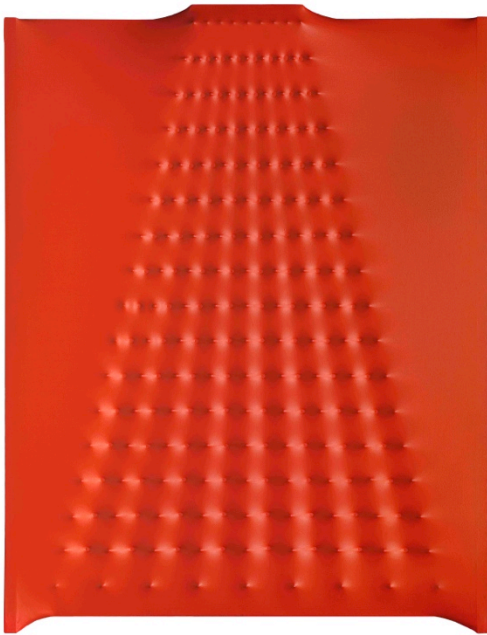


DOMINIQUE LÉVY

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Enrico Castellani: Interior Space
April 7 – May 21, 2016



Superficie rossa n. 8, 1966. Acrylic on canvas. 40 3/16 x 31 7/8 inches (102 x 81 cm). Courtesy Fondazione Enrico Castellani.

New York...Dominique Lévy is pleased to announce a solo exhibition in New York by **Enrico Castellani**, with whom the gallery has worked since its inception in 2012. The exhibition explores the ways in which painting can occupy three-dimensional space, with recent as well as historical works by the artist, many of which are on view in New York for the first time. Castellani's work presents a complete amalgamation of form and concept: in the artist's words, a "total interior space, lacking contradictions."

A selection of Castellani's large-scale shaped relief canvases, *Superfici bianche* (White Surfaces), are presented in juxtaposition with recent angular metallic paintings titled *Biangolare cromato* (Bi-angular Chrome) and *Angolare cromato* (Angular Chrome), the latter of which Castellani installs in corners. These white and metallic works are placed in dialogue with one another, highlighting the ambient light

and shadow effects that occur as the works activate the architectural space in which they are situated. Three-dimensional paintings are complemented by the recent sculpture *Spartito*, in which Castellani references a seminal work made in 1969 by bolting hundreds of sheets of paper together to create a biomorphic minimalist form. Punctuating the monochromatic white and silver artworks are two early red shaped canvases: *Superficie rossa n. 8* (1966) and *Superficie angolare rossa* (1961), both of which decidedly announce Castellani's break with the trajectory of painting to that point by rupturing the rectangular or square format.

The exhibition which was on view in London from February 9 to March 26, 2016, is accompanied by a comprehensive book featuring a newly commissioned essay by Angela Vettese, former President of the International Jury of the Venice Biennale and director of the graduate program at the Università Luav di Venezia. This publication also includes a newly revised translation of a rare interview between Castellani and Hans Ulrich Obrist from 2009.

Throughout his over five-decade-long career, Castellani has continued to investigate the premises he laid out when he started out as a painter in the late 1950s. Originally trained



as an architect, he entered the art scene at a time when many artists in Europe were growing tired of the gestural abstract paintings of *Informel* and related movements. Leaving behind these ideas with their derivative links to Surrealism and the dark emotions of the Second World War, Castellani, along with his close friend Piero Manzoni, formed the gallery Azimut and accompanying journal *Azimuth* in Milan in 1959. With close links to the Zero group, as well as other forward-thinking artists and curators throughout Europe, America, and Japan, Azimut/h explored “a new artistic conception” in which works were devoid of referents and achieved a state of autonomy and objectivity. Castellani was also influenced by the reduced semantics of Piet Mondrian, the all-over compositions of Jackson Pollock, and the spatial explorations of Lucio Fontana, and in his own work sought out a pure and harmonious art form, which goes beyond its physical borders to alter the light and space around it and evoke the infinite.

Alongside his *Superfici*, Castellani began his *Angolari* series in 1960, making around fifteen works in total between this year and 1966. These works, painted red, white, and black, are to be hung in corners of a room, at once disrupting the space and yet simultaneously creating continuity within it. In 2010 he revisited this seminal group, creating several works in *cromato*, a silvery coating of metallic paint. With their strong and mercurial reactions to light, the recent chromatic *Angolari* and *Biangolari* works change not only internally as the viewer moves around them, but also imbue the space in which they are hung with dynamism as they animatedly reflect the light in the room. In 2009, Adachiara Zevi stated, “it is our belief that the white and aluminum surfaces, extreme in their ability to capture and restore light, constitute Castellani’s truly original invention.” Confronted by Castellani’s white and chromatic works, the viewer enters an architectural space of a different dimension, a spiritual site of contemplation.

About the Artist

Enrico Castellani is regarded as one of Italy’s most important living artists. Born in Castelmasa in 1930, he studied art and architecture at Belgium’s Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts and École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, respectively, in the early 1950s and soon began a practice challenging the confines of painting, sculpture, and architecture in search of a new paradigm. A catalytic figure in the European post-war avant-garde, he founded the Azimut gallery—and the related journal *Azimuth*—in Milan in 1959, with Piero Manzoni. They organized international exhibitions and published essays that opposed the dominant art movements in Europe at the time, and promoted the idea of an art that did not imitate but instead sprang self-referentially from its own techniques and materials. In 1959 Castellani also showed his now celebrated *Superficie nera* pieces for the first time. To make them, he worked his monochrome canvases with a nail gun to produce a relief-like surface that induced light and shade effects through alternating depressions and raised areas. In the 1970s and 1980s, he expanded his approach to include other materials; but Castellani’s focus upon a poetic marriage of painting, sculpture, architecture, and space has never wavered.

Castellani has exhibited at prestigious museums around the world, including the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow; the Museum of Modern

Art, New York; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich. He represented Italy at the Venice Biennale in 1964, 1966, 1984, and 2010 (with solo exhibitions in 1966 and 1984 and as part of group exhibitions in 1964 and 2010). In the latter year he became the first Italian artist ever to receive the Praemium Imperiale for Painting, awarded by the Emperor of Japan. His works are included in numerous public collections including the Stiftung Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf; Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki; Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Fondazione Prada, Milan; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma (MACRO), Rome; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart; Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (GAM), Turin; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

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