

---

**ROBERTO CODA ZABETTA**

---

**STUDIO**

via Privata Giuba, 19

20132 Milano (IT)

[www.robertocodazabetta.com](http://www.robertocodazabetta.com)

---

**CONTACTS**

phone: +39 02 93647481

mobile: +39 335 5810735

[robertocodazabetta@gmail.com](mailto:robertocodazabetta@gmail.com)

[info@robertocodazabetta.com](mailto:info@robertocodazabetta.com)

---

---

**PORTFOLIO**

---

---

**Site specific projects**

---

CNTR

1.11.2020

Museo del Vino, Priocca d'Alba (IT)

CANTIERE 1 / TERRAZZO 000

24.09.2020

PART – Palazzi dell'Arte Rimini (IT)

CANTIERE 2 / HARBOUR

2.06.2018

Port of Portivy, St. Pierre Quiberon (FR)

CANTIERE 1 / TERRAZZO

28.08 - 14 .10.2017

Ex Ospedale Militare S.S, Napoli (IT)

Publication: CURA., Roma, 2018

SISTEMA EXTRASOLARE

27.04.2015

The Shit Museum, Loc. Castelbosco, Piacenza (IT)

---

**Recent exhibitions**

---

TERRAZZO

12.10 – 15.12.2019

Kuenzler Kunsthandel, Zurich (CH)

GRAND OPENING Summer Rhapsody

5.07 – 10.09.2018

KURA. at Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, Milano (IT)

SOSTANZA

24.06.2017 – 29.07.2017

Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam (NL)

#FILMBOX01

3.05 – 8.08.2016

Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, Genova (IT)

FILM# 00-56

11.03 – 7.04.2015

Fondazione Mudima, Milano (IT)

Catalogue: Allemandi, Torino, 2015

ROBERTO CODA ZABETTA / CARLO VALSECCHI

Case Chiuse #01 by Paola Clerico

20.02 – 7.03.2015

Garage Soccol, Milano (IT)

### Permanent installation:

Roberto Coda Zabetta

CNTR, 2017-2020

Mixed media on thermoplastic polymer

4,75 x 63,5 cm

Courtesy: the artist, Gruppo Mondodelvino and Annet Gelink Gallery

At Priocca, in the heart of the Roero hills, in May 2019 Mondodelvino group opened Wine Experience, the first multimedia wine museum in Italy, an interactive space in which to learn about the age-old history and value of biodiversity of vineyards, and to discover that wine is not just nature but also culture, tradition and innovation. This is the location for which Roberto Coda Zabetta has created *CNTR*, an installation set in the space in front of the museum. The work, originally titled *Cantiere*, has a long story. Produced in 2017 for various Italian and international public spaces, *Cantiere* was a giant canvas of lively colours, whose materic painting become an integral part of the host space. After being dismantled, bearing signs of wear, it was reconsidered in various ways by the artist, taking on different forms. At Priocca the work becomes an installation with a length of fifty meters, composed of thousands of vertical planks, each different from the others, on which the coloured strips of the cut canvas are attached only at the top, and left free at the bottom. The lightness makes them into an almost natural feature that interacts with the surrounding space: a banner that is a symbol of rebirth, force and continuity.



Photo credit: Henrik Blomqvist

### CNTR / Piemonte

Documentary, 2020, 7'00''

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/RCZ/CNTR>

Director: Henrik Blomqvist



### Art Mapping Piemonte

A project by Regione Piemonte, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, Fondazione Torino Musei and Artissima - Fiera internazionale d'arte contemporanea

Curated by Ilaria Bonacossa



*"Art Mapping Piemonte" is a new project that encourages the discovery of contemporary art outside of traditional pathways. Created to reinforce and underscore the role of art as a tool of cultural and economic development and the growth of tourism in the Piedmont Region, "Art Mapping Piemonte" is organised in two phases: the production of three site-specific installations by international artists, and the mapping of the most important works of contemporary public art existing in the territory.*

Ilaria Bonacossa, Director of Artissima







**Permanent installation:**

Roberto Coda Zabetta  
*Cantiere 1 / Terrazzo 000*, 2017-2020  
Mixed media on thermoplastic polymer  
357 x 855,5 cm

Courtesy: the artist and PART, Rimini.

The work comes from the temporary floor of *Cantiere1 / Terrazzo 000*, created in Naples for the complex of the SS. Trinità delle Monache with the Matronato of the Donnaregina Foundation for contemporary arts / MADRE. A documentary film produced by Black Mamba describes the creative practice behind the work.

The large canvas, installed at the PART entrance, is architectural painting. It modifies the space with a play of light and colors which, between the vector and concentric movements produced by the pigments applied with an air compressor, becomes transparent. A dialogue between Piazza Cavour, the back garden and the Federico Fellini International Museum.

*Image hybridisation, corrupting signs with other signs, dreams with other dreams, fighting in favour of the unidentifiable, altering, deviating, tirelessly giving contradicting signs – you could say that my first aspiration is to free the form. So, the absence of expression, the non-form. It's a long story, my offence against the form, but pure physicality here (if it ever existed) cedes entirely to the 'psychic': the release of an internal push that projects itself might be an artist's necessity, without then restraining on the outside. I see over the horizon, a dissipated richness of signs, lines, colours. Nature wants to be heard. Today, I like to think about these repeated words.*

Roberto Coda Zabetta



Photo credit: Henrik Blomqvist





#### **PART – Palazzi dell'Arte Rimini**

Thanks to an exceptional agreement between the Municipality of Rimini, led by Andrea Gnassi, Mayor of the city, and the Fondazione San Patrignano, the PART – Palazzi dell'Arte Rimini, a new major space has been founded for modern and contemporary art that will house the collection on a permanent basis. New displays will also host future donations, thus constantly renewing the dialogue between the works and the spaces that host them. The project constitutes an exceptional convergence between public and private institutions that creates communities and opens new cultural itineraries through art.



#### **Art Collection**

<https://palazziarterimini.it/collezione/cantiere1-terrazzo-000-roberto-coda-zabetta/>

#### **Download the catalogue**

<https://palazziarterimini.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CFSP-CATALOGO-DIGITALE.pdf>



# CANTIERE<sub>2</sub> HARBOUR

Roberto Coda Zabetta  
CANTIERE 2 / HARBOUR  
2.06.2018

Port of Portivy  
St. Pierre Quiberon, Bretagne, France

*Cantieri 2 / Harbour*, the second appointment of the project Cantieri by Roberto Coda Zabetta, will be presented in Portivy, in the Quiberon peninsula, on the 9th of June 2018.

*Cantieri 2 / Harbour* will see Roberto Coda Zabetta move his studio in Bretagne to realise the massive public artwork on Portivy's pier. This project is founded on the reciprocal relationship between painting, architecture, the natural environment and the landscape.

For millennia the force of the winds, of the tides, the erosion of the sea, the sun, the rain, the saltiness hit the coasts of the Quiberon peninsula that stretches in the Atlantic Ocean. Kilometres of coastline called *Côte Sauvage* are preserved under the *Conservatoire du Littoral* institution.

The strength, the intensity and the purity of this nature are the primordial elements that have inspired the artist; they are the themes on which his research has been focused on, for the last year. Roberto Coda Zabetta is profoundly aware of the impossibility to stem these incontrollable elements and, for this, his work will only be created by relating its linguistic degree to the unpredictability of natural forces.

