

Claudio Verna

(Guardiagrele, Chieti, 1937)

Claudio Verna is a member of the generation of artists who found themselves having to justify and defend their choice to paint, during a period when critical debate maintained that the history of pictorial language, seen as a whole, has reached its conclusion with the end of *Art Informel*.

“To speak about painting,” Verna wrote in 1972, “signifies also specifying that this medium (medium and not category of the spirit) does not have any privileged or reductive position in terms of any other material. One cannot speak of painting in the abstract, but only in reference to a particular type of work.”

The three works in the collection, *The Four III*, 1970, *A 140*, 1972, and *Tutto nero (All Black)*, 1974, reveal his art’s rigorous analysis of the constituent elements of abstract painting: light, color, and geometric-compositional balance. In the oldest work, the square canvases placed next to each other exploit a modular mechanism similar to that used by certain figures associated with the School of Piazza del Popolo, but unlike those artists for verna the partition between the pictorial dimension of the canvas and its object-like reality never goes away: “The frame disappears,” he wrote in 1971, “the painting turns behind the canvas but does not become object. Painting remains painting, but the ‘gesture’ of painting is finished.”

The nearly mathematical rigor on which the continuous variations of his painting are based multiplies the squares on the canvas, makes them mobile and immerses them in the sensibility of the space. For verna, the propagation of the geometric and chromatic structure from work to work constitutes the authentic space of comprehension and expression of the work, which can be said to be truly complete only in series. For this reason he gave his paintings of an entire period titles composed of letters and series of numbers. In an open and continuous sequence specific to his approach, his works annul the closure and symbolic value of traditional painting. The goal indicated by the artist is to “propose to the viewer/user a suggestion for shared research and not to offer him a truth that the author cannot have because it does not exist.” (EV)