

Carla Accardi

(Trapani, 1924 – Roma, 2014)

Carla Accardi was raised in Sicily, embracing, as she recalls, the light, the Mediterranean colors, the frontier spirit, and the memory of ancient civilizations that characterize the region. In the immediate postwar period she moved to Rome, where she participated in the climate of renewal, passionately involved in the artistic debate then taking place. In 1947, she was the only woman artist among a group of young artists to sign the Forma manifesto. Openly anti-realist in their polemics, this group promoted abstract painting, ideally reconnecting to the European avant-garde tendencies of the first half of the century. Accardi immediately stood out in the way she broke away from the rigors of geometry. Within the context of her long career – characterized by a continuous evolution, as well as a capacity to experiment with new forms, materials, and spatial solutions — the works in the collection, created during the fifties, belong to a moment when, after an initial phase of experimentation and mastery of formal means, Accardi forged an autonomous path. 1954 is a crucial year for the artist, when she began working on the floor, developing an innovative language of signs.

While in *Materico con grigi* (*Matter with Grays*), 1954, her palette still includes greens, browns, and grays, in *Arciere su bianco* (*Archer on White*), 1955, her choice is clearly directed toward the rigor of black and white. A comparison between the two canvases also shows the clear evolution in the language that characterizes her painting at the time. Starting out slightly angular and fragmented, almost nervous, the signs become fuller, tending toward roundness and a more balanced formal fullness. In *Labirinto n. 12* (*Labyrinth no. 12*), 1958, the background is black, while the white signs aggregate in a dense web — organic matter traversed by an unstoppable vitality. As the artist reminisces, the choice of white signs against a black background is “anti-painting” that goes even beyond the memory of the writing that can be identified in the earlier black signs. (MB)