The material elements has always been at the center of the artist's work, for over two years he has experimented with natural materials in his work. Over and above natural pigments, he has confronted with organic materials such as 'shit' in collaboration with Museo della Merda (The Shit Museum, Castelbosco, PC) and with the use of oyster powder from Brittany in collaboration with Dennery Cyril.

The project in Portivy concerns the realisation of a great intervention in the port of the small town. The entirety of the area will be prepared with a detailed cleaning using a hydro-cleaner, afterwards, on the dam, on the wall and on the port drops, layers of 'matter' using natural pigments, oyster dust, fish glue and Airlite paint, the leading company in the production of paints and pigments at zero environmental impact. On the first layer of white matter, additional pictorial layers will be applied with the use of an air compressor.

The sea and the time will dissolve this big ephemeral artwork, animated by the energy of nature and respectfully realised for its surrounding environment. The entire structure and the degree abstraction which the artist has chosen to express himself with, creating a collision of feelings and intellect, aiming to produce a connection without continuity solutions between perception and thought, allowing the viewer to access a different dimension not governed by simple

perspective in which we usually identify our relationship with the outside world.

The process of the work, like with *Cantieri 1 / Terrazzo*, will be documented by photographer and filmmaker Henrik Blomqvist, the production of the film is in collaboration with Black Mamba, the graphic design by Matteo Blandford.

The film will have contributions by Catherine Elkar (FRAC BRETAGNE), Patrizia Torricelli (DAIS - Environmental Science Department Ca' Foscari University, Venice), Martina Sabbadini (independent curator and researcher; collection and communication manager at Kadist), Massimo Torrigiani (Boiler Creative Studio and Fantom, Milan), Hervé Bourdon (Founder, owner and chef at Petit Hotel du Grand Large, Portivy).





# CANTIERE<sub>2</sub> HARBOUR

Roberto Coda Zabetta  
CANTIERE 2 / HARBOUR  
2.06.2018

Port of Portivy  
St. Pierre Quiberon, Bretagne, France

**CANTIERE 2/ HARBOUR**  
14'00'', 2018

**Link:**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxVu1FKCPB\\_wfC0xPepf3OQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxVu1FKCPB_wfC0xPepf3OQ)

The documentary was presented in 2018  
at Milano Design Film Festival.

**Director:** Henrik Blomqvist

**Video:** Leo Bourdon

**Production:** Black Mamba, Milan

**Project team:** Edoardo Mirabella Roberti, Leo Bourdon, Rose Bourdon, Florian Siegel

**Photography:** Henrik Blomqvist

**Graphic design:** Matteo Blandford

**Interventions by:**

Patrizia Torricelli, Catherine Elkar, Martina Sabbadini,  
Massimo Torrigiani, Hervé Bourdon



Sabato 27 Ottobre 2018, ore 17:30

Presentazione e prima nazionale  
del film: **Cantiere 2/Harbour**  
Talk a seguire, fino alle 18:30.

Sala Abanella  
Anteo Palazzo del Cinema  
piazza XXV aprile 8, Milano



# CANTIERE<sub>1</sub> TERRAZZO

**Roberto Coda Zabetta**  
**CANTIERE 1 / TERRAZZO**  
28.08 - 14 .10.2017  
Curated by Maria Savarese

**Ex Ospedale Militare**  
SS. Trinità delle Monache, **Napoli**

---

*Cantiere 1 / Terrazzo* is an open-air art studio in a public setting, but accessible only to a few points of the city.

The new project by Roberto Coda Zabetta for the abandoned Complex of Santissima Trinità delle Monache - ex Military Hospital of Naples - is promoted by the City Council of Naples - Department of Culture and Tourism, in collaboration with the Department of Urban Planning and Common goods and with the "URBACT Interdirectional Project Unit and Networks for the development of urban integrated policies" - 2nd Chance project of the URBACT III program led by the City Council of Naples. *Cantiere 1 / Terrazzo* received the "Matronato" from Donnaregina Foundation for Contemporary Arts in Naples.

This is the first stage of a work that will touch other cities in Italy and around the world. The basis of *Cantiere 1 / Terrazzo* is a relationship of mutual involvement between painting, architecture and territory. The project - curated by Maria Savarese - is intended as an itinerant journey and will take place from 28 August to 14 October 2017 in one of the most striking places of the historical center of Naples. The Complex of Santissima Trinità delle Monache is currently undergoing a urban participatory planning process which is involving citizens and the municipal administration to implement an action for the recovery, re-activation and management of the Complex.

Roberto Coda Zabetta's work will focus on creating a large painting on the roof of the former military hospital, an experience yet unseen.

The project will be followed and documented by Henrik Blomqvist, photographer and filmmaker, with video contributions by: Maria Savarese, Ilaria Bonacossa (former Director of the Villa Croce Museum, Genoa, and current director of ARTISSIMA, Turin) and Andrea Viliani (director of the Madre, Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples).

The work will be visible, during the time of exhibition, from the hilly area of Naples behind the architectural complex, becoming a tissue element interacting with the city itself. A public art work for the city, which engages with the whole building and its architectural heritage.

The whole structure and the abstract figure with which the artist chose to express himself, provides a meeting place between the senses and the intellect, aiming to produce a reference without a intermission between perception and thought, allowing access to another dimension than that governed by simple perspective, which usually identifies our relationship with external reality.

The video of the project will premiere nationally in Naples and later in major international museums and institutions.



Photo credit: Henrik Blomqvist



# CANTIERE<sub>1</sub> TERRAZZO

Roberto Coda Zabetta  
**CANTIERE 1 / TERRAZZO**  
28.08 - 14 .10.2017  
Curated by Maria Savarese

**Ex Ospedale Militare**  
SS. Trinità delle Monache, **Napoli**

---

**Partner of *Cantiere 1 / Terrazzo*:** project promoted by the City Council of Naples, Department of Culture and Tourism, in collaboration with the Department of Urban Planning and Common Goods, and with “URBACT Interdirectional Project Unit and Networks for the development of urban integrated policies” - 2nd Chance project of the URBACT III program led by the City Council of Naples.  
The project received the “Matronato” from the Donnaregina Foundation of Contemporary Arts in Naples.

