



# Enrico Castellani, Maurizio Nannucci, Peter Wuethrich SISTEMA – DEMATERIALIZZAZIONE – TESTO

*Curated by Lóránd Hegyi*

Opening: **Tuesday 7 September 2021, 2pm – 8pm**  
8 September – 5 November 2021

After the success of the first exhibition of the series "MY30YEARS – Coherency in Diversity" – conceived by international critic Lóránd Hegyi, paying homage to gallery owner Annamaria Maggi's 30-year career – Galleria Fumagalli continues with the second exhibition: "Sistema - Dematerializzazione – Testo" which jointly presents the works of Enrico Castellani, Maurizio Nannucci and Peter Wuethrich.

The 8 exhibitions of the series involve the works of 12 artists – established masters and younger artists – followed or represented by Galleria Fumagalli in order to outline some recurring aesthetic and conceptual orientations. For each exhibition the critic Lóránd Hegyi has identified 3 artists in conversation on specific themes, in order to bring out new connections and similarities between their diverse artistic research, avoiding any conceptual imposition and letting the works retain their own individual meaning.

The second exhibition "Sistema – Dematerializzazione – Testo" attempts to release the works of the 3 artists from rigid historical-artistic classifications, revealing hidden layers of meaning and evoking broader – and often unexpected – realms of thought. An example of this is the interpretation of the typical relief canvases by **Enrico Castellani**. Only appearing monochrome and rational at first glance, the system of formations created by the artist is instead a trace of a hidden, almost narrative creative process, akin to a text. The succession of these traces left by precise pictorial acts, a real "writing", is not limited to conveying a message, but invites the viewer to determine its meaning, thus inviting an active participation in a communal situation, and in this, it has the role of materialising that which is shared. With this in mind, Castellani's work stimulates the creative perception and reinterpretation of repeated visual and sculptural phenomena.

The evocative potential of writing is undoubtedly a subject of study for **Maurizio Nannucci**. Through his luminous neon writings – carrying an evident sensual and material characteristic – he operates at semantic and immaterial levels. These scriptural structures, by virtue of their relationship with specific spatial and architectural realities, stimulate the unfolding of imaginary, poetic and intelligible meanings. And imagining other meanings implies a re-evaluation of conventions, and a freedom of interpretation of time and space that we live in, as suggested by the iconic work "Trace of time and space" of 2006.

**Peter Wuethrich** also works with the exploration of the semantic layers of the text. Words taken from texts with a strong emotional charge, communicate intelligible and intimate realities. But above all, the book is the characterising subject matter of the artist's work, intended as an ambassador and physical protector of the intangible and spiritual entity of the text. As Hegyi writes, «their [the book's] existence is the suggestion of something different; their presence is an indication of something not present; their function is the materialisation of something immaterial, the visualisation of an in-between state. This in-between state relates to mediation between the sender and the receiver of the message, on the one hand, and between the intelligible message, the immaterial idea and the rationally structured, semiotic system on the other hand.»

The text, with its semantic potential, alludes to immaterial dimensions and often heralds something new, imaginary, not yet visible. An evocative power of enormous scope, well summed up by the neon work by Maurizio Nannucci, designed for the ArtLine contemporary art park in Milan: "New Times for Other Ideas New Ideas for Other Times" (2020).



## Biographies

**Enrico Castellani** (Castelmassa, 1930 – Celleno, 2017) is one of the best-known abstract artists of Italian post-war art. In the early 1950s he studied art and architecture in Belgium at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts and the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, starting very early an artistic practice in between painting, sculpture and architecture, in search of a new paradigm. Active in Milan since the late 1950s, he established a friendship and collaboration with Piero Manzoni, with whom, in 1959, he founded the magazine *Azimuth* (published in only two issues). They also founded the almost homonymous gallery *Azimut* (exhibiting internationally renowned artists such as Giovanni Anceschi, Agostino Bonalumi, Gianni Colombo, Dadamaino, Heinz Mack, Enzo Mari, Almir Mavignier...), proposing a total rethinking of the previous artistic experience and undermining the dominance of Art Informel. It was in 1959 that he created his first monochrome relief canvas: the combination of double-curved elements made with nails and planks allowed him to probe the potential of the canvas in maximum tension and to create unprecedented perspectives and shadows. This entirely original venture earned him the title, “father of minimalism” from Donald Judd. Enrico Castellani has exhibited in some of the most famous institutions worldwide, and in 2010 received the *Praemium Imperiale* for Painting from Prince Hitachi, Honorary Patron of the Japan Art Association. Since 1997 he has collaborated with Galleria Fumagalli which dedicated three solo exhibitions to him (1997, 2001, 2006), some important external projects including the one-man show at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (2005), a special monograph documenting his work from 1959 to 2000 and the anastatic reprint of the two issues of *Azimuth* magazine.

**Maurizio Nannucci** (Firenze, 1939) lives and works between his hometown and South Baden, Germany. Since the early 1960s he has been analysing the conceptual and perceptive layers of language starting from the minimum size of the letter, enhancing its typographic and minimal dimension. This research also involved the investigation of the theme of colour perception, which led to the introduction of neon in his works. By combining words, colour and light – which inevitably defines the space in which the work is placed – he generates an all-encompassing involvement of the viewer and opens up new ways of perception (sensual and conceptual) and interaction with reality. Part of his artistic research is also aimed at the diffusion and circulation of art: he is the founder of the self-managed spaces *Zona* (Florence, 1974-1985) and *Base / Progetti per l'arte* (Florence, since 1998), as well as author and collector of records, books and artist's editions. In the early 1990s he started collaborations with internationally renowned architects such as Fritz Auer, Renzo Piano, Massimiliano Fuksas, Mario Botta, Nicolas Grimshaw and Stephan Braunfels, and carried out numerous projects for public institutions, such as the neon work for the park of public art in Milan “*ArtLine*” (2020) and the permanent installation for the *Pilotta Complex* in Parma (2019). In 2005 he began collaborating with Galleria Fumagalli, which dedicated two solo shows (2005, 2017) and two special exhibition projects to him: “*ACMN*” (2011), the exhibition conceived by Nannucci and dedicated to four masters of Italian Conceptual Art (Giovanni Anselmo, Enrico Castellani, Maurizio Mochetti and Nannucci himself) and the participation in “*Visioni*” at the Sant'Agostino's church in Bergamo (2005).

**Peter Wuethrich** (Berna, 1962) lives and works between the Swiss capital and Interlaken. Since the early 1990s, his work has focused on the written word and in particular on the “book” as subject and constitutive unit of many of his creations. The artist enhances its physical character as a monument, depositary and guardian who protects the immaterial, spiritual entity of the textual content. The book is intended as a physical witness of the past but also as a precursor of what has yet to come. This physicality is reaffirmed through the plastic and coloristic characteristics of his works, but also through the photographic project which started in 2010 (still in progress) in Los Angeles: “*The Angels of the World*”. In these scenes, the book is transformed into the wings of an angel and the people who wear it on their shoulders automatically become angels and harbingers of an ethereal message. Part of this project, “*The Angels of Venice*”, was exhibited at Galleria Fumagalli which has been collaborating with the artist since 2004. His first solo show at the gallery and the monograph “*Literary Towers*” with text by Bruno Corà were realised in the same year. Together with nineteen other artists, Peter Wuethrich took part in the exhibition “*Visioni*” at the Sant'Agostino's church in Bergamo (2005), for which he created a site-specific project, inspired by the Gothic architecture of the church.

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