



ISTITUZIONE  
FONDAZIONE  
BEVILACQUA  
LA MASA

CONTINI  
GALLERIA D'ARTE

# MARIO ARLATI

## MURI E STRACCI: LA MATERIA DIVENTA ARTE

WALLS AND RAGS: WHEN MATTER BECOMES ART



BEVILACQUA LA MASA FOUNDATION  
San Marco Gallery, 71/c – Venice

*in collaboration with*

CONTINI ART GALLERY  
Calle Larga XXII Marzo – Venice

SEPTEMBER 22nd – NOVEMBER 25th 2018

Open daily from 10.30 am to 5.30 pm

The Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, in collaboration with Contini Art Gallery, are pleased to present Mario Arlati's solo exhibition *Walls and Rags: When Matter becomes Art*. The exhibition will be held at the gallery located in San Marco from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2018.

Mario Arlati was born in Milan in 1947 and is a very talented Italian artist within the contemporary art scene. He lives and works between Milan and Ibiza, the latter being very important in the development of his artistic identity and the place of transition from his early figurative style into a decisively informal and material-based language.

The artist passionately devotes himself to the creative process of his artworks, inspired by the surrounding environment. The use of colour, materials and light each resemble the symbolism associated with Arte Povera. His artistic language is characterized by gestural expressiveness, incorporating tools and everyday objects which are transformed into a highly expressive work of art. With this language Arlati created works such as *Walls; Rags* and *Incomplete Flags*. With a curious and deep fascination for materials in all forms; he shapes them carefully, crafting the interior image, emotionally and vitally, which then flows outward.

In the series entitled *Walls*, the artist's attention is focused on the study of emotions, on the flow of colours and the ability of these features to stimulate our perception on a multisensory level. These canvases are made of monochrome materials. The applied technique seems to recreate the rough, coarse and cracked appearance of the wind-battered walls which are eroded by the salty air and sun, left fragmented and pasty by the heat of its surroundings. It is the island that impacts the artist's life and works.

The energy of something hidden seems to emerge from the cracks in the *Walls*, ready to explode with a destructive force and the passion that characterises Mario Arlati's life. The white, blue, red, yellow and black walls - through which the light seems to filter and the power of nature and colour seems to flow - makes Arlati's work very intense and emotionally charged. It seems almost to invite the viewer to study the cracks, between the thickness of the matter, entering empathetically in contact with the artwork and with the surrounding environment that inspired it.

His interest in the manipulation and transformation of the matter also characterizes the series of work *Trapos*, translating literally as 'rags'. These pieces consist of assembled parts of different fabrics stained with colors. A process whereby the pigments are poured slowly onto the fabric until they are soaked and the colors are bent to bring a new allure to the matter. Once again, the artist diverges from a narrative and focusing rather on the fragment, the sign, the gesture, and the stratification between matter and color, which identify and represent life experiences and feelings. Arlati's gesture becomes playful, instinctive and dynamic, therefore reaching his ultimate aim: to make a genuine presentation of humanity to human beings.

The dialogue between the artist and the viewer is an integral part of Arlati's painting practice, as such engages us, urging us to respond to the stir triggered by the work. It is precisely with the series *Incomplete Flags* that this interaction process reaches its peak.

This collection of recent works develops from a project supported by the European Union, representing a clear homage to the work of American artist Jasper Johns. An unequivocal and immediately identifiable symbol, the flag has to be conceived as a message of power, community and culture. Hence, a symbol of unity, but at the same time it is also a symbol of fragmentation, as revealed by the very concept of unfinished. Arlati places at the center of his whole poetics the term *incomplete*, which highlights the active role of the audience, who is invited by the artist to complete the work with their own gaze and interpretation. Though often defined as informal-material, the work of Mario Arlati avoids any stylistic definition. The material "units" of his paintings are many, namely soil, nature and landscape, which are suddenly fractured to reveal the colour and sense of life that emerges out of the cracks.