

Luca Vitone

Überall zu Hause
Ovunque a casa propria
At Home Everywhere



At Home Everywhere

Giacinto Di Pietrantonio, Enrico Lunghi, Martin Sturm

An artist proclaiming that he feels “at home everywhere” is a great source of encouragement at a time when nationalistic tendencies and xenophobic polarization increasingly obscures our view of present-day reality. Consequently Luca Vitone’s wide-ranging work can be considered an attempt to redefine and resurvey (quite literally, as well) terms such as “homeland”, “cultural identity” and “territory”, working against unilateral, one-dimensional and stereotype ideas. Astrid Wege, one of the authors of this catalogue, points out that “reflections on place, the question of how it is depicted, perceived, experienced and remembered” – i.e. in geographical, cultural *and* social terms – is a very important issue for Luca Vitone and a key to interpreting his work. A good example of this is the group of works *Carte atopiche* in which maps of cities are made virtually illegible – or at least impractical – by eliminating the place names.

From the point of view of content, Vitone’s interest in “defining” a place concerns primarily groups of people, or people’s activities, that the dominant social structure tends to deem peripheral or outmoded from an anthropological viewpoint: e.g. the (still) nomadic Roma people, almost extinct regional folk music with its characteristic instruments or anarchist movements that these days seem to have dissolved to nothing. What they all have in common is the lack of a fixed, geographically defined territory and its corresponding national symbols. Where Vitone does concentrate on an actual place – such as the city of Genoa in *Stundäin* – he shows it as a social space from a side we are not familiar and that is not “recognisable” in the conventional sense. This form of mapping, which discards with the nation-state perspective and instead drafts new and unaccustomed maps, is reflected in Vitone’s work by the invention of a flag combining the black banner of the anarchists, who refuse to commit to a fixed ideological camp, and that of the Roma, in which the wheel serves as a symbol of the nomadic lifestyle (*Nulla da dire solo da essere*, 2004). This contradicts and annuls the nationalistic definition of the flag as super-symbol of territorial demarcation.

These and other aspects of Vitone’s work are covered in detail in this publication – the result of close cooperation with the artist and an attempt to carry forth in the catalogue his own research and analysis. As an introduction, Roberto Pinto analyzes Luca Vitone’s artistic career. An intensive explanatory dialogue between the artist and Andrea Lissoni follows. The heart of the book is formed by a richly illustrated “Dictionary” with 25 catchwords characterizing important themes in Vitone’s work. A reference to the actual artworks is made with every catchword; the explanations were contributed by Jimena Blázquez, Emanuela De Cecco, Luca Lo Pinto, Alessandro Rabottini and Astrid Wege.

The first time Vitone showed his works at the GAM, as it was called at the time, the Galleria d’Arte Moderna (today GAMeC) in Bergamo, was in 1992: eight young curators invited some 20 young artists to participate in the exhibition “Ottovolante”. One of them was Vitone, at the time one of the most promising young talents of the Italian art scene. GAMeC purchased several of Vitone’s works for its collection. Thus Luca Vitone’s place-specific works found their way into the museums. Back in 1999, the O.K Centrum Linz hosted *Sonorizzare il luogo*, a sound installation dealing with European minorities.

In the exhibition at Casino Luxembourg, “Sous les ponts, le long de la rivière ...”, which was held in 2001 in the valleys of the capital of the Grand Duchy, Luca Vitone mounted an archaeological excavation expressly for the show. Emanating from the excavation site were music pieces that Franz Liszt played in 1886 at his last public performance in the former Citizens’ Casino – today Casino Luxembourg – a few weeks before his death.

Now Casino Luxembourg, the O.K Center and GAMeC are each holding individual exhibitions of the artist’s new and older works. These exhibitions present the work of the artist in different ways and allow visitors to familiarize themselves with the various facets of his work from its beginnings in the 1980s. Works are being shown that address the typical issues of a period we could describe as late modernist: Identity, place, object, symbol, communication ... Vitone uses many different media: video, installations, photography, sound, objects, texts ..., which are as relevant today as they ever were. It is for this reason that these three institutions decided to draw our attention to Vitone, an artist who, in his work, has never lost touch with life.

We would like to thank the authors for their valuable contributions to this book. Special thanks to Luca Vitone for the openness and dedication he has displayed from the very outset of this project. We share with him the great pleasure we had in realizing the exhibition and this catalogue.

Translated from German by Jennifer Taylor-Gaida and Susan Ring

Luca Vitone: Space Practices

Roberto Pinto

I would like there to be durable, immobile, intangible, untouched and almost untouchable, unchangeable, deeply rooted places; places that are a point of reference, starting points, sources (...). There are no such places, and because they don't exist space becomes an issue, stops being a certainty, stops being integrated, stops being appropriated. Space is uncertain: I have to keep on staking it out, naming it; it never belongs to me, it will never be given to me, I have to conquer it. – Georges Perec¹

Space is an extraordinary medium in movement consisting of internal layers that shift. – Franco La Cecla²

Like art in other parts of the world in the 60s and 70s, Italian art underwent an epistemological change that was due to the fact that the artists' main objective became the analysis of language and the theoretical meanings of art. One of the first consequences of this process was questioning the centrality of the emotional aspects of a work over the importance of the project-related and concept-specific aspects. These conditions introduced to an intensive, fertile era; as evidenced firstly by the works of Fontana and Manzoni, later by those of Lo Savio, Paolini, or Prini. Thus a nucleus of artists formed in Italy as well, who, while they cannot be directly recognized as being part of the historical movement of conceptual art (attributed mainly to the United States), have created very interesting expectations and developments aligned with this trend.

