

08.09 – 10.10.2015

Opening: 05.09.2015

Gianfranco Pardi continued to grapple with abstraction at a point where louche touches and ironic figuration began to dominate the art context. It seems that these moves merely redoubled his seriousness of intent. The legacy of geometric abstraction tends to lead towards reduction and stasis. With Pardi's work of the transitional period of the 1970s and 1980s he avoid such moves. Instead he shows how a painting works. Without succumbing to any form of representation the art works become an architecture of painting. Apparently contradictory lines of tension operating in layers. The divisions and marks on the canvas countered by structural cables and ties that force the painted forms into a structural relationship. Here we face the combination of real illusion and real structure. The division of the canvas and the division of the structure assert themselves autonomously and synthetically.

It has to be remembered that these works span a period of dynamic political upheaval in Italy. New forces of change were taking direct action while new models of political thought were being laid down. So how do we account for the work of such a serious man - who was steeped in theory and philosophy producing work such as this at that time?

Pardi's work is always operating at the interface between the given structure and the potential for agency and beauty. It accepts that structural components have to be revealed. And that art is always a struggle to come to terms with material realities. There is a dialectic in the work between action, tension, the desire to show limits, and exceed them at the same time.

Most crucially his work shows a continued commitment to the legacy of supremacist and constructivist art - right at the moment that the wood nymphs and blown out architectural imagery of post-modernism were emerging. Coming across this work in the 1980s it was clear that Pardi continued a commitment to a deeply political form of art – a belief in an abstraction that threw out the old order. A task that thrives in a commitment to poetry, philosophy and the problem of painting.

Liam Gillick

The Italian artist Gianfranco Pardi (1933-2012) extensively investigates in space and construction in his early works, in the wake of a neo-metaphysical style, thus giving life to works of formal rigor where drawing, painting and sculpture are strictly combined. He then devotes himself to the creation of more rigorously geometrical works. Since the mid eighties his compositions have achieved a more lyrical dimension thanks to an increased formal balance. From 1959 until his death in 2012 his work was widely exhibited in museums, galleries, biennials and art fairs around the world. His work is also part of numerous public collections and many monographic catalogs were published about Gianfranco Pardi.