

Bice Lazzari
un espandersi ai margini dei labili confini
selected works 1950-1975

kaufmann repetto is delighted to present the second solo exhibition at the gallery devoted to the Italian Modernist pioneer Bice Lazzari (1900-81). The exhibition in Milan, organized in collaboration with the artist's archive, bears witness to the profundity of a line of research pursued in the fields of abstractionism and minimalism, establishing Lazzari as one of most innovative painters of the 20th century.

Emancipated by a free spirit with respect to the sociocultural context of 20th-century Italy, the independence of Lazzari's research and the fact of being a female artist had a great influence on the course of her creative development and her reception in the art world. The length of time it took Bice Lazzari to achieve international recognition was something that stirred feelings of bitterness and disillusion in the artist, and yet her almost ascetic isolation may have been the decisive element that permitted Lazzari to attain the limpid and imperturbable freedom that characterizes her masterpieces.

Born in Venice in 1900, Lazzari studied drawing and decorative arts at the Accademia, since classes of painting—and in particular lessons with nude models—were considered inappropriate for women. At the end of the 1920s, in an effort to achieve economic independence she devoted herself for over a decade to the applied arts, collaborating with important architects on the creation of carpets, textiles and bags. The experience gave Lazzari the opportunity to experiment with abstract and geometric designs, typical of the decorative repertoire of the period inspired by international avant-garde movements like the Bauhaus and Suprematism.

It was at the end of the Second World War and over the course of the 1950s that the artist explored the languages of post-cubism, geometric abstraction and the Informel. By this time, Lazzari was living in Rome and frequenting the city's lively art scene, but she retained an autonomous position with respect to the movements and groups of the capital. The textured painting of the early 1960s with new materials like glue, sand and tempera was followed by a radical linguistic renewal, in which apparently simple colors and signs were used to create linear rhythms and lyrical dialogues.

In part due to a shift to the medium of acrylic paint, Lazzari's abstract style grew even more minimalist and took on ever sharper outlines. Her visual vocabulary was distilled into groupings of straight lines set against a monochromatic background. The rhythm of her compositions reflects Lazzari's love of music and poetry. In the cadenced patterns that characterize the works of the 1970s, Lazzari approached ever more lucidly the synthesis that she defined as the "indispensable minimum," and that she translated into compositions brimming over with measured and silent rigor.

In the end, it was the contemporary demands of the feminist movement of the 1970s that favored a greater attention to its female protagonists in the world of Italian art. Thus, Lazzari was able in the last years of her life to experience the satisfaction of a series of exhibitions and a critical reception that recognized the importance of her research. Despite grave problems with her eyesight, the artist continued to work right up until her death, on November 13th, 1981 in Rome.

kaufmann repetto

Bice Lazzari was the subject of several solo exhibitions including Estorick Collection, London (2022); Museo del Novecento, Florence (2019); National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington (2013); MACRO - Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome (2011); Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna Ca' Pesaro, Venezia (2005); Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (2002); Casa del Mantegna, Mantova (1989); Frankfurter Westend Galerie, Frankfurt (1987); Plazzo Venezia, Rome (1987); Galleria Civica, Modena (1980); Fondazione Querini-Stampalia, Venice (1969).

Lazzari's work is part of the public collections of Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Alessandria; Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Cagliari; Museo Novecento, Firenze; Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Ferrara; Pinacoteca Comunale, Macerata; Pinacoteca di Brera, Milano; Museo del Novecento, Milano; Galleria Civica, Modena; Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Parma; Museo Nazionale, Pisa; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Musei Vaticani, Rome; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea; Rome; Museo d'Arte Contemporanea MACRO, Rome; Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna Ca' Pesaro; Venice; Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington; The Philips Collection, Washington.

Bice Lazzari's solo exhibition at kaufmann repetto Milano is presented in collaboration with Bice Lazzari Archive.