

Mattia Moreni

(Pavia, 1920 – Brisighella, Ravenna, 1999)

Moreni began his career as an artist in Turin and was, prior to the CRT acquisitions, represented in the GAM collection by a large painting from his early Post-Cubist period, *Il porto di Antibes, Antibes (Port of Antibes, Antibes)*, 1951, and by a later canvas from his *Informel* period, *Sterpaglia sulle rocce (Brushwood on the Rocks)*, 1956. The latter work, vertical in orientation and yet dramatically focused on the ground, creates a contrast of visual tensions that conveys an often furious outburst, which the artist is able to impart in the work's dynamism and in the pictorial material, applied with relentless gesturalism. While dramatic, the landscape in *Sterpaglia sulle rocce* still does not possess the violence of *Immagine in pericolo (Image in Danger)*, 1960, in the CRT Collection. In the latter work, the compositional fury fully emerges and gives true substance to the images, hurling them at the center of an uncontrollable vortex of forces, where a mayhem of colors occurs, passionately transported along trajectories that intersect and flee, and that radiate out into space as in an explosion. Lightning, wind, and a sense of impending danger are the agents of this thunderous art, blinded by its own power, by the dazzle of a raging energy that erupts within, and which is echoed in the force of the *Urlo del sole (Howl of the Sun)* that Moreni captures in a work from 1954.

The beauty of his painting remains miraculously steadfast amid the whirlwind of perceptions. His works have prompted numerous critics to make comparisons with the expressionism infused with sacred horror and the chromatic agility found in Grünewald's paintings. In Moreni's work we find a distant memory of the cruelties of the cross, painted upside down in certain canvases entitled *caduta (fall)*, lost in the abyss of intense blacks, presented with arms open to the fury of reds and whites, like the carcass of a slaughtered animal that must be drained of its blood. Anyone who has been to the fields around Brisighella, where the artist lived during his later years, will find it impossible to look at the canvases from this period without having a clear recollection of sensations that only Arcangeli was able to describe: "When at the distant and nocturnal roar of an engine, at the drone of a remote jet, or at the far-off glow of factories, everything becomes immediate, velvety and hard, icy and incandescent." (Arcangeli, F., "Il percorso di Mattia Moreni," in *Mattia Moreni*, exhibition catalogue, Bologna, 1965). These are also the only words capable of reconciling us with figures that will appear in the works of the artist's final years, for while they reverberate with the atmosphere from which his *Informel* paintings emerged, they also perhaps hide the reasons behind his late work. (EV)

FACRT