**Link:**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxVu1FKCPB\\_wfC0xPepf3OQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxVu1FKCPB_wfC0xPepf3OQ)

**CANTIERE 1 / TERRAZZO**

Documentary, 2017

**Director:** Henrik Blomqvist

**Production:** Black Mamba, Milan

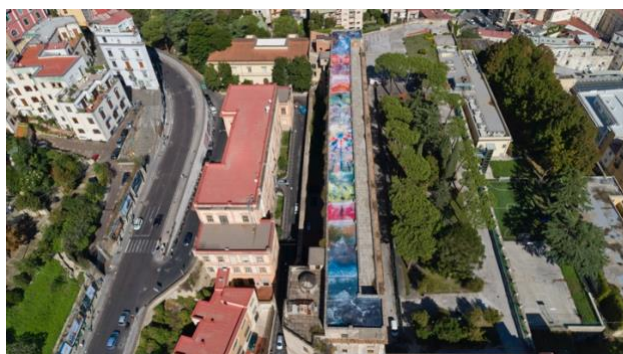
**Project team:** Ciro Delfino, Paolo Gambardella, Edoardo Mirabella Roberti, Carla Savarese

**Photography:** Fabio Donato, Henrik Blomqvist

**Graphic design:** Matteo Blandford

**Interventions by:**

Ilaria Bonacossa, Nino Daniele, Maria Savarese, Andrea Viliani





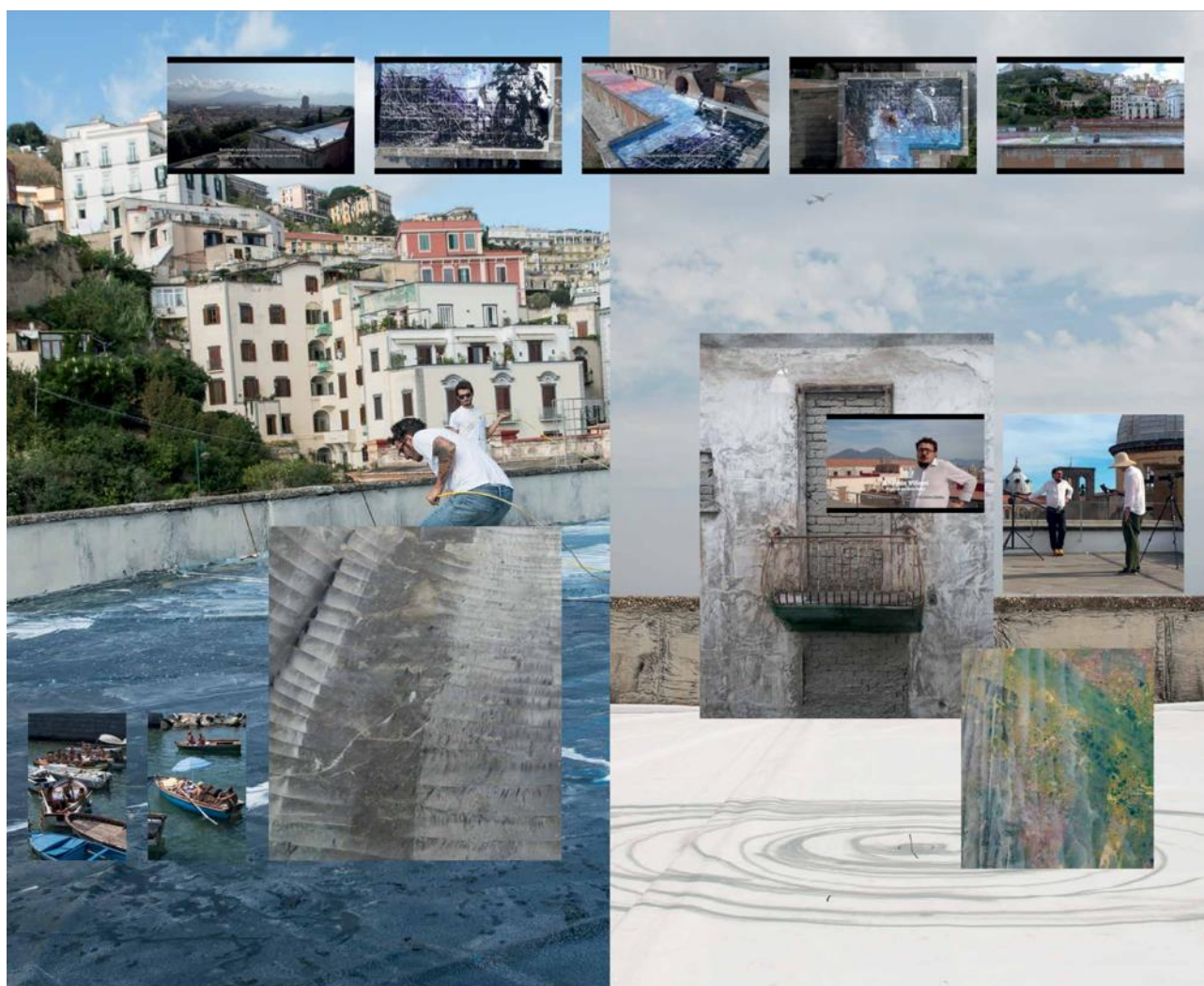
**Publication of the project:**

Roberto Coda Zabetta  
CANTIERE 1 / TERRAZZO  
28.08 - 14 .10.2017  
Curated by Maria Savarese

Ex Ospedale Militare  
SS. Trinità delle Monache, Napoli

**Link:**

<https://curamagazine.com/roberto-coda-zabetta-cantiere-1-terrazzo/>





### Permanent installation:

Roberto Coda Zabetta  
*Sistema Extrasolare*, 2015  
Organic material and natural pigment  
Variable size, 170 x 170 each. (8 elements)

Courtesy: the artist and The Shit Museum, Piacenza.

Link: <http://www.theshitmuseum.org/the-extrasolar-system-by-roberto-coda-zabetta/>

*Extrasolar System* is the name of the installation that Roberto Coda Zabetta (Biella, 1975) has realised for the Shit Museum. Produced in 2015, a polyptych split in eight different works represent the percentage of methane exerted from each planet in the solar system. The paintings are abstract in form and textural in substance; a varied chromatic palette is made from liquid muck: the result of a mixture of different doses of water, resin and pigment – exhibited on a table in the room as the content of the 20 vases that complete the installation. The works alternate according to a cycle of 24/26 days to simulate the rotation of the Sun around its axis. The expected time of fermentation and fossilisation of a phytoplankton and zooplankton: these organisms are born out of photosynthesis and use solar radiations as a main source of energy to synthesise fundamental organic matters for the production of methane. Living art.







***Sistema Extrasolare*, 2015**  
Organic material and natural pigment  
Variable size, 170 x 170 each. (8 elements)



Since 2017 Roberto Coda Zabetta has been developing his painting practice beyond the intimate dimension of the studio towards public spaces with large-scale site-specific projects: *Cantiere 1 / Terrazzo* (Terrace) in Naples, Italy and *Cantiere 2 / Harbour* in Portivy, Bretagne, France. The next monumental work will see the light in Kokkola, Finland, in 2020.

In September 2017 Roberto Coda Zabetta inaugurated the public art project *Cantiere 1* on the terrace of the historical building SS. Trinità delle Monache - ex military hospital of Naples, promoted by the City of Naples and by Museo Madre / Fondazione Donnaregina, a foundation for contemporary arts. On the gigantic canvas that was stretched out on the panoramic rooftop, vivid colours and textured surface came to life in relationship with the architectural space, the city at large, becoming an organic part of the city itself.

In the following months the canvas was exposed to the sun, rain and wind, and atmospheric conditions contributed with further transformations. Nature was thus complice to the resulting pictorial matter. The canvas was then removed from its site and brought to the studio. And in the following two years the work was part of different installations, engaging in new conversations with other architectural spaces: in 2018 in the Oval in Turin, Italy, during *Artissima*, under the curatorship of Ilaria Bonacossa, and in Milan, Italy, in the spaces of *Kura / Cura* magazine, which collaborated in publishing the material regarding *Cantiere 1*.