If instead we focus on the end of the 70s and most of the 80s it becomes clear that Italy – with the Transavanguardia and many subsequent, more “minor” strains in the same vein – became a stage for an undisputed kingdom of painting, without artistic practices emerging that were open to the inclusion of social and political spheres in their own areas of interest. Contrary to what happened in the United States, for example, there are no (longer) artistic figures capable of transforming the important experience of Arte Povera, or conceptual art in general, into a personal narrative and social dimension.³ In the States this process led to the breakthrough of explicit “political” figures (such as Adrian Piper or Barbara Kruger) or artists (like Cindy Sherman or Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Vito Acconci or Jenny Holzer), who – in addition to redefining the term identity – based their work on ethical and social aspects.

It wasn't until the second half of the 80s that a diverse group of artists in Milan (a similar group also came from Genoa) picked up on the experience of Manzoni, Fontana and others involved in Arte Povera and conceptual art; rather low-key to start with but then gaining in decisiveness. Luca Vitone was certainly one of the most outstanding exponents in this scene regarding his capabilities in design and analytical clarity. His first works already clearly indicated that the analysis of language and exhibition conditions, as such, belonged to the key aspects of his research. These features remained critical to the true fundamentals of his work, even when influenced by more ethical and political themes. Vitone expressly confirmed this attitude himself on many occasions and in a recent interview

1 Georges Perec, *Specie di Spazi*, Bollati Boringhieri, Turin 1989, p. 110 (original title: *Espèces d'espaces*, Éditions Gallilée, Paris 1974).

2 Franco La Cecla, *Mente Locale. Per un'antropologia dell'abitare*, Elèuthera, Milan 1993, p. 61.

3 It is evident that the structure of the Italian artistic system, based almost exclusively on private galleries, has surely favoured this condition. It has made the elaboration of other experiences which did not necessarily correspond with the “beautiful” images proposed as complements to furnishings, much more difficult, leaving only a restricted group of collectors.

confirmed, “The artistic debate does not concern the subject as much as the linguistic process on which the work is based and the way in which it affects the public. In this sense I like the idea that the subject is exchangeable and is not in fact fundamental: what is fundamental is how you exhibit it.”⁴

All of Luca Vitone’s early works can be defined as investigations of places; starting with the full-size reproduction of the plan of the Pinta’s gallery, an installation which occupied the entire floor space of his first solo exhibit. Defining the place was the first essential step in rational but also emotional awareness: the space itself in which the work was to be executed had to be outlined and fixed, the location of the art⁵, the gallery. Using the map of the location an attempt was made to establish contact with the space, to become familiar with it, and yet at the same time Luca Vitone wanted to create a kind of structure which revealed the learning mechanism by making it visible. The map is therefore a “guide”, as neutral and unambiguous as possible, that also reveals the necessity (present in these early works in particular) to escape the plot of interpretations, to reduce the multiplicity of its possible meanings to a clear vision; to a simplified reading – with a mentality that recalls minimalism rather than conceptual art. Certainly, that does not mean that Vitone’s intent – him being at the heart of the theorization of postmodernism – is to return to an unconditional trust in the capability of people to represent (and understand) the world; to a sort of ideological enlightenment which would not have any reason to exist any more. Rather, I believe that he would like to leave open the possibility of an analysis of the reality that surrounds us by testing the systems with which reality is experienced and coded, and (especially in his later works) construct the fundamentals with those thoughts based on preconceived ideas and terms of use, stereotypes and clichés.⁷

Luca Vitone, like Alighiero Boetti in another way before him, is fascinated by the magic of geographical maps, and, put more generally, the search for an opportunity of representing places through an exact, scientific form, as a precondition for being able to affirm one’s own identity and navigate through the labyrinth of life. As Irit Rogoff says, “cartography is the signifying practice of both location and identity, a mode of writing through which we can uncover a set of general laws.”⁸

