



GALLERIA IL PONTE arte moderna e contemporanea

Firenze 50121 via di Mezzo 42/b info@galleriailponte.com www.galleriailponte.com

tel 055240617 fax 0555609892 – orario 15,30-19,00 sabato su appuntamento – festivi chiuso

press release

GIUSEPPE CHIARI

*grande formato
otto spartiti*

virtual show

curated by
Andrea Alibrandi

exclusively online

Galleria Il Ponte - Firenze
www.galleriailponte.com

20 May - 15 June 2021



Alongside the gallery exhibitions, Galleria Il Ponte is continuing its virtual shows with a set of large-format works by Giuseppe Chiari.

The show presents eight musical scores from the early 1980s. The scores are photographed and blown up to a large size (approx. 150x100 cm) on glossy paper, cotton fibre paper and acetate, and display the marks of Chiari's energetic improvisation.

As Stefani Verri writes, "One of the outstanding figures of Italian conceptual art, musician, composer and intellectual, he transforms the concept of musical score. He takes what is for the canon the essential tool in order to write and play music and places it in a visual dimension, transforming it with colours, marks and crossings-out. On one hand, these may seem to go against the institutionality of the "rule" but on the other they highlight this sense of totality in a subtle mixture of languages...". Chiari progresses from visually highlighting the notes or graphical symbols signalling the gestures to perform, which become independent images and pure visual products in the first musical scores, to experiment different means of expression: from collages to paintings and gestures consisting of marks, words and stamps on staves, scores and photographs which find full expression in the 1980s.

The works are all accompanied by certification from the Archivio Giuseppe Chiari.

The virtual shows are a new way to propose the gallery's activities in this ongoing pandemic situation. The space is designed as a faithful reproduction of one of the rooms in the gallery which hosts a small number of selected works in solo exhibitions.



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Biography

Giuseppe Chiari was born in Florence on September 26th 1926. He took a degree in Engineering while studying piano and composition privately. After founding a Jazz Club in Florence in 1947, in 1950 he began to compose on rational and mathematical bases. In 1960 he was one of the co-founders, with Pietro Grossi, of the association Vita Musicale Contemporanea, chaired by the physicist Giuliano Toraldo di Francia and patronised, among others, by Sylvano Bussotti and Heinz Klaus Metzger; the latter introduced him to the international avant-garde. With Bussotti he organised in 1962 the travelling exhibition *Musica e segno* (Galleria Numero, Rome, and Creative and Performing Art Center, Buffalo); in 1964 he coordinated with Daniela Palazzoli and Gianni-Emilio Simonetti the exhibition *Gesto e segno* at the Galleria Blu in Milan.

In September 1962 Frederic Rzewski performed his opera *Gesti sul piano* at the Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Neuester Musik in Wiesbaden and, following the publication of *La strada* (1965) edited by George Maciunas, Chiari's name became indissolubly integrated into the activities of the Fluxus group. In 1963, always Rzewski performed his opera of action music *Teatrino* at the Judson Hall in New York during the First Avant Garde Festival organised by Charlotte Moorman. That same year, his opera *Per arco*, performed by Italo Gomez during the IV Settimana internazionale nuova musica in Palermo, caused a sensation; it has been proposed again several times from the following year by Moorman herself, who included the piece in her regular repertoire.

During those same years Chiari began to collaborate with the journal "Marcatré" which included composer Vittorio Gelmetti among its editors for musical content. This was the time when Chiari forged important alliances also with other important representatives of the avant-garde musical scene which, beyond the above cited names, included Jon Phetteplace, Alvin Curran, Richard Teitelbaum – who with Rzewski gave life to the improvisation group *Musica Elettronica Viva* (MEV) –, Steve Lacy and Cornelius Cardew, with whom he performs in several concerts. In 1963-64 he participated to the foundation of Gruppo 70 in Florence, with visual poets Sergio Salvi, Lamberto Pignotti, Eugenio Miccini and painters Antonio Bueno and Silvio Loffredo; he participated in the conventions *Arte e comunicazione* and *Arte e tecnologia* held at the Forte Belvedere, and helped to organise, in December 1963, the first collective show of the group, *Tecnologica*, at the Galleria Quadrante.

