

Vasco Bendini

(Bologna, 1922 – Roma 2015)

“Stability of the unstable”: these are the words Vasco Bendini uses when referring to the meaning of his work as an artist. Characterized by various phases, his career has been marked by unbound experimentation, characterized by a rejection of rigid stylistic identity and a courageous autonomy from schools or groups, staking out a position that has been called “anarchic.” The historical category *Art Informel* relates to one important aspect of his work, but it does not include other expressive forms and the invention of personal and original languages. In the early 1950s the artist’s works interrogated the very characteristics of painting. His introspective capacity and his personal form of spirituality led him to investigate the theme of the human face. Between 1951 and 1954, he conceived of the canvas as a window onto interiority, a thin membrane on which unstable images are visualized, as specters suspended between appearance and imminent disappearance.

The works in the collection were produced at the end of that decade, when Bendini restricted his intervention to a trace that tends to allow a fair amount of freedom to the chromatic material itself. The memory of the image is lost and the void that results can be interpreted as a dolorous absence, a loss that can no longer be filled. In *Polvere del tempo (Dust of Time)*, 1958, this lack is translated into a canvas where the idea of subtraction dominates, as if every presumed attempt at the figurative had been scratched and abraded by uncontested forces.

Untitled, 1958, belongs to the *Gesto e materia (Gesture and Material)* series, a phase when Bendini manifests the gestural direction that will mark his work in the early 1960s. More than a physical, external action, however, the artist’s gesture appears as an operation of inner research, developed dialectically with the pictorial material. Bendini has frequently cited the concept of “self-creativity” in relation to his work, meaning that every work is both a symbolic expression of his own mental processes and an autonomous expression that is “other” in respect to the author. (MB)