The next phase goes deeper with *Carte atopiche*, a series of works that span four years from 1988 to 1992.⁹ Quoting the artist’s statement, “the idea of atopic maps stems from the degree of knowledge which we have of the place in which we live and, above all, of our awareness of it. In a geographical map without place names we lose our sense of orientation, we don’t recognize places; so that we can maintain that one place is like another. The degree of the memory of a place is reset to zero.”¹⁰ Parallel to this particular form of the description of space, Luca Vitone starts another way of deepening and

defining a place through the presentation of popular music, food and typical products. In *Sonorizzare il luogo* (1989–1993) the artist presents various kinds of ethnic music – bearing witness to a knowledge and to a form of expression that is disappearing (often only available through recordings) – and maps which indicate the origin of a musical piece played. Vitone applies this procedure, in the first phase, to the Italian context; afterwards, during a presentation at MUHKA in Antwerp¹¹, he broadens his attention to fifteen cultural European minorities (Basks, Bretons, Catalans, Corsicans, Flemish, Galicians, Roms, Jews, Saamis, Macedonians, Sardinians, Scots, Slovaks, Slovenes, Walloons). Fifteen different recordings were heard at the same time at such a volume that the many sounds combined together in a unique backdrop of noise. Only by positioning oneself right in front of the consoles could the individual recordings and musical differences be grasped and appreciated. Only by paying attention – the artist seemed to say – was it possible to attempt to understand the richness which each single, cultural difference preserves.

Vitone proceeded in a similar way even with the flavors of the place, presenting, within the space where he was called to exhibit, typical products, generally collaborating, with the local tourist offices. It is an exercise of living, a practice of knowledge which passes through the senses. Perhaps, we would not normally associate these with the definition of space, but perhaps they are just the peculiarities which render the places in which we live familiar.¹²

4 Emanuela De Cecco (editor), *Intervista a Luca Vitone*, in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Maria Grazia Tolomeo, *Luca Vitone. Stundàiu*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni Edizioni, Rome 2000, p. 30.

5 In a text published for the re-proposal of the exhibition in another gallery Luca Vitone wrote: “(...) our interest in the place is not only given through its topographical measurement but through its accessibility via its acquaintance; the time that passes in acting it out in order to possess it. All in all, the place of art, in our enjoying it in the operative, conceptual, emotive, sense is placed as an existential condition of living it.”, in Luca Vitone, *Galleria Pinta*, edited by Galleria Neon, Bologna 1990.

6 Afterwards *Il luogo dell’arte* (“The Place of Art”) will be used for the title of a double exhibit organized by the Emi Fontana Gallery and Paolo Vitolo, in 1994 in Milan. There will also be a catalogue (published by the same Galleries) in which Vitone exhibited the photocopies of 83 planimetries of galleries from throughout the world, shown without captions which could have more easily revealed in fact which galleries were being represented.

7 It could be interesting to compare the works of Luca Vitone with the coeval research of Marc Augé. In 1986, the French ethnologist published *Un ethnologue dans le métro*, Hachette, Paris (translated in Italy in 1992 and published by Elèuthera, Milan), while in 1992 he published *Non-lieux*, Seuil, Paris (translated in 1993 and also published by Elèuthera).

8 Irit Rogoff, *Terra infirma. Geography’s Visual Culture*, Routledge, London/New York, 2000, p. 73.

9 Even though, maybe even for the *Il luogo dell’arte* project (cf. nota 5) it might be possible to use the term atopic maps.

10 Text written in the occasion of a show at the Paolo Vitolo Gallery, Milan 1993.

11 Being referred to was: *On Taking a Normal Situation and Retranslating it into Overlapping and Multiple Readings of Conditions Past and Present*, edited by Y. Aupetitallot, I. Blazwick, C. Christov-Bakargiev organized in the occasion of Anversa Capital of European Culture.

12 Cf. Franco La Cecla, *Mente locale. Per un’antropologia dell’abitare*, Elèuthera, Milan 1993. An author who is well known by Vitone who has realized together with him the book: Franco La Cecla, *Non è cosa. Vita affettiva degli oggetti*/Luca Vitone, *Non siamo mai soli. Oggetti e disegni*, Elèuthera, Milan 1998.

Having an affinity for the works which have been described so far in *Der unbestimmte Ort*, realized in 1994, Vitone calls the Rom and Sinti communities of Cologne to collaborate, in order that they may organize a presentation/party of the communities, inside the Nagel gallery courtyard, where the exhibit was hosted. These last works signalled a change of direction undertaken by Vitone. He moves towards re-personalization of the works, which in the beginning seemed cooler and more conceptually strict. They are in fact the interests of the artist, the stimulation to investigate inherent questions of artistic language, as well as “marginalized” cultures. The references, in a more precise way, involve the political-social reality. This change always provokes a shift in conceptual implications now bent on investigating the real and artificial elements. Real, because popular music obviously exists. Typical products, which actually always become the base and the symbol for an alternative economic vision, to the waste of globalization in course, thus in opposition to the egalitarianism of the multinationals.