In 2020 part of the work will become a permanent installation in Rimini, Italy, in the new museum of contemporary art, under the artistic and architectural direction of the architect Luca Cipelletti.

The project of the installation by Kuenzler Kunsthandel in Zurich represents a further evolution of the original *Cantiere*.

The gallery space will be covered with canvas on vertical axis of the walls and the horizontal plane of the floor.

14 canvas of the same format will be exposed on the walls and the whole gallery floor will be covered, thus demonstrating once again the inner potential of the work, to change and adapt to several architectural fruitions. Born from a dialogue with the vastness of Naples, the work now offers a more intimate but equally intense reading. The explosion of bright colours and the circular, centrifugal and centripetal movements inspired by the energy of the city can be found in these canvases and are amplified in the gallery space like windows, possible visions of worlds or particles of invisible worlds.

For Roberto Coda Zabetta painting is always a mental state and a physical necessity, in which the relationship with materials is essential. The experimentation of the technical characteristics of the materials and their transformation are the basis of his research. In his paintings the colours are spread and worked with brushes, spatulas and compressed air. The work proceeds by subtle layers of colours and air shaped by the precision of the gesture and by the deep knowledge of the creative material. The technique of subtraction with air is always used with extreme control and push to extreme forcing.

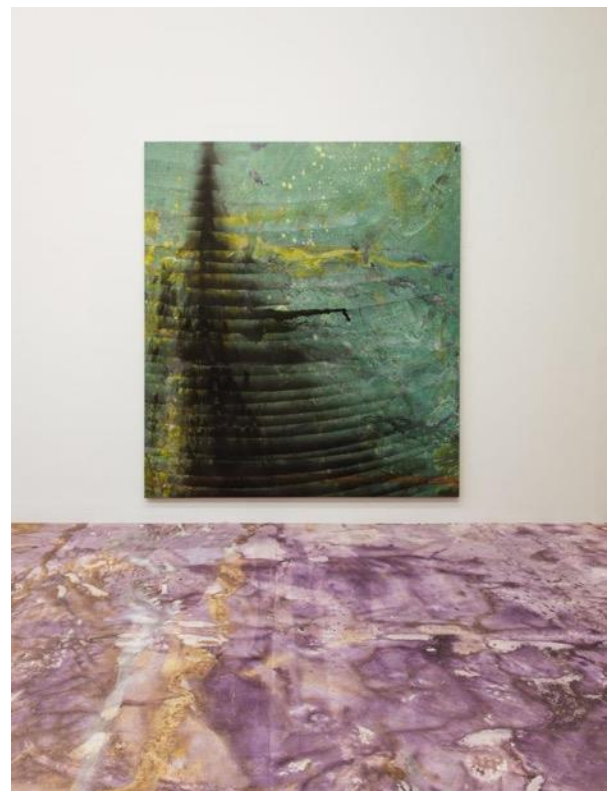


Photo credit: Henrik Blomqvist

**ROBERTO CODA ZABETTA**

**TERRAZZO**

12.10 – 15.12.2019

**Kuenzler Kunsthandel**

Hirschengraben 3, 8001 Zurich

---



***CANTIERE1/TERRAZZO 013*, 2018**

Mixed media on pvc

175 x 155 cm



With GRAND OPENING (SUMMER RHAPSODY) KURA. opens in Milan on 5 July and launches the exhibition program directed by CURA. in the historic premises of Fonderia Artistica Battaglia.

KURA. is born from a misspelling of our magazine's name. The pronunciation is the same, but the K represents the glitch, the element of novelty that bases its roots in the very idea of "spazio okkupato" (occupied space), that is also associated with the k in kunsthalle, without necessarily being one. It is the physical space and extension of CURA. which joins the programming of exhibitions already curated by Andrea Baccin and Ilaria Marotta, founding directors of the magazine, held in the premises of BASEMENT ROMA.

Movement, the alternation of empty and full, but also role improvisations aim at creating the rhythm of the exhibition experience of this new space. An experience that, although protracted in its assumptions, will be called to define itself over time.

"We are not interested in getting to a point, but in identifying a path. Investigate the cracks more than the finite form, the process more than the final destination."

According to David Reinfurt, the eclectic co-founder (together with Stuart Bailey) of Dexter Sinister and creator of the visual identity of the project, the "scheme for a future program" is summarized "in that small alteration, involving a few strokes, between a C and a K" which defines the open nature of the logo, still far from a finished form.

With KURA. in Milan, the CURA. team, together with a board of artists and curators which include the aforementioned David Reinfurt, Lorenzo Benedetti (Kunstmuseum St. Gallen), Luís Silva and João Mourão (Kunsthalle Lissabon), Samuel Leuenberger (SALTS Birsfelden), Anthony Huberman (CCA Wattis Institute), aims at alternating solo and group exhibitions of artists mostly belonging to the generation born in the early '80s, who came to the fore on the international scene and had a leading role in a new layout of the contemporary scene.

"The relationship with the foundry and its premises will be significant but not decisive in defining the works or use of the materials. It will be a fluid collaboration, involving roles and spaces, in which

everyone will be able to draw the best from the experience and skills of the other."

Swaying between reality and fiction, between social ritual and mise en scène, GRAND OPENING (SUMMER RHAPSODY) embodies, and at the same time activates, the celebrations of the opening of the place, serving as a prelude to something new, a free and varied orchestration of actions, bodies, shapes and sounds, which take on the popular traits of a great street party.

Works by Mitchell Anderson, Davide Balula, Anna-Sophie Berger, Louis Fratino, Nancy Lupo, Mélanie Matranga, Caroline Mesquita, Adrien Missika, Martin Soto Climent and a site-specific intervention by Roberto Coda Zabetta, will implement the celebrating context of the exhibition.

"The party is a gnoseological model that implies the collectivity and self-affirmation in the celebrating experience," according to Walter Benjamin. (1)

Hence, the party and its potential annual recurrence define the forming of a new collective body articulated over time and in the materialization of a ritual and changeable experience, which has always represented the moment of disruption of the imposed social order. The artists' work, which for the occasion will be placed in many of the Fonderia's areas, eradicates roles, functions and uses, in an allegorical meta-narration.

"The party is a hortus conclusus, a space/time, a place for the soul, a magical environment, where one participates in a collective preparation work." (2)

GRAND OPENING (SUMMER RHAPSODY) thus defines a collective and choral entity, a multifaceted big bang in which individuality and community come together, "an interlude of universal confusion" in which everything is destroyed and from which at the same time everything is born: a moment of disruption, of waiting and beginning, which starts the next KURA. exhibition program in Milan.

1 W. Benjamin W., *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (also *On the Concept of History*, from German: *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*), 1940.

2 L. Tussi, *La festa popolare: un'interpretazione pedagogica* [The Popular Feast: A Pedagogical Interpretation], in *"Il Calendario del Popolo"*, n. 637, December 1999.

### **Painting as Space**

Text by Ilaria Bonacossa

After FILM#, Roberto Coda Zabetta's practice has moved from the series of canvases hanging on the wall to actual space. The spaces in which his actions have developed are far from minimal white cubes, inhabiting instead complex environments loaded with history and natural elements. His practice that is both macho and poetic tries to find an original way of occupying and transforming space by both neutralizing its presence and at the same time completely transforming its perception.