Since 1964 Chiari's activities entered a new phase: the representation of himself and his works in order to bring about a radical demystification of the existing fracture between author, player and listener. As a logical extension of this performative practice, from 1965 he began to elaborate different *Metodi per suonare*, which included methods for playing the piano, guitar, water, rattles, bells, stones, video cameras, or for playing by breaking. Each method starts off from objective considerations on the nature of the instruments, of objects and of available matter, and by inverting their functions reciprocally: concrete materials without a specific function assume a musical function; objects devoid of musical function are treated as if they were matter, functionless, or as musical instruments; musical instruments are treated as if they were matter or objects without musical functions.

Starting from this stance, Chiari extended his behavioural reflection to deconstructing the use of media (*Video Concert*, *TV Happening*), and to the analytical relationship with the environment in its domestic declinations (from *Suonare la stanza* to *Concerto per luci* of the '90s) as well as the urban and social planning declinations (*Suonare la città* which debuted during the event called *Campo urbano* in Como in 1969). The pre-eminence of graphic signs in his scores, as an expedient for defining the processual and non-deterministic logic of his own music, was not unnoticed by John Cage who included Chiari in his monumental anthology *Notations* published in New York in 1969 by Something Else Press.

Of great significance was, at the end of 1970, his meeting with pianist Giancarlo Cardini, with whom for a short time he performed in duo concerts; subsequently Cardini became one of the more assiduous and reliable interpreters of Chiari's works.

In parallel to his performative practice, during the early years of the '70s Chiari embarked in a ferti-



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le and since then uninterrupted series of exhibitions, including personal shows which followed upon each other in the following galleries: Milano (Milan, 1970), Il Centro (Naples, 1970), Toselli (Milan, 1971 and 1973), LP 220 (Turin, 1972), René Block (Berlin, 1973); he also participated in important international shows – Biennale internazionale d'arte di Venezia (several editions starting in 1972), Documenta 5 (Kassel, 1972), Contemporanea (Rome, 1974), Projekt 1974 (Cologne, 1974) – he thus asserted his place in the scene of European conceptual art.

He also started on an intense publication activity: in 1969 he published with Lerici *Musica senza contrappunto* in the series “Marcalibri” edited by Magdalo Mussio; in the following years he also published *Senza titolo* (Toselli, Milan, 1972), *Musica madre* (Prearo, Milan, 1973), *Arte* (Toselli, Milan, 1974), *Teatrino* (Banco/Nuovi Strumenti, Brescia, 1974) and, edited by Gillo Dorfles, *Metodo per suonare* (Martano, Turin, 1976). Starting from 1972 the distinctive trait of Chiari's work becomes clearly defined as the production of “statements” marked in very large letters on various supports and using different techniques (Indian ink, felt-tip pens, chalk, stamps).

In 1976 he took part in the Biennale di Venezia in the section *Attualità internazionali 1972-76*, where he proposed the performance entitled *La confessione*. In 1978 he was again invited to the Italian section of the Biennale, where he wrote in chalk on the wall “L'arte è una piccola cosa” (“Art is a small thing”). In 1982 he participated in the exhibition *1962 Wiesbaden FLUXUS 1982* in Wiesbaden, a celebration for the twenty years of the Fluxus group. In June 1983 he presented, at the Salone Villa Romana in Florence, the anthological exhibition *Music is Easy (Opere 1963-1983)*, and in 1984 he was invited for the fourth time to the Biennale di Venezia in the section *Arte, ambiente, scena*, where he showed a videotape. In the same year he published, with Edition Copie in Hannover, the multi-language book *Aesthetik*. Among the several personal and anthological exhibitions that followed, the most important are *Extra*, Galleria Vivita, Florence, 1986; *Giuseppe Chiari. Opere 1962-1986*, Galleria Milano, Milan, 1986; *Chiari*, Centro Culturale Belvedere, San Leucio (Caserta), 1987; *Viva*, Studio Leonardi, Genoa, 1988. The collective exhibitions that followed: *Happening & Fluxus*, Galerie 1900-2000, Paris, 1989, and *Ubi Fluxus ibi motus*, Ex Granai della Repubblica alle Zitelle, Venice, 1990 (Edizioni Mazzotta) consecrated him as the most respected Italian representative of the Fluxus movement.