However, at the same time, even this alternative reality can seem “false”. This seeming “false” occurs at the same time in which it is proposed again, because it itself envelops the richness of a culture and of a place within prefabricated visions which are frozen in time. With his own awareness Vitone affirms: “folk music and food are the first elements which allow us to get close to a world which is different from ours, with all of the clichés that these aspects comprise.”¹³ In the same interview, just to highlight the impossibility of establishing a concept of “authenticity” he repeats: “But, just because it is fiction embedded in the same reality, at the end my entire journey it refers to the reality in which we live and it would like to express situations of lived experiences with which we compare each other, day by day.”¹⁴

In the mid 90’s a new phase of his artistic journey begins. Vitone, in fact, even if he does not abandon the base themes which are dear to him, enlarges the field of the possible applications and therefore, in certain aspects, renders his works more complex. In *Wide City*¹⁵ (1998) for example, the attention to the minorities is materialized into a real, alternative map of the city. Available from tourist offices, this is a map in which the cultural and productive activities of the foreigners in Milan are mapped. The project also provided “guided tours” to the meeting places of the various communities and a collection of informative materials, sounds and images of a multiethnic Milan.

Liberi tutti! Also follows this direction of research; the work was composed of the installation of a series of anarchical flags placed on historical sites of the liberation movement (in Basel in 1996 and in Rome in 1997) and of a proposal to rediscover the city through unusual paths and suggestions – instead of those related to work, commerce of interest to tourists, these were paths of personal experience and of a possible collective memory.

Even more personal is the vision that he offers us in the whole series, proposed under the title *Itinerari intimi* (1994–1999), which are traces of the paths and journeys taken by the artist himself. “To draw a journey is the visualization of an experience. It is a process of appropriation which verifies our degree of knowledge of the territory and of ourselves.”¹⁶

This combination of the biographical aspects with the alternative views to the city becomes even more evident in the exhibition *Stundàiu*¹⁷ (2000) in which Vitone, besides creating a map of Genoa, his native city, organizes a series of meetings on Ligurian gastronomy and traces an itinerary through the dwellings of the illustrious Genoese who have lived in Rome from the 1500’s to the present day.

The city recounted through the itineraries of Luca Vitone seems to take to heart the suggestions of Michel de Certeau. It is proof then, that the city can be used in an absolutely personal, therefore unforeseeable and innovative way. By suggesting possible journeys, Vitone invites us in fact to use our reality in a free and creative way, without necessarily submitting to the habits, to the routines; to traverse and use the city without observing it anymore. After all, de Certeau maintains: “In general terms, a *way to use* systems imposed upon us leads to resistance against the historical laws of an actual situation and against its dogmatic legitimization. The use of order imposed by others leads to a redistribution of space within the order, creating at least a margin of play for movements of opposing force and for reference points.”¹⁸ It is no coincidence that the French scholar dedicated a part of his *L’invenzione del quotidiano* to maps and to walking.¹⁹

Luca Vitone’s journey so far – from the huge full-scale maps (therefore unusable and completely smothering reality, completely unique, almost a monument to geographical representation) to the more recent proposals of “personalized” journeys – could paradoxically be read as a backward journey into history, since the medieval map’s peculiar characteristic was that it was designed to create itineraries and

13 Emanuela De Cecco (editor), *Intervista a Luca Vitone*, in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Maria Grazia Tolomeo, *Luca Vitone. Stundàiu*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni Edizioni, Rome 2000, p. 26.

14 Ibid. pp. 28–29.

15 Cfr. Luca Vitone, *Wide City*, Comune di Milano editions, Milan 1999, catalogue of the show with the same name realized at Openspace, Milan 1998.

16 Luca Vitone, artists’ statement at the show *Itinerari intimi*, 1999: *Percorsi Privati*, 1994–1999. Galleria Neon Bologna.

17 Cfr. C. Christov-Bakargiev, M.G. Tolomeo, Luca Vitone. *Stundàiu*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni Edizioni, Rome 2000.

18 Michel de Certeau, *L’invenzione del quotidiano*, Edizioni Lavoro, Rome 2001 (original title: *L’invention du quotidien. I Arts de faire*, Gallimard, Paris 1990).

19 To be exact, the third part of the book *Pratiche di spazio* [Space Practices] – from which I took the title of this article – opens with a chapter entitled “Camminare per la città” (“Walking through the City”).

narrations, more than scientifically representing space. This point of view could be confirmed also in *Usuale*, a 1995 video in which the artist travels along his usual itinerary from home to his studio. He counts the steps taken, reappropriating himself therefore of the absolute utilitarian dimension and carving out onto himself the description of the city, as well as of their unit of measure which serve to quantify it.

Taking away value from technicist rationality – which believes it can entirely foresee and plan facts and people – gives sense and value of to the singular choices particular to every one of us. I believe that this aspect is a priority in Vitone's work, so much so as to relegate the obvious political implications to second place. This implies presenting, for example, a path through the anarchical places or an immersion inside the nomadic culture of the Rom people. It is also true that underlining the deep libertarian matrix that this method entails is not at all in discord with the political message it contains. In a certain sense, putting the accent on its own physical and mental path means to underline the possibility of not playing by the rules of the game. It means being involved in a society which is pragmatically governed by commercial rules, by economic deregulation, with marginal aspects, with social aspects, but also in general with oneself.

