

## Gino De Dominicis

(Ancona, 1947—Rome, 1998)

“Dear... I believe that things do not exist. A glass, a man, a hen, for example, are not really a glass, a man, a hen, but only the verification of the possibility of existence of a glass, a man, a hen. In order to truly exist, things would have to be eternal, immortal; only in this way would they be not merely the verification of certain possibilities but truly things.” In these words, Gino De Dominicis begins his *Lettera sull’immortalità (Letter on Immortality)*, 1970. Addressed to a woman whose identity remains unknown, the letter reveals the cognitive tension that animates the artist’s research. Obsessed with the incessant passage of time, in 1969, on the occasion of his first exhibition in Rome, De Dominicis exhibited his own obituary.

Proposing situations close to immobility, his works emanate the idea of a contraction or boundless expansion of physical space and time. De Dominicis’s works – epiphanies that the artist felt could not be represented adequately by photographs – do not participate in common experience but strike with the force of a cosmic event. A very tall gilded pole, its tip brushing against a large mass that rests on the ground, remains mysteriously balanced. Such is *Untitled*, 1967-1969, a work that embodies a verticality that pierces the physical laws that regulate this world. De Dominicis “antediluvian” art finds ideal correspondence in certain religious and philosophical concepts pertaining to archaic cultures, particularly Sumerian culture. In numerous works he brings together in hypothetical coexistence the Sumerian king Gilgamesh and the Indian goddess Urvashi, uniting them on the basis of the desperate search for immortality that characterizes the myths and legends surrounding them. In the work in the collection, dating from 1988, the artist draws two stylized profiles on a black panel, placing a multifaceted prism at the center. Perhaps evoking the moment during which Gilgamesh and Urvashi have glimpsed at the long sought secret, the work transmits an atmosphere of enigmatic suspension that seems to invite silence and contemplation. (MB)