To take the cinematic metaphor further Coda Zabetta has used monumental environmental paintings to create 'sets' in which visitors, art lovers as well as passers-by are turned into actors who have to interact or better act out themselves. Related to land-art more than to action painting, these works continue to develop the idea of transparency linked to Coda Zabetta's practice, as well as the desire to talk to non art experts as well as to passionate curators, critics or artists.

In the last year his practice has undergone a radical shift occupying public space, or better has invented a participatory form of pictorial practice as a way of reclaiming spaces either forgotten or devoid of contemporary creativity.

This experimental endeavour started at Cantiere 1- Terrazzo Terrace developed in Naples on the panoramic roof of the abandoned complex of SS. Trinità delle Monache, (converted in a Military Hospital in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) for MADRE Museum in the fall of 2017, where the artist completely painted the gigantic flat surface of the building's roof; has recently seen it's second episode (May 2018) in France where *Cantiere 2 Harbour/Porto* was activated on the waterfront of Portivy, St. Pierre Quiberon in Bretagne. In this second experiment the natural landscape has called for a more subtle yet transformative intervention with natural pigments on the actual walls and rocks of the bay transforming the landscape in a canvas that will slowly but surely be erased by the sea tides as well as the coastal violent storms.

Here, for the opening of Cura's new space in Milano, Coda Zabetta has created another phantasmagoria of light and color that will occupy the space of the courtyard transforming the viewers way of moving through it. Coda Zabetta has given life to a new landscape/space in this post-industrial turned-artistic environment, again the power of air (through a

specific technique born by using pigments that are mixed and removed by an air-compressor) seems to have pushed matter to create vectorial as well as concentric movements of colour and light. What I find fascinating is how the element of chance is balanced by an artistic premeditation of composition and form, where enamels, pigments and different types of natural and industrial paints merge in a space of pure energy. Similarly western and eastern traditions and techniques seem to merge in a space of pure abstraction that is both a tent, a roof and the sky of an oneiric space of creativity.





**GRAND OPENING**  
**Summer Rhapsody**  
5.07 – 10.09.18

**KURA.**  
at Fonderia Artistica Battaglia  
Via Stilicone 10, **Milan**

---



**Vela**, 2017  
pigment on pvc  
5 x 10 m

**ROBERTO CODA ZABETTA**

**SOSTANZA**

24.06.2017 – 29.07.2017

**Annet Gelink Gallery**

Laurierstraat 187-189

NL-1016PL **Amsterdam**

---

Annet Gelink Gallery is delighted to present *Sostanza*, the first solo exhibition of Italian painter Roberto Coda Zabetta (1975, Biella, IT) with the gallery. Coda Zabetta believes it is possible to structure emotions on the painterly surface. For him, painting is a state of mind and, at the same time, a physical necessity.

Since 2014, Coda Zabetta has been working with pure abstraction, inspired by the importance of materials. The move from figurative to abstract is not necessarily an irreversible choice, but it allows the painter to take a step back and observe from a distance. Instead of concentrating on subjects, the artist focuses on pigments, colours and substances. Experimenting with textures, the artist not only uses traditional materials, but also different natural elements such as sand, organic materials, oyster shell dust, tar and chemical materials.

The title of the show comes from the Italian word *Sostanza*, which has different meanings. In current use, it can be translated into being the essence of something. It is also a term that, from the origins of philosophical thought, designates what remains below the changing appearances. And the word can also be used for a substance of a chemical composition that gives it particular characteristics.

In this exhibition, works from two series have been brought together. In his 'films' series, Coda Zabetta experiments with layers of wafer-thin pigments, creating fluid coloured paintings that almost seem to radiate. The transparency of the works, obtained by painting with air pressure, remind of traditional Chinese and Japanese watercolour landscapes. The paintings in his 'more material' series look much more dense and materialistic, with the paint thickly applied in a single gesture. What looks like the expressive brush stroke is in fact created by applying paint with a spatula, evoking the idea of stucco on a wall.

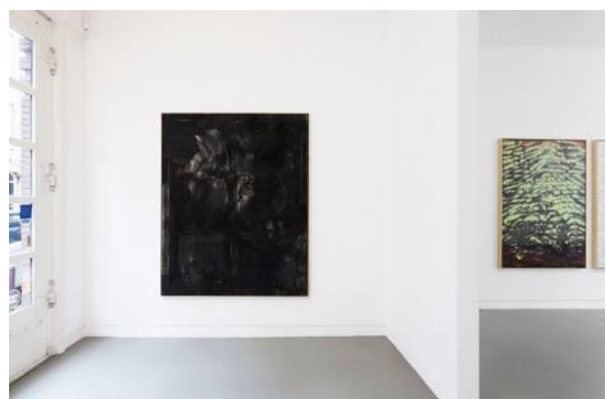


Photo credit: Michel Claus



ROBERTO CODA ZABETTA

SOSTANZA

24.06.2017 – 29.07.2017

Annet Gelink Gallery

Laurierstraat 187-189

NL-1016PL Amsterdam

---



***Untitled 9 (ghostwhite#f8f8ff e mistyrose#ffe4e1 e mediumaquamarine#66cdaa), 2016***  
sand, resin, enamel and pigment on canvas  
200 x 150 cm

**Roberto Coda Zabetta**  
**#FILMBOX01**  
3.05 – 8.08.2016  
curated by Ilaria Bonacossa

**Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce**  
Via Jacopo Ruffini 13, **Genova**

---

*I believe in technique, in its capacity to structure  
emotions on the painterly surface...*

Roberto Coda Zabetta

The Contemporary Art Museum of Villa Croce launches a new project, that questions the limits between the exhibition space, its aura and the intimate space of the artist's studio.

For this reasons Roberto Coda Zabetta's new project **#FILMBOX01** occupies a corner room of the museum's monumental first floor, transforming it temporarily into an artist studio. This new intimate space, constructed in dialogue with the museum's architecture, offers an unexpected and personal form of encounter with art in a prolonged time frame. The nature of the project will thus not have an official opening but will instead be activated by talks, artist presentation and workshops.

Painting, has always been, for Roberto Coda Zabetta, a state of mind as much as a physical necessity, a personal method to give form to the magmatic chaos of matter. Usually large-scaled, his works show how to seize and 'force' pigments into a transparent, airy impasto that violates the two-dimensionality of the canvas. In particular **#FILMBOX01**, the large box with 4 windows and a door, made of canvases, left rough on the outside and completely painted on the inside, allows the public to immerse themselves in a three dimensional painting experience, made of thin and impalpable 'films' of colour. The work evokes the analogue nature of film as opposed to the flatness of digital media, transforming the viewing experience into a surreal form of visual poetry. Pigments themselves undergo, thus, physical forms of stimulation through, air, forces and gravity, simulating the geological processes that bring to life marble, onyx, jade or alabaster. Roberto Coda Zabetta's new works seem to play with contemporary abstraction through a tactile and visceral relationship to the traditional materials of painting that are 'forced' into a site specific structure, that evokes sidereal spaces that are millions light years away from us, while their transparencies pay homage to traditional Chinese and Japanese watercolours.

Passing some time alone inside **#FILMBOX01** shows how abstraction can take us inside an intimate place where "the mind" can be left behind, where our gaze glides fast along horizontal, vertical and concentric lines, rising to the surface and plunging into the depth; the painterly substance becomes fluid and transparent

thanks to the use of air as a painterly tool.

