

Giulio Turcato

(Mantua, 1912 — Rome, 1995)

A nomadic spirit, capable of participating in multiple experiences while maintaining his autonomy, Giulio Turcato, after some interaction with the Corrente group, was one of the artists who came together to form the Fronte Nuovo delle Arti. A heterogeneous collective joined not by stylistic choices but above all by commitment of a moral nature, the Front emerged in 1947 in Milan and reassembled, at the initiative of the critic Giuseppe Marchiori, on the occasion of the 1948 Venice Biennale. Turcato — who for a period moved back and forth between Venice and Milan, and settled in Rome in 1943 — found opportunities for the exchange of important ideas in the group. The issues that ignited debates included anxiety about the renewal of artistic language through breaking the isolation from the international situation, imposed during the years of Fascism, and the importance of social commitment and its artistic expression. In 1947, according to the constant desire for renewal that animated his work, Turcato joined Forma, which brought together younger artists in Rome. With this group he shared an interest in formalism that, as indicated in the manifesto signed by the artists, was considered “the only means for removing oneself from decadent, psychological, expressionistic influences.” In 1952 he joined the Gruppo degli Otto, assembled by Lionello Venturi for the Venice Biennale. During this period, as in all phases of his career, Turcato moved toward a growing reduction of the image, which gradually frees itself from naturalistic references. His chosen subjects – rallies, rebellions, factories, or urban landscapes, including city ruins – manifest the artist’s involvement with political and social issues.

Composizione (Composition), 1956, is typical of Turcato’s work of the mid-1950s. Modulated by curvilinear harmonies where color becomes a structural element, the work is painted in brown tones and dominated by vivid red planes. Almost bringing to mind a laboratory slide on which lumps of matter are concentrated, *Batteriologico (Bacteriological)*, 1960, is punctuated by stains and faded build-ups of color. The work exemplifies the artist’s passion for new scientific discoveries, in keeping with a curiosity that, in the late 1960s, would lead him to find inspiration in the space race and in the historic lunar landing. (MB)