

Achille Perilli

(Rome, 1927 – Orvieto 2021)

Achille Perilli is one of the young artists who came together in Rome as the Forma group, and who, in 1947, signed the manifesto published in the homonymous magazine. Like the other signatories, the artist supported a renewal of painting through abstract language, which was understood to derive from the observation of phenomenal reality. This naturalistic point of departure, evident in his early works of this period, was also emphasized by Perilli in two essays published in the magazine, along with a theoretical commitment that continued in tandem with his activity as an artist. Profoundly knowledgeable about avant-garde movements and an advocate of links between art, poetry, literature, and architecture, in 1957 he and Gastone Novelli founded the magazine *l'Esperienza moderna*. Five issues were published until 1959, and included essays on literature, music, and figurative arts, ranging from the European avant-gardes to American action painting. The works in the collection were created during the period of the magazine's existence.

La Grande Eva (The Great Eve), 1958, is a painting whose large surface is clearly divided horizontally, by color and proportions, into two different planes. The upper portion, dominated by shades of brown, weighs on the lower section, which is lighter and smaller in size. The entire surface is covered with signs, scratches that penetrate the pictorial material, exposing the layers of paint that compose it. Abstract marks that cannot be traced back to any alphabet, these signs are linked to the velocity of the gesture required to achieve them. More than a sketch for communication that is verbal in nature, they seem to relate to the tool through which the sensibility of the pictorial material is tested. As with other works that were also exhibited at the 1958 Venice Biennale, the title in this case refers to a distant temporal dimension.

The title of *Carta segreta (Secret Map)*, 1959, however, seems to suggest the idea of secrecy, of communication that is hidden or coded in order to preserve its contents. In this case too, the surface is articulated by two monochrome areas, unequal in tonality and proportion. Here, however, the sign occupies only the larger, lower area. Broad and decisive, almost similar to a convulsive signature, the sign forcefully enters the pictorial space, connecting to the layers that compose it. The emotional intensity of the works from this period gradually led the artist to new realms of research. Since 1968, in the context of a development that has continued without pause to the present day, the artist has focused on pure abstraction, drawing upon his imagination to create original investigations into new geometries and color. (MB)