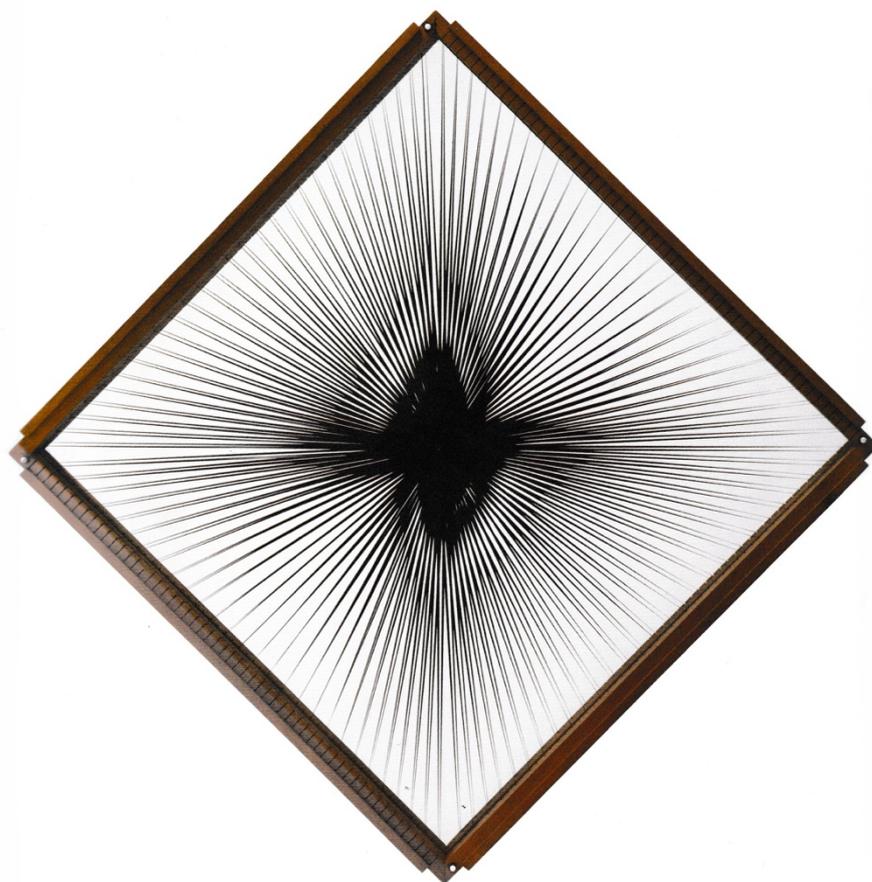


ALBERTO BIASI  
*La Materia della Visione*  
1959 - 2019



Curated by Marco Meneguzzo

**Opening 7 May 2019 at 6 p.m.**  
the artist will be present

**from 7 May to 2 June 2019**

**Scuola Grande della Misericordia, Sestiere Cannaregio 3599, Venice**

On the occasion of the 58<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, we will be opening the show **ALBERTO BIASI. *La Materia della Visione 1959 - 2019***, curated by Marco Meneguzzo, to be held in the Scuola Grande della Misericordia. The show will be a tribute to the work of Alberto Biasi, and to the constant research into substances and materials that characterised his sixty years of art production.

“La Materia della Visione”, The Material of Vision: more than a genuine material, a physically tangible one, the material of which we are speaking is the mental, cultural, and physiological participation of the viewers, who are stimulated by the work to discover ways of “seeing”. So the work, and therefore its material, is a catalyser of a way of seeing that makes the viewers knowing participants in the same mental processes that guided the artist when creating and organising his labour, then translated into works. The show then is a passage through the various phases of elaboration, development, and concretisation of the single, large idea of “seeing”.

So in the magnificent room of the Scuola della Misericordia, the public can admire both the first, intuitive works, by now dating back sixty years, and the final results, linked together by the common thread of optics and the cognitive process linked to seeing.

And then the variety of the works testifies to the inexhaustible depth of the argument and the ability of Biasi to deal with it from various points of view. Through the works on show – some of monumental size, and so adapted to the grandeur of the main room of the Scuola della Misericordia – we can consider the artist's constructive ability in ideating perceptive forms and tools that oblige the viewers' eye and mind to an active participation in vision.

In fact the show will analyse chronologically the salient passages of the work of Alberto Biasi and of his art which, from 1959 onwards, saw him experiment with various materials and an ever-coherent aesthetic analysis.

