

Gruppo MID

Founded in 1964 by Antonio Barrese, Alfonso Grassi, Gianfranco Laminarca and Alberto Marangoni, linked by their shared experience at the Brera Academy, the MID became part of the history of Italian Programmed Art at least five years after the founding of the Gruppo T and the Gruppo N in Milan and Padua. The acronym that the artists attribute to themselves contains its own lines of action: Mutation (and not Movement as was erroneously written by a number of critics, and who for all intents and purposes would historicise this version), i.e. driven towards chance and innovation; Image, in reference to the visual sphere in which they operate; and Dimension, hence the surpassing of the limits of painting and sculpture with a view to producing multimedia, synesthetic and contingent works. With the aim of rejecting the individuality of the artist out of hand, from this name the four founders would often deliberately omit the term 'group', which in their view gives off the idea of a summation of ideas instead of the outcome of a cohesive and unitary organism. Developing what had been started by the previous Milanese and Paduan experiences, the experiments undertaken by the MID transferred the latest discoveries in the field of electronics and lighting to art, also through a thorough study of cybernetics, of information theory and the technology of materials.

The group's research is known most of all for its creation of interactive and dialogic objects, conceived to be manipulated by the user, without which the work would remain inert. An example of this approach is to be found in the *Oggetti Stroboscopici* which, endowed with their own internal light and moved either by hand or with a motor, produce images that change on the basis of the speed of rotation of the discs inserted into the mechanism. The *Generatori Traccianti* work in a similar fashion yet without the addition of stroboscopic light, as the movement of the framework exploits the phenomenon of retinoic persistence in order to compose circular, conical or paraboloid shapes that remain in the eye for a few moments. The *Quadro stroboscopico* (1965) and the two *Generatori di linee traccianti* (1967 and 1968) in the collection belong to this set of works, which also include structurally simpler and more economical exemplars such as the *Lampeggiatori* and the *Generatori di interferenze*.

However brief the MID's activity was, finishing with their dissolution in 1972, its members always worked with great enthusiasm and inventive spirit, playing an active role in the debate on the environment of the works, which artists and critics alike were interested in at that time. Their *Strutture*, large kinetic elements featuring extremely intriguing discs or rotating cylinders, were the main response to the issue of spatiality. Less known yet just as experimental is the production of photographs (*Immagini Sintetiche*) and films (*Opere Schermiche*) which – starting from the very names chosen by which to define the results, communicate a clear distancing from the more traditional use of such media.

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