**#FILMBOX01** questions the limits of contemporary abstraction by establishing a tactile and visceral relation with the classic materials of painting which are 'forcefully' turned into transparent wefts through the use of spatulas and compressed air.

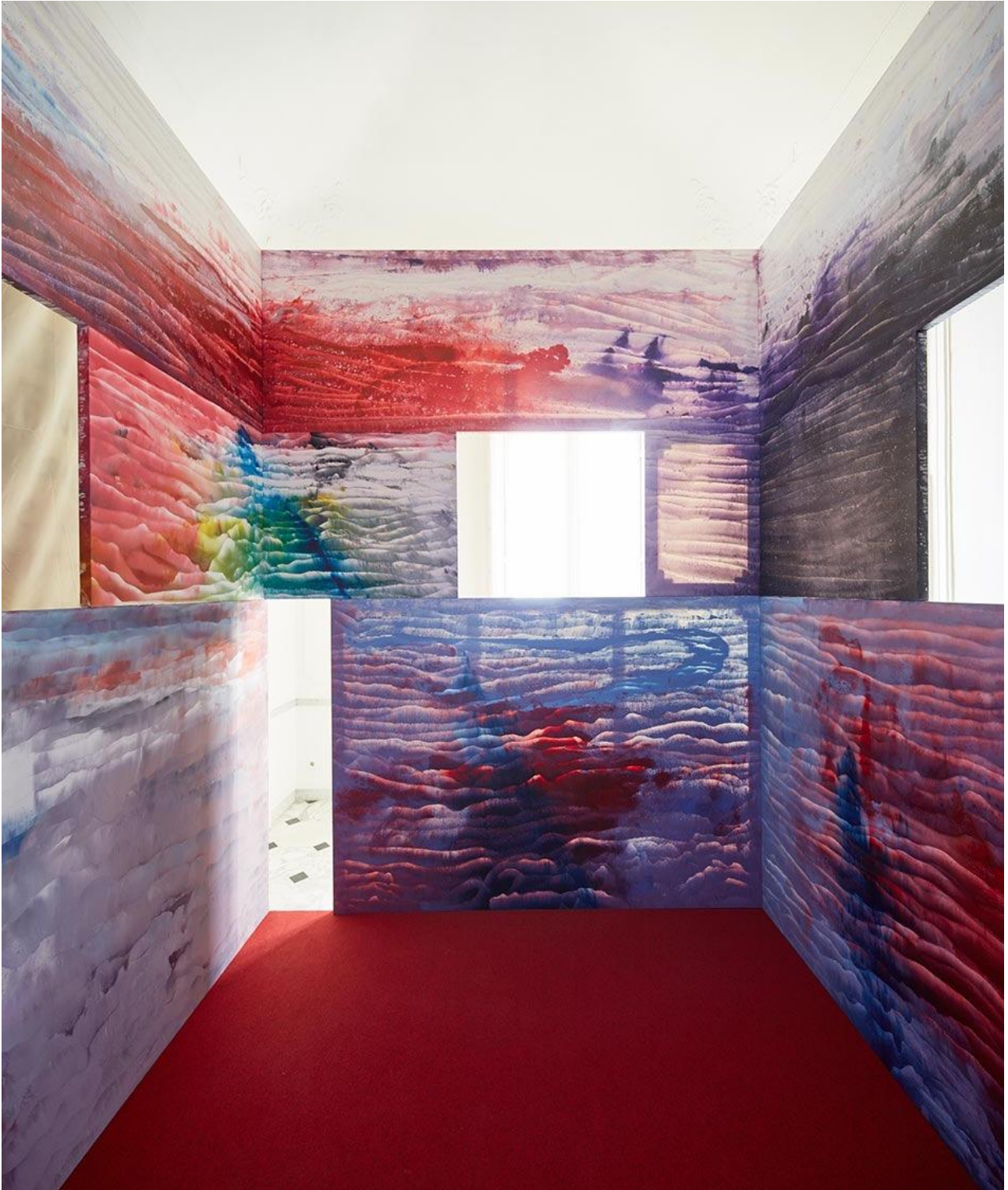




**Roberto Coda Zabetta**  
**#FILMBOX01**  
3.05 – 8.08.2016  
curated by Ilaria Bonacossa

**Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce**  
Via Jacopo Ruffini 13, **Genova**

---



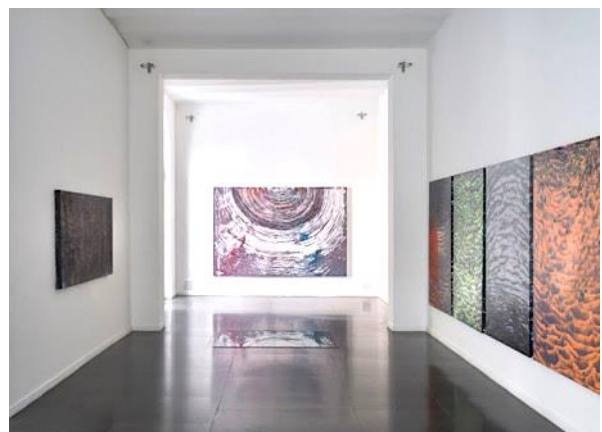
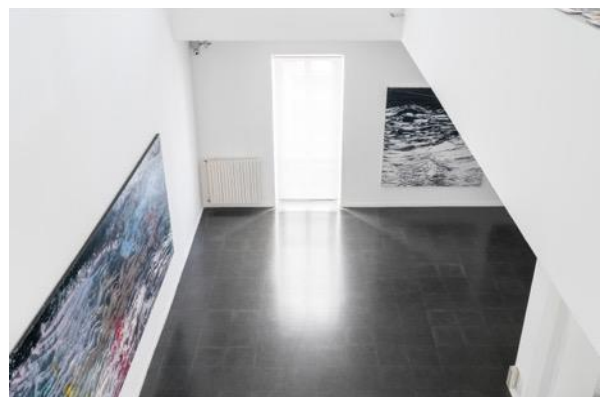
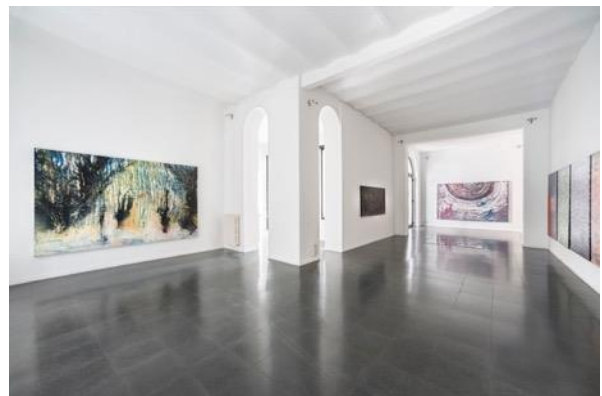
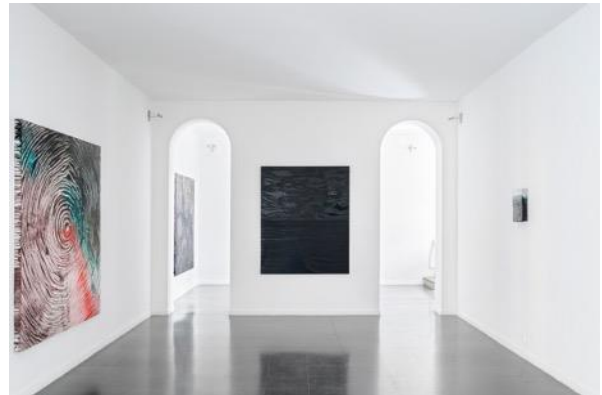
**#FILMBOX01**, 2015  
Pigments on canvas  
3 x 3 x 4 m

Fondazione Mudima presents *FILM# 00-56*, the latest project by Roberto Coda Zabetta, a series of twenty large paintings that anticipate the full development of the project comprising fifty-five pieces.