At the same time, with the publication of *Dubbio sull'armonia* (Hopefulmonster, Florence, 1990), Chiari embarks on a thorough documentary research on the “models” of conceptualisation of musical experience, analysing the transitory function and relative sense of the models' historical affirmation. Such recognition, initiated a few years earlier with the publication of *Osservazioni su Zarlino/Riemann* (self-published, Florence, 1987) and *Biblioteca musicale* (self-published, Florence, 1989), was systematically pursued in the books *Analisi della parola “Tonalità” secondo F.J. Fétis con una nota su Il caso Monteverde*. Firenze 1992 (self-published, Florence, 1996), *Helmholtz*. Firenze, 1992 (Ulisse & Calipso, Naples, 1997), *Trattato di musica* (Ulisse & Calipso, Naples, 1994), *Storia dei modelli musicali*. Firenze, 1995 (Meta, Florence, 1996), *Indici di libri di musica teorica in ordine temporale storico*. Firenze, 1996 (Ulisse & Calipso, Naples, 1999), *Storiografia*. Firenze, 1996 (private phototype), *Fantamusicologia* (Silenzio, Rome, 1998), and *Musicologia triviale* (Meta, Florence, 1998). In 1994 he published the book *Teoria* (Leonardi, Genoa), in which he extended an analogous reflection to the deconstruction of ideological statutes sustaining artistic praxis and its historical and critical reception.

Wide-ranging overviews of his visual production have been presented in numerous exhibitions, among them: *Conceptual Music*, Palazzo Rocca – Spazio Multimediale per l'Arte Contemporanea ex Chiesa di San Francesco, Chiavari, 1996; *Collage*, Rocca di Umbertide – Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea, Umbertide (Perugia), 1996; *Una canzone*, B&D Studio Contemporanea, Milan, 1997; *Bianco e nero*, Prato, 1998. In 1999 he published a book of sentences: *Fraasi* on occasion of his personal show at the Galleria Martano in Turin. Other important retrospective shows followed, (*Musica et cetera*, Palazzo Fabroni, Pistoia, 2000-2001; *Quit Classical Musik*, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, 2001; *Le scelte trasgressive*, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, 2005; *Mi hanno cercato*, Galleria Il Ponte, Florence, 2006), as well as his regular inclusion in all the main



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collective exhibitions devoted to the Fluxus movement, not the least being the celebratory exhibition for the group's fifty years, Fluxus at 50, hosted by the Museum Wiesbaden in 2012.

His discography includes S2FM – Studio di Fonologia Musicale di Firenze: Musica programmata, LP attached to “1985 la Musica”, II, n. 11, March 1986; the Cds Daniele Lombardi, piano: Pennisi – Grossi – Chiari – Cardini – Montis, Edipan PAN CD 3065 (1998); Suono Segno Gesto Visione a Firenze: D. Lombardi – G. Cardini – S. Bussotti – G. Chiari, Fondazione Atopos ATP 009 (2000); Giuseppe Chiari: Antologia 1950-1970, Silenzio Edizioni SEAC01 (2000); Suono Segno Gesto Visione a Firenze 2: P. Grossi – G. Chiari – G. Cardini – A. Mayr – D. Lombardi – M. Aitiani – S. Maltagliati, Fondazione Atopos ATP 010 (2008); Giuseppe Chiari – Piero Mottola: Opere ed emissioni, Gangemi Editore (2010). In 2010 Die Schachtel published in a double LP+CD Edition the album Giuseppe Chiari +/- Daniele Lombardi Costellazioni (DSART 07+09), documenting the concert held on the 28th of September 2006 at the Saloncino del Teatro della Pergola in Florence, organised in honour of Giuseppe Chiari for his eightieth birthday, with the participation of Frederic Rzewski, Giancarlo Cardini and Daniele Lombardi flanking the author.

Giuseppe Chiari died in Florence on the 9th of May 2007. In 2019 in Slovacchia, at Art Gallery in Zilina, is opened Giuseppe Chiari in Zilina, the first exhibition by the artist, organized by the Italian Institut of Culture of Bratislava, with the cooperation of the Embassy of Italy in Slovacchia, of the gallery of Zilina, of the Archive Giuseppe e Vittoria Chiari in Florence and of the Archive Carlo Palli in Prato. In 2020 is presented Giuseppe Chiari. Sound, Word, Action, at Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio of Jesi, Palazzo Bisaccioni; his work is included at the 2020 Art Quadriennial OUTSIDE, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (30 Oct. 2020 - 18 May 2021).