There are two probable roads taken (which intersect many times) in his more recent works. The first one leads to a reflection of the means of looking and the other to the memory of the voyage. Of the first group I would like to indicate *Prêt-à-porter*²⁰ (2004), in which the artist has constructed a balcony from which it is possible to see, through the lenses of a telescope, a long series of slides placed on a glass wall. The images were taken in different Italian cities and are united by the common theme of selling food on the street. Even in *Verso Oltralpe*²¹ (2004), the experience of reality was realized through an optical device. From the roof of Villa Arson in Nice, it was possible to perceive, with the help of a telescope and a slide, a flag with a red tire on a black background which was waving at the entrance of Linz's O.K. Centrum and vice versa. It was again a telescope, which had been in a certain sense "tampered with" from the inverse disposition of the lenses (making the countryside look further away), which was used for *Panorama*²² (2004) an installation in which the artist offered a view from the bell tower to Gallarate's inhabitants.

I would like to conclude this itinerary with *L'ultimo viaggio*²³ (2005), which is again another trip, this time taken through the memories of a road trip that the adolescent artist really went on with his family. The photographs, the souvenirs purchased, even a car identical to the one used at the time, are displayed in an installation arranged on a bed of sand. It is clear that the implied subject is an epochal change which Vitone visualizes through the presence of the few objects and of an attitude of not many

years ago. Low speed, spirit of adventure and the significance of the direct experience come face to face with the current reality, without any nostalgia but with the awareness that even the freedom to travel, in those territories deeply wounded by the recent wars, has become a utopian dream. Yet again an intimate plan intersects with history and geography; a narrative and anti-ideological plan can give us clues on how to question the reality surrounding us; analysing the method of communication allows us to get to know the methods of learning, but more importantly, we get to know ourselves.

Translated from Italian by Maria Anna Calamia

20 Installation realized for the solo show at the Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato, December 2004.

21 The work was realized for *Shake*, a collective show curated by L. Gateau in Villa Arson, Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Nice, and by G. Rückert at the O.K. Centrum für Gegenwartskunst, Oberösterreich, Linz, in 2004.

22 *Panorama* is the title of the work shown in "ZAT, Zone Artistiche Temporanee [Temporary Artistic Zones]", which was shown at the Galleria Civica di Gallarate nel 2004.

23 Solo exhibit at the Galleria Franco Soffiantino in Turin which was shown in 2005.

Monochrom

Das Konzept des Monochromen hat sich in der Kunstgeschichte ständig weiterentwickelt, von den abstrakten Symbolen Malewitschs bis zu Fontanas Raumkonzepten. Yves Klein ging noch weiter, indem er die Aufmerksamkeit vom Objekt auf den Kontext seiner Umgebung lenkte. In seinem Buch *Inside the White Cube* erläutert Brian O'Doherty, wie der rechteckige Raum einer Galerie als Hintergrund für das Werk fungiert und wie KünstlerInnen, die mit monochromatischen Bildern arbeiten, diese Abhängigkeit zwischen dem Objekt und seinem Kontext aufzubrechen versuchen.

Mit Arbeiten wie *Io, Roma* (2005) oder *L'invisibile informa il visibile* (1988–1990) erzielt Vitone einen wichtigen Fortschritt, indem er das Monochrome in ein Porträt oder die Darstellung eines bestimmten Ortes verwandelt. Die visuelle Wahrnehmung, die gewöhnlich zu einer Re-Kontextualisierung der Arbeit führt und damit seine Bedeutung ändert oder psychologische und emotionale Erfahrungen erzeugt, wird in Arbeiten wie *Viva!* (2005) oder *Finestre* (2004), in denen der Künstler die Spuren und Zeichen einer Person oder eines Ortes offen legt, weiter unterstrichen.

Die monochromen Arbeiten Vitones spielen mit der Zufälligkeit, wo organische Elemente, atmosphärische Veränderungen, Zeit und Raum im Schaffensprozess die Hauptrolle übernehmen. Smog, Staub, Luft, Umweltverschmutzung sowie spezifischere Elemente wie Wein und Safran bilden die willkürliche Oberfläche der Leinwand. Die Wahrnehmung dessen, was die BetrachterInnen auf den ersten Blick zu sehen glauben, ändert sich, sobald sie bemerken, dass es sich in Wirklichkeit um die Kartierung eines Ortes, einer Aktion, einer Person handelt. Man wird durch die Uniformität der Farbe verführt und mit dem Wesen der Leinwand konfrontiert. Das Außergewöhnliche an den monochromatischen Werken Vitones ist die Tatsache, dass man sich als BetrachterIn zunächst auf das einlässt, was man zu sehen glaubt, bis man feststellt, dass das Wesentliche in dem liegt, was man eben nicht sieht.