In the works on display, forms, lights, shadows and colors from nature coalesce into a atemporal, nonfigurative flux of unending information. The eye glides fast along horizontal, vertical, and concentric lines, rising to the surface and plunging into the depth. In spite of the immediacy of vision, a process of recognition is triggered that slowly reveals the painterly gesture, its references and its sources. An unconscious short circuit occurs: metal images do not unveil as much as they re-veal (veil once again), since they disclose and hide that invisible something the image is related to, seeking out that which is "unrepresentable" of this world, in a movement between high and low driven by the urgency to transcend the emotional condition of experience.

As Ilaria Bonacossa writes: "It seems that Roberto Coda Zabetta's new works play with the limits of contemporary abstraction through a tactile and visceral relationship to the traditional materials of painting that are 'forced' into futuristic frameworks. His large paintings evoke the digital synthesis of nanotechnological imagery as well as sidereal spaces that are millions light years away from us while their transparencies might pay homage to the thousand-year old Japanese tradition of ink drawing and watercolor on paper".

Abstract painting is a state of mind marked with significant restraints and boundless liberties: does it make a subject/object abstract or does it seize the essence? Does it add or subtract? Total freedom: does it really exist? Or rather, is painting capable of condensing infinite liberties? Perhaps, for Roberto Coda Zabetta abstraction is the intimate place where 'the mind' can be left behind, where the multiple layers of life experience, its teachings and benchmarks can be excavated, where heaps of information are released in the free movement of soul and vision, in the sum of the opposites and of all that which escapes the finitude of perception and temporality. At the same time, it is also the place where the outmost freedom from those very reference points can be enacted with the awareness that each single gesture is laden with historical references but that it can also develop, knowingly, with disregard for all chronological classification.





**ROBERTO CODA ZABETTA**

**FILM# 00-56**

11.03 – 7.04.2015

**Fondazione Mudima**

Via Tadino 26, Milano

---



***Film #26*, 2014**

Color ink, tempera and pigment paste on canvas  
190 x 190 cm

**Catalogue of the show:**

ROBERTO CODA ZABETTA

FILM# 00-56

11.03 – 7.04.2015

Fondazione Mudima

Via Tadino 26, Milano

**Link:**[https://www.allemandi.com/dett\\_libri.php?id=1133](https://www.allemandi.com/dett_libri.php?id=1133)**Painting Energy**

Essay by Ilaria Bonacossa

Painting is, for Roberto Coda Zabetta, a state of mind as much as a physical necessity, a personal system of formalizing matter's magmatic chaos. Usually large scaled, his works seem to seize pigments, forcing them into a transparent, doughy impasto that violates the two-dimensionality of the canvas. Following the teachings of Emilio Vedova (1919 – 2006), the Italian master of contemporary abstraction who used to define his own works as "quakes and whiffs", Roberto Coda Zabetta's research is structured in thematic clusters that allow for hypnotic emotions to explode from layers of painterly substance.

In developing his practice, Roberto Coda Zabetta has never abided by the strict rules of the contemporary art world, reclaiming the freedom to choose his own style with the same eclecticism of his mentor and teacher Aldo Mondino (1938 – 2005). Indeed, after a decade of figurative post-expressionist monochromes, in 2014 he dived headlong in pure abstraction. Once again, Mondino set the example teaching Coda Zabetta's the importance of the knowledge of one's own creative tools through the use of different materials, and, more importantly, on the necessity of a truthful relation between one's work and the world.

Yet, the diffusion of abstract experiments in the international art scene proves that the return to abstraction as a space of freedom and emotion can be read as the artists' muted answer to the exaggerated consumption of images brought about by global capitalism and the virtualization of the real. The work of great contemporary painters such as Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, Amy Sillman, and Charline von Heyl shows that the shift from abstraction to figuration is not conceptually definitive. Indeed, contemporary abstract painting does not depend on dogmatic paradigms: it results from the balance between total

freedom and the compositional restrictions the artist imposes upon himself.

Titling an exhibition of two-dimensional works *FILM# 00-56* entails a semantic shift and elicits a fluid reading of the works that appear connected to one another through an invisible "narrative" structure. In addition, this title turns the artist from creator to director since he seizes and captures on film actions performed by others than himself. The choice to paint "as a director" developed after a two-years long pause during which the artist underwent a crises about his capacity to represent the world through images. This crisis resulted into a new open production, autonomous and, to a certain extent, independent from the artist himself, *FILM# 00 – 56* is a sequence of fifty-six frames that portray a linguistic transformation from the expressionism of gesture to the desire of freezing the energy of pigments on the canvas.

However, there is nothing casual about Coda Zabetta's new artistic practice, his paintings are made of thin layers, impalpable ›films‹ of color and air. No longer thick nor brightened by heavy brushstrokes of white, the painterly substance becomes fluid and transparent thanks to the use of air as a painterly tool. The serial structure of this project derives from the idea of creating a sequence of film-stills in which mechanical execution and the energy of compressed air are combined with manual precision, the rhythm of brush-strokes, and the force of color. These canvases, of different sizes, seem to play with the limits of contemporary abstraction by establishing a tactile and visceral relation with the classic materials of painting, which are ›forcefully‹ turned into transparent wefts through the use of spatulas and compressed air.

*FILM#* features a material metamorphosis where the gestural energy crystallizes into an atemporal space influenced by oriental art, where narrative structures recede in favor of matter. Technique and manual skill are decisive in governing the flow of pigments, while the formal accuracy of the gesture is quite lyrical and distanced from any form of psychic automatism.

The works on view can be divided into subgroups, like the episodes of a film, where the energy of the pigments crystallizes in different structures. The material, almost sculptural, weight of certain canvases, where numbers of layers are blended to darken the image, nearly turns them into transparent screen-prints that seem to be painted in watercolor.



Thus, cut across by a vector of color, some paintings appear to be lit by falling stars exploded millions of light years away, while others seem to capture the reflections of waves moving across water. Their transparencies as well as their extended temporality recall the thousand-year-old tradition of Japanese ink wash painting and watercolor on paper. Similarly, the concentric force of some works seems to figure forth the slow death of a star and its implosion in a space beyond the Cartesian three-dimensionality we are used to inhabit. At last, the small-size square paintings look like microscopic scans of colorful coral fragments. These fifty-six works are about the energy of the universe, they turn painting into a film about waves, reflections, particle movements, centripetal and centrifugal forces. It is a moving, stunning film.

