

Carlo Marangio
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Languages: Italian and French



Carlo Marangio was educated at the Istituto d'Arte in Lecce before enrolling at the Magistero d'Arte in Florence. During his student years, his talent was rewarded by winning the First Prize in two painting competitions and by the invitation to exhibit at the 3rd National Biennale for young artists in Rome. His early works are mainly townscapes, landscapes and still lifes which are intimately connected to the natural environment and baroque architecture of his native region of Salento, Southern Italy, dominated by the sun, the sea and the fertile soil of its vineyards and olive groves. The tragic event of his elder brother being killed in a road accident prompted a series of oils, pastels and pencil drawings that show family groups and individuals overwhelmed by acute pain and unbearable, deep sorrow. In many scenes, arms are outstretched towards the sky in a desperate gesture of supplication, or malediction. His pictorial output during this period also comprises several crucifixions in which Christ's facial contortions and long, somewhat animalized, limbs, convey a kind of primeval physical agony as well as spiritual suffering. (Sandro Torrigiani, 1959)

After his graduation, Marangio embarked on a career as a professional artist and moved to Milan where he soon gained recognition as a painter of talent and insight. He had a one-man show there at the Galleria dei Re Magi in 1960. Franco Russoli, then director of the Pinacoteca di Brera, wrote to the artist on visiting the exhibition to compliment him on his passionate and coherent work, and on his personal vision, *cosa oggi assai rara* (something rather rare today). Marangio was by now increasingly exploring the art of the still life: new spatial possibilities, plastic correspondences and the emotional potential of everyday objects, fruits and vegetables.

When Marangio travelled to Paris in 1960, spurred by the desire to see Leonardo's *Gioconda* in the Louvre, with 1000 Italian Lire in his pocket and a portfolio packed with works on paper, he must have felt like the young man he portrayed in one of his paintings, vulnerable and lost in a city of tall buildings. He was, however, to live and work in that city for 46 years. In the cultural climate of the French capital, he found a sense of freedom and a fertile meeting of new influences to nourish the elusive disposition of his artistic temperament. As Luigi Carluccio has pointed out, even the early works by Marangio show that he spontaneously tended to refute the optical reality of the subject matter as he strove to grasp its interior structure and sentimental nucleus. Nature, although detached, remains in Marangio's work, not only as a remote matrix of forms, but also as a vital source of energy that fuels an almost mechanical dynamism. (Carluccio, 1971)

The fruit and vegetables became increasingly unrecognisable in Marangio's *Objets dans l'Espace*. (This is the title he gives to all of his works from 1960 onwards). Their original, real-life forms are deconstructed and reshaped into new items in novel configurations, but the table's invisible presence is still felt in them. The French art critic Jean Cathelin wrote about *la force tranquille* de Marangio, of the slow change within the painter's art, brought about without fits and starts, without rupture. Indeed, the flux of his oeuvre is one of synthesis and amalgamation. The artist brings together as divergent qualities as the sense of movement of the Italian futurist school, the sense of immobility inherited from the metaphysical pursuits of Giorgio Morandi and the pure plastic research of Alberto Magnelli. Objects are selected and stripped of any burden of anecdotal meaning or significance. They are relieved of any commentary or literary association to become pictorial elements in a recreated order that is designed to satisfy the eye and the spirit, the soul as well as the heart. (Cathelin, 1971)

Many of Marangio's compositions from the 1970s consist of monochrome surfaces where brushstrokes and marks of thickish oil form the background on which beautiful configurations painted in 'loud', bold gestures from a restricted palette of colours are hurled together in the bottom half of the canvas. One senses in these paintings that particular attention to painterly aesthetics that is one of the characteristics attributed to what is labelled the Ecole de Paris. Slowly, however, the artist's paintings were to become filled with numerous and more intricate, baroque constructions, and the colour range gained new opulence and vibrancy. Marangio's works are for the most part either painted in a range of brown, red and yellow ochres or they are given a scale dominated by hues of blue, perhaps thus echoing Salento, *the sun-baked, fruit-giving terra surrounded by the sea*.

Roberto Sanesi has commented on the change of direction evident in Marangio's art: on the progressive reduction of the more *sensual* (pittorico-plastici) preoccupations (pictorial modelling) in favour of a more expressionist formula and a style based on the clarity of the sign. He asserts that these images, with their constant articulation and disarticulation of elements, simultaneously *still and tremulous*, and with their vaguely concentric structures, claim, from time to time, a kind of cubist repossession of space. (Sanesi, 1984)

Solo Exhibitions

1958 Circolo Cittadino, Lecce; **1960** Galleria dei Re Magi, Milan; **1962** Galerie Camion, Paris; **1964** Galerie Ferrero, Geneva, Switzerland; **1965** Società Operaia, Lecce; **1971** Galleria Il Ridotto, Turin; **1972** Libreria Feltrinelli, Bologna; Galleria Feltrinelli, Parma; Square Gallery, Milan; **1975** Art Direct, Paris; **1977** La Palmeraie, Paris; **1980** Galeria de la Alianza Francesa de San Angel, Mexico City, Mexico; **1982** Galleria Seno, Milan; Artestudio 36, Lecce; **1984** Galleria Vinciana, Milan; **1986** La Galerie Elkaim-Villain, Paris; **1988** Galerie J.P. Villain, Paris.

Group Exhibitions

1962 Galerie Camion, Paris; **1965** Exposition d'Art International, Maison de la Radio, O.R.T.F., Paris; 4a Biennale de Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris; **1966** Salon Comparaisons, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris; **1967** Biennale de Lyon; Biennale de Mèrignac; **1969** Biennale de Mèrignac; Institut Italien de la Culture, Paris; **1970**

Institut Italien de la Culture, Paris; Groupe Expérimental, Galerie Jacqueline Storme, Lille; Biennale de Menton; Peintres et Sculpteurs Italiens de France, Sala Napoleonica, Venice; Peintres et Sculpteurs Italiens de France, Galleria Pagani, Milan; **1971** Salon d'Automne, Grand Palais, Paris; **1972** Quatre Peintres Abstraits, Institut Italien de la Culture, Paris; 6e Exposition Internationale, Amiens; **1973** Galleria Due Torri, Bologna; **1975** Art Direct Paris ; **1976** Verifica '76, Lecce; Salon d'Automne, Paris; Salon Comparaisons, Paris; **1977** Salon d'Automne, Paris; **1978** Salon Comparaisons, Paris; Le 18e Salon de Toile, Galerie Roussard, Montmartre, Paris; 1979 Salon d'Automne, Paris; **1980** Y Milan, Chicago; Galerie Mer Kup, México, D.F.; **1983** Devozione al Disegno (a cura di Osvaldo Patani), Stanza del Borgo, Milan; **1984** Expoart, Bari; Arte-Fiera, Bologna.

Works by Carlo Marangio are in numerous European private and public collections, and paintings and gouaches by the artist appear frequently for sale in fine art auctions in France, Italy and other European countries.