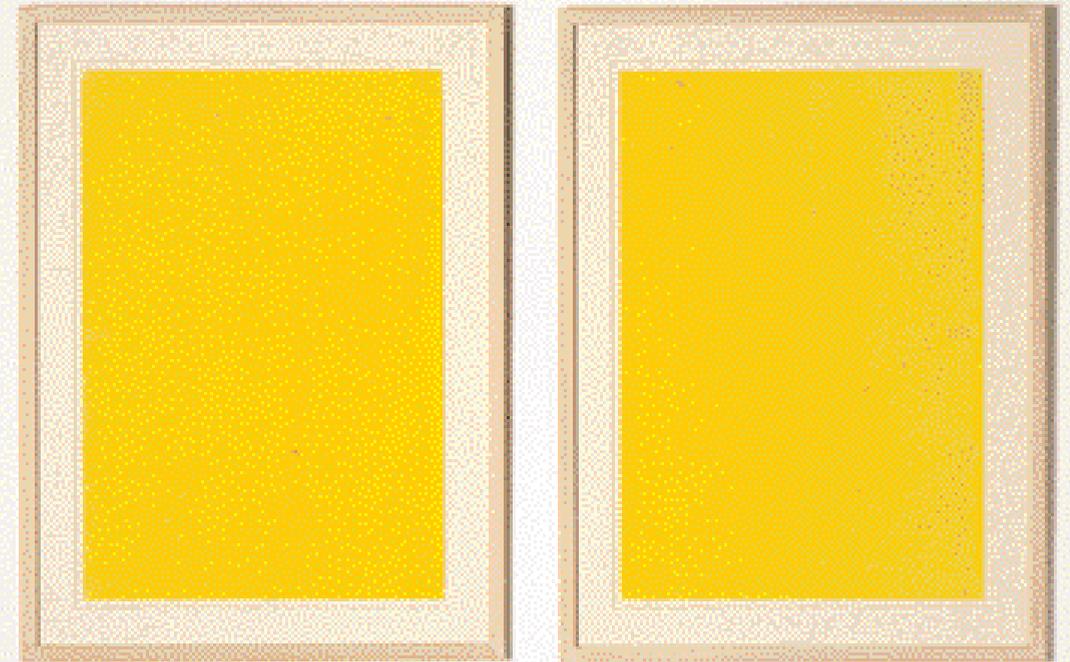
Aus dem Englischen von Anja Schulte

147 *Senza titolo (zafferano)*, 2000, Diptych: 2 Safranaquarelle auf Papier, gerahmt, jeweils 43 x 58,5 cm; Foto Roberto Marossi; Courtesy Galleria Emi Fontana, Mailand.

149 *Finestra VI grande (Isola dell'arte)*, 2004, Staubaquarell auf Papier, gerahmt, 205 x 155 x 5 cm; Foto Roberto Marossi; Privatsammlung, Mailand; Courtesy Galleria Emi Fontana, Mailand.

150/151 *Io, Roma*, 2005, Ansicht der Installation, von links: *Io, Roma (via del Porto Fluviale)*, 2005, Smog auf Leinwand, 240 x 138 cm; *Io, Roma (via degli Specchi)*, 2005, Smog auf Leinwand, 242 x 137,5 cm; Foto Susanna Soriano; Courtesy Magazzino d'Arte Moderna, Rom.

153 *Viva! (Brut a 8° Sant'Amato a 13°, Mandorlo a 11°, Chianti a 18°, Moro a 18°, Dicatum a 18°, Salamartano a 18°, Vinsanto a 16°)*, 2005, Wein auf Leinwand, 8 Teile, jeweils 16 x 160 x 4 cm; Foto Pietro Paolini; Privatsammlung, Fucecchio (FI).



Monocromo

Nella storia dell'arte l'idea di monocromo si è evoluta dalle icone astratte di Malevich ai concetti spaziali di Fontana. Con Yves Klein si assiste ad un passo ulteriore, il punto di attenzione passa dall'oggetto allo spazio in cui questo è contestualizzato. Brian O'Doherty nel libro *Inside the White Cube*, spiega come lo spazio rettangolare della galleria agisca da sfondo per l'opera e gli artisti che lavorano al monocromo cerchino di rompere ogni dipendenza tra oggetto e contesto. In lavori come *Io, Roma* (2005) o *L'invisibile informa il visibile* (1988–1990) Vitone compie un importante passo in avanti rendendo il monocromo ritratto o rappresentazione di un luogo specifico.

La percezione visiva che generalmente porta ad una ricontestualizzazione dell'opera, variandone il significato intrinseco e provocando esperienze emozionali o psicologiche, è sottolineata ancora di più in opere come *Viva!* (2005) o *Finestre* (2004) dove l'artista espone tracce di una persona o di un luogo. I monocromi di Vitone giocano con la casualità: elementi organici, agenti atmosferici variabili, spazio e tempo diventano i protagonisti della creazione dell'opera. Inquinamento, polvere, aria, gas di scarico, insieme ad elementi più specifici come vino o zafferano, costruiscono la superficie della tela in modo del tutto arbitrario. La percezione di ciò che lo spettatore crede di cogliere al primo sguardo cambia non appena egli si rende conto di essere di fronte alla mappatura di un luogo, di un'azione, di una persona. Il confronto allora si realizza con la superficie della tela, con la seducente uniformità del colore. Ma ciò che è straordinario nei monocromi di Vitone è il fatto che lo spettatore crede di sapere cosa ha davanti agli occhi fintanto che non si accorge che la vera essenza è in ciò che non si vede.

