

Piero Dorazio

(Rome, 1927 – Todi, Perugia, 2005)

An eclectic personality, Piero Dorazio wove a dense web of relationships in Italy and abroad over the course of his life, participating actively in the cultural debate. In the early 1940s, his political commitment led him to found the group Arte Sociale in Rome, whose goal was to reconstruct the relationship between art and society. In 1947, searching for more profound artistic autonomy, he joined the group Forma and signed its manifesto. The establishment of a new group, Arte Concreta, followed, including the opening of L'Âge d'Or, a gallery-bookstore, which in turn functioned as an incubator for the new group, Origine. Attentive to innovations but equally capable of drawing upon the teachings of French Impressionist painting, Cubism, and the Russian avant-garde, Dorazio also carefully studied Italian Futurism, becoming close with Giacomo Balla at a time when the elderly painter seemed cut off from art circles. In the 1960s, Dorazio also established a studio in New York. In 1974 he moved his Rome studio to Todi, to an ancient monastery in Canonica. An artist, but also a writer, Dorazio contributed to magazines and newspapers — including *Il Corriere della Sera* — organized exhibitions, taught at the University of Pennsylvania, and contributed to the establishment of spaces for contemporary art, such as the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia.

The works in the collection belong to the period in which Dorazio, in 1958 — after spending several months inside his studio in Rome, in voluntary isolation — fully develops his original language. The new type of painting is characterized by a reticular grid structure, with colors applied with the tip of the brush to form textures organized according to horizontal, vertical, and diagonal intersections.

These orientations correspond to the horizon, to the force of gravity, and to time, parameters that, according to the artist, define human experience. *Tantalo T (Tantalus T)*, 1958-1959, reveals how, for the artist, the study of color is inseparable from the experience of light. Dorazio ties this dialectic back to his childhood and to hours spent watching “the alternating play of light and shadows.” As noted, among the sources for Dorazio’s painting, a special place is reserved for Impressionism. *Pontoise*, 1960, bears the name of the French town whose reputation is linked to the presence of artists such as Camille Pissarro.

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