

# DIEGO ESPOSITO IN DIALOGUE WITH BRUNO CORÀ

**Bruno Corà** Starting from the present, let's talk about how this exhibition came about. What are the criteria that drove you to orient yourself in this new experience, what are the wishes, how were the works conceived, what's the idea behind this show?

**Diego Esposito** There had been talk of this show for some time. But only when we decided the date did I start to reflect about how to get started, I was in Venice and I had the plan of Palazzo Fabroni in front of me. Looking at it I felt the need to colour the various rooms, to create a coloured alphabet for myself. Let's say that colour was the starting point.

**B.C.** I remember that the presence of colour has been a constant in your work for many years. So how did this need begin?

**D.E.** The first thing that attracted me to painting was colour. I had a great love for Cézanne and his *Montagne Sainte-Victoire*. I was struck by the form that reminded me of the Abruzzo of my childhood. But what struck me more was that the colour served to express volume, it was drawing and form together. So I saw colour... that is I don't see it as colour, but as colour-form, like a place of echoes, with sounds, with its vibrations. Picasso said of Matisse: "He has the sun in his belly". This phrase comes to mind every time I think of Matisse, who came from the north and who was one of the most Mediterranean and radiant artists!

**B.C.** You were born in Teramo, but where did you come into contact with art?

**D.E.** Teramo has a splendid Jacobello del Fiore in the Cathedral. The first things came from my imagination, looking round. Then from books, from art magazines and from poetry: one day I heard Ungaretti in Giulianova. I was about twenty years old. Very soon, I started travelling.

**B.C.** When did you set off on your first trip?

**D.E.** The first trip, when I was around ten years old, was to the nearest city, Rome. I was speechless in front of that astonishing representation thing that is the Sistine Chapel. However the museum that I liked best then was the Villa Borghese, with Titian and Caravaggio. Then I started visiting the Venice Biennale: I travelled by night, I really felt the need to see painting. In the National Museum in Naples, where I studied, the places I visited most were the rooms of the Pompeian frescoes. There I understood that there is no difference between ancient and modern art; there is only art, and it is always contemporary.

**B.C.** I first heard about your work in the catalogue of an Italian art exhibition held in Philadelphia *Italy Two, Art around '70* (1973).

What did that exhibition mean to you and what type of work were you presenting at that moment?

**D.E.** That exhibition was conceived by Filiberto Menna and Alberto Boatto, I however did a bit of the promotion because I know some people in the United States where I had lived for four years.

**B.C.** When did you go to the United States?

**D.E.** In '68.

**B.C.** And how did you come to go there?

**D.E.** Because I had a scholarship to Temple University.

**B.C.** ...You were already painting, so you were working?

**D.E.** Yes, they had seen my works in Rome, where still today they have a branch. The Director liked them, and invited me to the USA.

**B.C.** You had already exhibited, shown?

**D.E.** Yes, but nothing important.

**B.C.** How long did it last and how was that trip and that experience characterized?

**D.E.** I stayed in the United States until 1971-72. First in Philadelphia then in New York. It was an extremely interesting period, Pop was at its height and Minimal and Conceptual were already making a name for themselves.

**B.C.** In Philadelphia did you have the opportunity to see any artists that were particularly interesting for you?

**D.E.** Yes, it was very important seeing Duchamp's last work, *Etant donné*, the door... which could not be photographed. It was only photographed after his death. Then I met some very important collectors, I saw their collections in Philadelphia and in other cities of the United States. I was a friend of the Wolgins who were also my collectors. They bought directly from the artists, from Jasper Johns, from Rauschenberg, from Arman and from others.

**B.C.** But did meeting these artists and their work in some way also open the subject of colour?

**D.E.** Rothko and Barnett Newman without a doubt. Not only for colour, but also for the secular and at the same time spiritual vein of their painting, and for their use of space. But one of my big interests was for Malevich's work, and how he mounted the painting on the wall in the same way as an icon, after the Russian tradition.