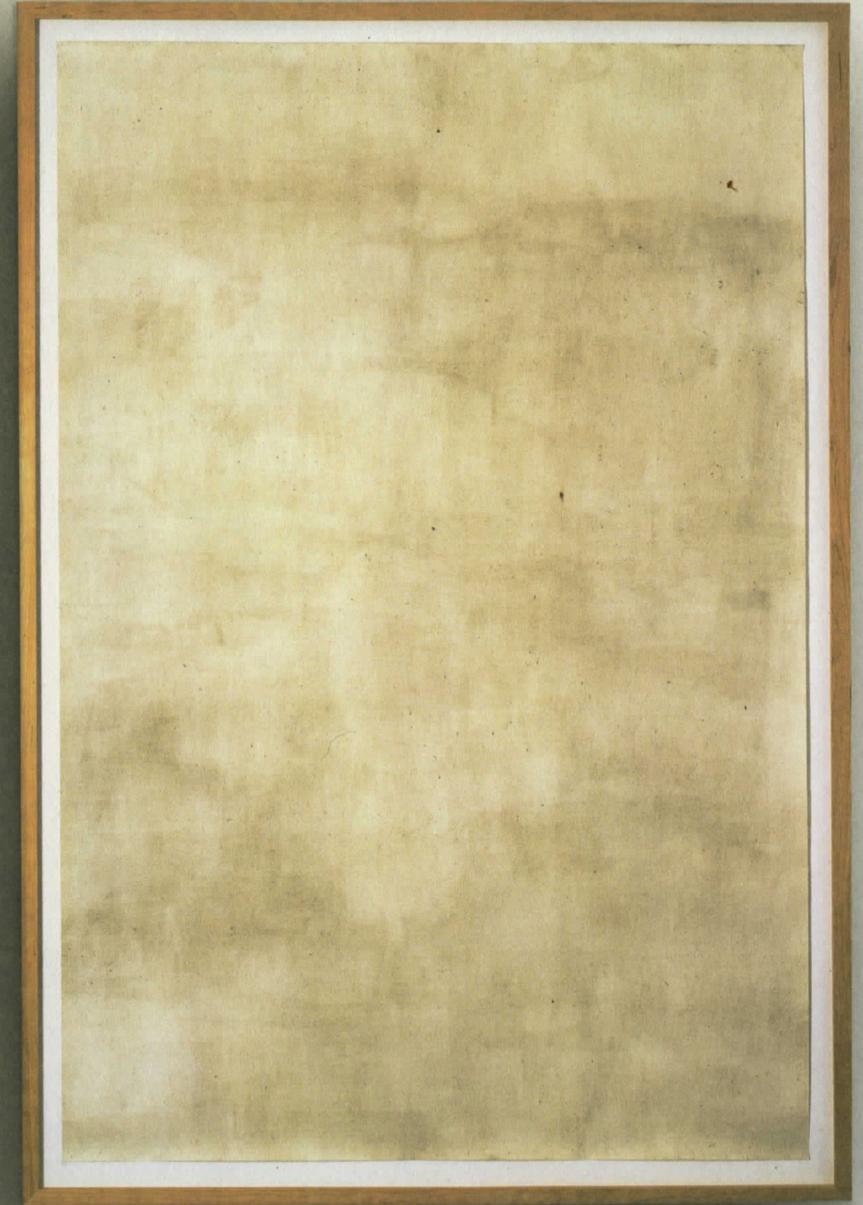
Tradotto dall'Inglese da Barbara Carneglia