In fact his *Trame* date from 1959. These are works obtained by superimposing pierced sheets of paper and were the beginnings of his studies into the psychology of form and visual perception. The 1960s were to be years of great ideological and political turmoil and new art researches: in 1960 that he founded the Gruppo Enne and almost won the Leone d'Oro (a prize won at the last moment by Robert Rauschenberg) in the famous Biennale defined as "scandalous" for its well-known historical events and of which there will be in the present show a nucleus of the works exhibited. He was to work with the Gruppo Enne until 1967, the year the group disbanded, but he was to remain for the rest of his life the most coherent dynamically optical artist in Europe. In fact his art was concentrated on the visual perception of, and interaction with, the viewers. Movement in its passive sense of virtual action became a study of the science of optics, and his works gave the viewers a sense of perceptive and emotive dynamism.

His very study of materials allowed him to develop his kinetic theories: in the *Torsioni*, the first of all his similar works on this theme, PVC blades or lamellas were twisted over iridescent and contrasted colours to give life to optical games and movements of infinite variety. The forms are classical: squares, circles, triangles, and ellipses. The formal evolution of the *Torsioni* came about in the *Politipi* series, where the compositional aspect became fundamental, and in which the result of the twisted lamellas was to form extremely articulated and complex geometrical compositional structures. A further development of these games of twisting was then extended in his well-known *Ottico-dinamici* works where the play of the lamellas was left suspended allowing the work itself to be seen.

In his most recent works, Alberto Biasi concentrates on a search for new perceptive and optical effects, using new materials and technologies. In the show will be works in which the artist decided to experiment the use of a new material that, thanks to its lightness, ductility, and chromatic opacity, gave to the large pieces a new optical effect. This was a successful experiment, also thanks to the resources of the well-known Italian firm of Alcantara, where the hundreds of lamellas that compose the large works were specifically developed according to the needs of Biasi. The installation will include a series of four *Torsioni Sovrapposte* and four large-scale *Ottico-Dinamici*.

The following is part of a conversation with Marco Meneguzzo about the search for materials.

"For some time I wanted to try out a new material. PVC – probably to be prohibited by the EU because it is too polluting – I have used by now in all its potentialities.

I wanted a material that was softer and less plastic. The resistance to the strong tension which the composing lamellas are subject to were a limit not to be undervalued.

I have always known Alcantara and I wanted to try it out. The firm at once was extremely helpful and sent me samples and then cut me lamellas to use in my work. In this way I realised that this material is not only soft to see and touch, but also "changeable". I understood the changeability of this material after having had to take apart a prototype because I hadn't understood how come the blades were of two different blacks: Alcantara "works" with light according to where you observe it from. This specific aspect of the material belongs to me and I like it very much.

This is how my latest works and "my" new material came about."

The show concludes with a section devoted to his study of light with the presence of a small *Light-Prism*, 1960, the only series undertaken by Alberto Biasi that uses motorised kinetics; this too was begun in the 1960s and the prisms, rotating at an unpredictable speed and direction, create plays of light in which we can immerse ourselves.

The evident contrast between ancient and modern, immediately seen between the work and its architectural setting, is dissolved in a bonding of forms that supersedes any cultural and temporal distance, and testifies to the unambiguous and intuitive presence of what in the course of history has become defined as "art".

- At the same time, it will be possible to visit, in Palazzo Ferro Fini, another show about Alberto Biasi organised by the council of the Veneto region, the Archivio Alberto Biasi, and the Fondazione Peruzzo. Its title is "*Tra realtà e Immaginazione*".

## **Alberto Biasi | Biography**

Alberto Biasi (Padua 1937) is an undoubted leader of post-war Italian art history. His is one of the most coherent and authoritative figures at an international level of what in Italy has been defined as "Arte Programmata" or "Arte Cinetica" and, elsewhere, "Optical Art". From 1959, the year that the young Biasi had his beginnings in art, until today his activity has been consistently based on perceptive inquiries, through series of works each of which has poetically and scientifically dealt with some problems regarding vision: from the first *Trame* to the famous *Torsioni*, *Light-Prisms*, and the *Ottico-dinamici*.

In 1988 an anthological show was held at the Museo Civico agli Eremitani in Padua. In 2006 he exhibited in the rooms of the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg.

Besides the twelve shows with the Gruppo Enne, Biasi has had more than one hundred solo shows in such prestigious venues as Palazzo Ducale in Urbino, the Wigner Institute in Erice, the Barcelona cathedral museum, the Museo Nazionale in Villa Pisani, and the Prague national gallery. He has also taken part in more than five hundred group shows, among which ITALIAN ZERO & avant-garde '60s, in the MAMM museum in Moscow, the XXXII and XLII Venice Biennales, the XI Biennale of Sao Paulo, the X, XI, and XLII Rome Quadrennials, and the most famous graphics biennales; he has been awarded many important prizes.

### **ALBERTO BIASI. *La Materia della Visione 1959 - 2019***

Curated by Marco Meneguzzo

**From 7 May 2019**

**From Tuesday to Sunday**

**From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

**Scuola Grande della Misericordia, Sestiere Cannaregio 3599, Venice**