

## Emilio Vedova

(Venice, 1919 – 2006)

During the war Emilio Vedova was a partisan who struggled against Fascism, and political and social engagement are forces present over the course of his entire career.

Part of the debate in Italy that, beginning in the late 1940s, set up an opposition between realism and abstraction, Vedova upheld the moral qualities of abstract art, maintaining that visual language also must be “revolutionary.” His reaction to *Art Informel*, with which he is sometimes associated, was that his works, instead, contain structures, and that “these structures are structures of my consciousness.” Affirming the inner origin of his works, Vedova asserted their dialectical and purposeful role in terms of the present to which they pertain. A turning point occurred following a period of deliberate research, which, after the feverish drawings of architecture he made in the 1930s and the geometric rigor of the paintings from the 1940s, led him to free his painting in a gestural direction. “And so in 1951-1953,” he wrote, recalling those years, “the sign grew conscious of a more complex reality. Now they became alarmist signs in an immeasurable space.” (“Lettera a Nello Ponente,” March 5 1961, in Celant, G., ed., *Vedova 1935-1984*, exhibition catalogue. Milan: Electa, 1984). He worked in large series whose titles— *Scontro di situazioni* (*Clash of Situations*), *Ciclo della protesta* (*Protest Cycle*) — express the idea of struggle and confrontation, understood as constructive forces.

Like other works that bear the same title, *Immagine del tempo 3V* (*Image of Time 3V*), 1959, belongs to this crucial moment in the development of the artist’s language. Structured as a field open to the action of many different forces, the painting is punctuated by the material gesturalism of broad brushstrokes that are chromatically articulated in tones of black and white, only occasionally marked by traces of red pigment. The resulting image corresponds to that long-sought spontaneity, to a vision whose tumult of lights and shadows corresponds to the private tension that agitates the artist. The great energy of this period also led the artist to his first expressions of physical interaction with the space. (MB)