Arranged in groups, like medieval polyptychs, these paintings remind the viewer of nanotechnology's digital images as well as sidereal spaces millions light years away from us. They show how the contemporary gaze can now move from microcosm to macrocosm, from the core of a cell to the explosion of a galaxy. In *FILM#*, thus, abstraction probes matter's chore and contemporary physics is turned into purified painting, suspended in between the continuous flow of time and the urgency to grasp a fraction of the essence of something. This series descends from the urge to represent that which we have never seen nor, possibly, even imagined.

*FILM#* is informed by Coda Zabetta's dismissal of the compositional tenets accrued in his figurative works. Here, constitutional and technical features are radicalized and painting becomes an existential exercise. The force of these works resides in their power to condense information and seize the gaze of viewer, leading it through waves and reflections, in a journey made of emptiness and substance, light and shade, thoughts and contemplation. Wondering about the time necessary to make the single works is sterile, they stand as a collection of matter, of its movement and energy. It can take just an hour to make a painting but, for an artist, it can take many years before he or she can live that hour.

# Roberto Coda Zabetta Film# 00—56

Essay by Ilaria Bonacossa

Allemandi & C.



The exhibition comes with no title. The many titles I thought of, I ruled them all out. The one I was the most reluctant to dismiss was “pas de deux”: a term I especially cherish because it is used in ballet to indicate two dancers performing steps together. The image of the dancers moving in sync would have worked well to illustrate and express both the methodological and artistic reciprocity between Roberto Coda Zabetta and Carlo Valsecchi.

Yet, it was clear right away that this vision was incomplete, unfinished. I was well aware that the “pas de deux” image raised misleading issues but, as I strived to let it go, it kept coming back, unrelentingly. I was stranded. This sense of distress came to an end when I realized that this metaphor had caused a short circuit in my stream of thought bringing back memories, images, and texts about dance from the last century. Modern and contemporary dance established itself as an autonomous art with its own identity. Dance as a way of thinking space, the body, humankind and their mutual exchanges. Dance as an anti-dualist art, as a transcendental experience that deconstructs the real by reaching the shifting grounds of being and making intelligible one of the infinite possible visions of the non-visible.

In the 20th century, self-referential practice and its process of self-interrogation hold sway in both art and dance. Art becomes the search of its own essence. All this allowed to look at the new works by Coda Zabetta and Valsecchi, showed at Garage Soccol, from another point of view.

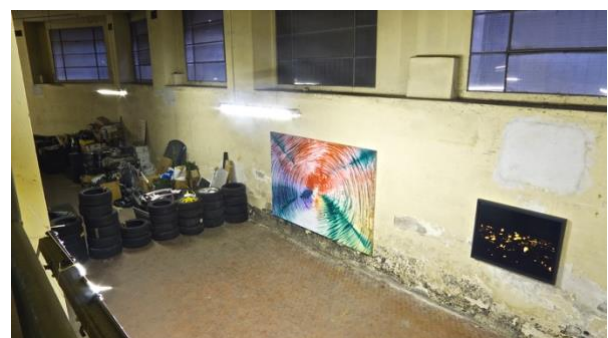
Like dance, these works are atemporal and a-spatial as much as they evoke time and space. They bring up a fluid, undetermined temporality and speak about a space that cannot be defined because it is not made just of parallels and abscissae, but has circular, centrifugal, and centripetal movements that endow it with a strong three-dimensional connotation. Like a ballet coreography, these works are a sequence of windows opened on the movement and transformation of matter beyond matter; multiple and undefined visions of worlds and of the particles of possible worlds that bestow vision upon the non-visible. Italo Calvino's words on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, from his *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, come to my mind: “the knowledge of the world tends to dissolve the solidity of the world”.

In the same way as technical mastery is, for a dancer, just a means that must be transcended to

communicate beyond the body, in these works' technique is applied in the most rigorous way and pushed to its limits until it fades away. The vision evoked in the mental space, forced by the subtractive process, eventually reveals its naturalness beneath the gestural laboriousness.

Through their subtractive process, Roberto Coda Zabetta and Carlo Valsecchi make their language lighter and create space. They leave room for something open to happen. They do not seek the presence but the atmosphere, and the manifold occasions that convene and compete therein.

Paola Clerico





ROBERTO CODA ZABETTA / CARLO VALSECCHI

Case Chiuse #01 by Paola Clerico

20.02 – 7.03.2015

Case Chiuse / Garage Soccol

via Procaccini 29, Milano

---

More info on the exhibition:

<https://www.casechiuse.net/exhibition-roberto-coda-zabetta-carlo-valsecchi-milano/>

Courtesy: the artist and Case Chiuse by Paola Clerico

Photo credits: Matteo Girola



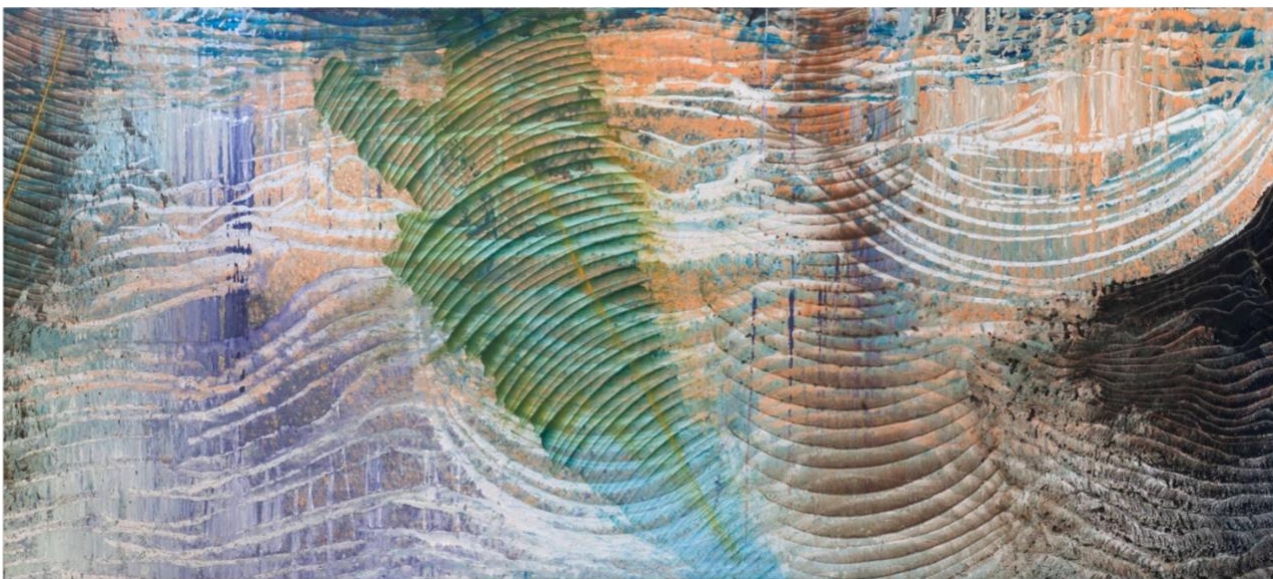
**FILM#44**, 2014

metal enamel and pigment on canvas  
100 x 100 cm



**FILM#49**, 2014

oil, solid glue, tempera and pigment on yuta  
70 x 70 cm



**FILM#52**, 2014

enamel, tempera and pigment on canvas  
185 x 425 cm