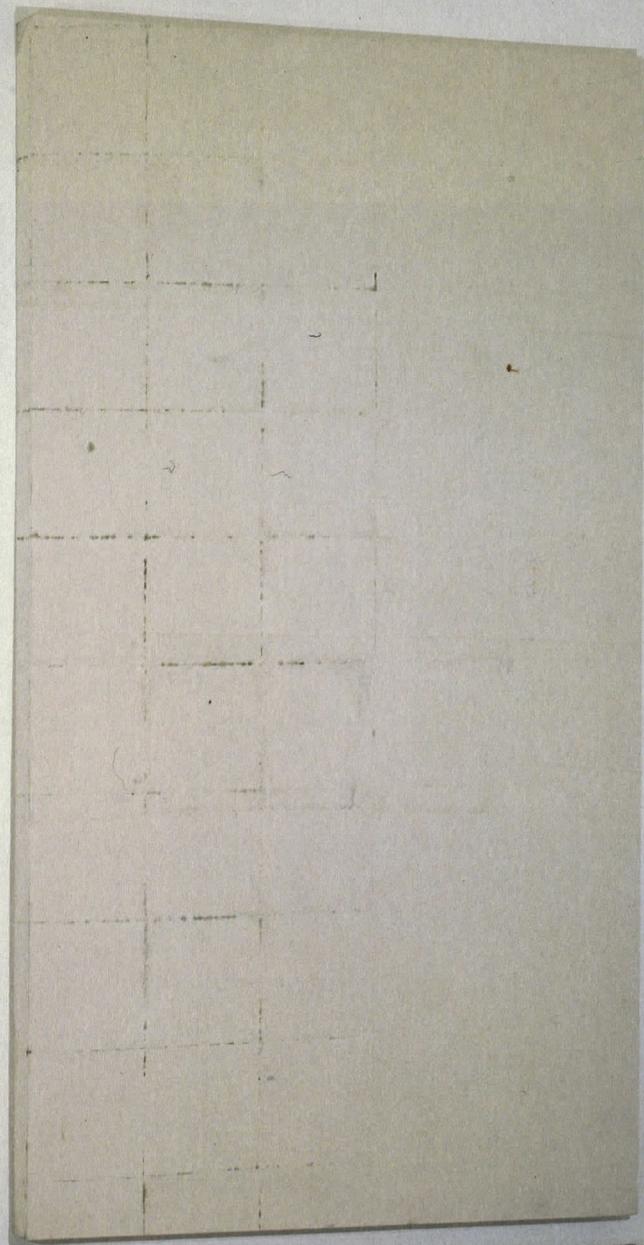
147 Senza titolo (zafferano), 2000, dittico, 2 pezzi incorniciati: acquerello di zafferano, su carta, 43 x 58,5 cm ciascuno; foto Roberto Marossi; courtesy Galleria Emi Fontana, Milano.

149 Finestra VI grande (Isola dell'arte), 2004, acquerello di polvere su carta, 205 x 155 x 5 cm incorniciata; foto Roberto Marossi; collezione privata, Milano; courtesy Galleria Emi Fontana, Milano.

150/151 Io, Roma, 2005, veduta della mostra, da sinistra: *Io, Roma (via del Porto Fluviale)*, 2005, agenti atmosferici su tela, 240 x 138 cm; *Io, Roma (via degli Specchi)*, 2005, agenti atmosferici su tela, 242 x 137,5 cm; foto Susanna Soriano; courtesy Magazzino d'Arte Moderna, Roma.

153 Viva! (Brut a 8° Sant'Amato a 13°, Mandorlo a 11°, Chianti a 18°, Moro a 18°, Dicatum a 18°, Salamartano a 18°, Vinsanto a 16°), 2005, vino su tela, 8 pezzi, 16 x 160 x 4 cm ciascuno; foto Pietro Paolini; collezione privata, Fucecchio (FI).





Monochrome

Throughout the history of art the idea of monochrome has evolved from Malevich's abstract icons to the architectural concepts of Fontana. Yves Klein moved forward by displacing the point of attention from the object to the space where it is contextualized. In his book, *Inside the White Cube*, Brian O'Doherty explains how the rectangular space of a gallery acts as a background for the work and artists working on monochromatic works try to break this dependence between the object and the context.

With works such as *Io, Roma* (2005) or *L'invisibile informa il visibile* (1988–1990), Vitone makes important progress by turning the monochrome into a portrait or a representation of a specific site. The visual perceptions that usually leads to a re-contextualization of the work, changing its meaning or generating psychological and emotional experiences, is further underlined with works like *Viva!* (2005) or *Finestre* (2004) where the artist exposes the traces and signs of a person or a location.

Vitone's monochromes play with randomness where organic elements, atmospheric changes, time and space become the main protagonists on the creation of the work. Smog, dust, air, pollution, as well as more specific elements such as wine and saffron build the surface of the canvas in an arbitrary way. The perception of what viewers think they see at first glance changes when they realize that it is actually the mapping of a place, of an action, of a person. One is then confronted with the essence of the canvas by being seduced by the uniformity of the color. What is extraordinary about Vitone's monochromatic works is the fact that the viewer sets out with an idea of what one might think you are seeing, until you realize the essence lies on what one actually does not see.

147 Senza titolo (zafferano), 2000, diptych: 2 saffron watercolours on paper, framed, 43 x 58.5 cm each; photo Roberto Marossi; courtesy Galleria Emi Fontana, Milan.

149 Finestra VI grande (Isola dell'arte), 2004, dust watercolour on paper, framed, 205 x 155 x 5 cm; photo Roberto Marossi; private collection, Milan; courtesy Galleria Emi Fontana, Milan.

150/151 Io, Roma, 2005, installation view, from left: *Io, Roma (via del Porto Fluviale)*, 2005, smog on canvas, 240 x 138 cm; *Io, Roma (via degli Specchi)*, 2005, smog on canvas, 242 x 137.5 cm; photo Susanna Soriano; courtesy Magazzino d'Arte Moderna, Rome.

153 Viva! (Brut a 8° Sant'Amato a 13°, Mandorlo a 11°, Chianti a 18°, Moro a 18°, Dicatum a 18°, Salamartano a 18°, Vinsanto a 16°), 2005, wine on canvas, 8 parts, 16 x 160 x 4 cm each; photo Pietro Paolini; private collection, Fucecchio (FI).

