

BORTOLAMI

Carla Accardi and Elisa Sighicelli

55 Walker

4 December 2020 – 16 January 2021

55 Walker (Bortolami, kaufmann repetto, and Andrew Kreps Gallery), is pleased to announce an exhibition of works by Carla Accardi and Elisa Sighicelli.

At the center of the exhibition is Carla Accardi's groundbreaking series of paintings on Sicofoil, a commercial plastic, which she first incorporated in her practice during the 1960s. Disrupting the traditional relationship between painting and its environment, the works investigate the interplay of multiple spatial planes within an artwork. This is the central interest of Elisa Sighicelli's new photographs on satin, which form both a material and conceptual response to Accardi's series of paintings on Sicofoil.

Carla Accardi first encountered Sicofoil on accident, when it was included in a delivery sent to her studio. Initially incorporating the material in sculpture and installation, by 1966 Accardi began fastening the material directly to stretcher bars. As seen in the earliest work in the exhibition, *Segni neri*, 1967, Accardi painted her signature calligraphic marks on the Sicofoil and overlapped the material in lattice-like patterns. In doing so, she was able to achieve different depths and levels of opacity throughout the work, as well as a visible interaction between the painting's recto and verso.

By the mid-1970s, Accardi's brushstrokes became noticeably less dense than in earlier works. This shift allowed the space behind the paintings to become an active part of the work's composition. As seen in *Grande Rosso Scuro*, 1974, the largest painting on Sicofoil the artist made, the negative space between the bold marks interacts with the space behind the painting. Culminating with what was perhaps Accardi's most radical use of the material are works where the Sicofoil is left unpainted, as in *Grande Trasparente*, 1975. A near obliteration of the picture plane, and a focus on the painting's object-ness, Accardi plainly shows both the bare material and the stretcher bar, the painting's support.

This focus on the painting's structure informs Elisa Sighicelli's new works, which are created by photographing draped, recycled plastic sheets in her studio in front of a window. Initially appearing as meditations on color and light, the resulting compositions are punctuated by the stark horizontal or vertical lines of the window frame. These lines become a stand-in for the stretcher bars themselves and reference the art historical understanding of painting as a window. While abstract, the works maintain an intrinsic relationship to the real environment in which Sighicelli made them. The use of lights enable new dimensional and tactile properties within the plastic, and obscured objects show fields of color in the composition. In turn, the works present a complex layering of space as the dichotomy between a perceived inside and outside is blurred and confused. Similar to Accardi's work, the shifting perceptions of depth in each work are reinforced by their medium. Sighicelli's photographs are printed directly onto a pliable satin that is suspended on the wall, allowing the material to become a stand-in for what it is intended to represent.

Carla Accardi's (1924-2014) work is currently the subject of a comprehensive retrospective at Museo del Novecento, Milan, on view through June 27, 2021. Past solo exhibitions include "*Carla Accardi. Smarrire i fili della voce*," curated by Laura Cherubini, Castelbasso, Torun, Budapest, Thessaloniki, and Athens, 2012 – 2014; "*Carla Accardi*," curated by Danilo Eccher, MACRO Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Rome, Rome, 2004; "*Carla Accardi*," curated by Laurence Bossé and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville

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de Paris, Paris, 2002; “*Carla Accardi. Triplice tenda*,” curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, 2001; “*Carla Accardi*,” curated by Ida Gianelli and Giorgio Verzotti, Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli, 1994. Accardi’s work has been featured in many prominent group exhibitions. This includes six editions of the Venice Biennale (1948, 1964, 1976, 1978, 1988, 1993); “*Italics: Italian Art between Tradition and Revolution 1968-2008*,” Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2008, traveled to Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2009; “*The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943- 1968*,” curated by Germano Celant, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1995, traveled to Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg, 1995.

Elisa Sighicelli (b. 1968, Turin) lives and works in Turin and New York. She studied fine arts in London at Chelsea School of Art, Kingston University and received her M.F.A. from the Slade School of Art. Past solo exhibitions include *Lumenombra*, Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli, 2019; *Storie di Pietròfori e Rasomanti*, Museo Pignatelli, Naples, 2019; *Doppio Sogno*, Palazzo Madama Museo Civico d’Arte Antica, Turin, 2017; *Elisa Sighicelli*, Gagosian Gallery, Geneva, 2013; *Elisa Sighicelli, Artist Videos 2005 - 2010*, screening, MAMbo, Bologna, 2011. Sighicelli has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including *Futuruins* at Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, 2019, *Marking Time*, MCA, Sydney, 2012, and the Italian Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009. A new bilingual monograph titled *Elisa Sighicelli 9 Years* has just been published by Skira, Milan.