**B.C.** And so then you went back to Rome?

**D.E.** Then I went back to Rome. I made new friendships with Tullio Catalano, Gianni Fileccia, Francesco Clemente. In '74 I went to Milan where I displayed my work at the Galleria dell'Ariete, with Beatrice Monti.

**B.C.** What work did you show there?

**D.E.** They were canvases without the support, of different forms, impregnated with colour... There were clips uniting the various fragments, which though resulted as territories without borders.

**B.C.** I'd like to ask a question about that: in those years the subject of matter of painting and of the surface which came from the French group led by artists like Cane, Devade, Dolla, Viallat and critics relation between your work and that Support-Surface research?

**D.E.** At the time I didn't know their certain trips to Mexico, together with some anthropologists from the University of Philadelphia.

**B.C.** When were you in Mexico?

**D.E.** I went to Mexico in '69 and in '70. I was fascinated by the Mayan and Aztec cultures. In Mexico city, at the National Museum of Anthropology, I saw capes of coloured feathers, artifacts that emanated an extraordinary energy.

**B.C.** There was then in your work at that time also a type of anthropological interest, while the show at Toselli (1975) produces a break with these canvases, these fabrics that have an organic base being the colour directly spread. At Toselli an altitude, an alignment, an horizon is surpassed.

**D.E.** Yes, the line corresponds to my horizon. I had painted a leaf a very beautiful cobalt blue and then I tore it into four

parts that I mounted on the wall, at my eye level.

**B.C.** But before these works there were some geometrics in paper?

**D.E.** In my studio I did some works in paper that were never shown but were published in '75 in the German *Magazin Kunst*. One work was 3.88 x 3.61 metres. A large totally white sheet of paper, with only two cuts, one horizontal, the other diagonal. A big geographical map, without definite references.

**B.C.** What was the dominant feeling of these works, the idea of territory, of travelling?

**D.E.** It was more the search for a territory not as a physical fact but as a fact of soul, of spirit, of sentiment. For a certain period there were two works in my studio, one in front of the other. The one with the horizontal and diagonal cuts and another composed of nine sheets of paper, which came out not totally stretched, but as a slightly wavy surface, like a sail.

**B.C.** When you arrived in Milan the history of this city from a contemporary art point of view kindled in you some particular interests. In this city there had been Medardo Rosso, there had been Fontana, Manzoni, all revolutionary artists.

**D.E.** Milan was not a casual choice. Though Rome was in that moment very interesting, I already knew it. Instead I had heard Milan spoken of in a certain way in the United States. There was then this curiosity tied to American tales. I have to say that I immediately got on well. Tommaso Trini presented me to Beatrice Monti and my first exhibition at the Galleria dell'Ariete was a notable success.

**B.C.** Castellani, Pistoletto... worked with the Ariete.

**D.E.** In Milan at that time there was truly something extraordinary also at an international level. At Franco Toselli there was a situation in continual movement, a continual stream of artists from every part of the world. You could talk about everything at any time of the day or night.

After the show at Toselli I showed some works on the same theme of the horizon at Massimo Minini's gallery in Brescia.

**B.C.** This problem of the horizon comes back, in a declared and explicit way, in the show at Area in Florence. What made this horizon emblematic for you, what meant giving body to this horizon, to this line which coincides with the gaze?

**D.E.** The show at Area was the close of this subject because it coincided with a moment of great crisis, but also constructive crisis, if you like. It was the end of a period, 1976, not only personal but of a general situation, political and social. It is not by chance that the show took place at Area, because Area was a beginning point at a moment of ending, of closing. It was a place where people of different provenance from a cultural point of view came together also for social and political reasons, I think of you coming from the art world, of Michele from the theatre, of our friend Paolo and of others. That space that had shown the work of artists who were then emerging, but who had been working for years, like Anselmo, Fabro, Paolini, Boetti, Sol LeWitt and others, all of a sudden showed Francesco Clemente and my work *Rievocazione del mio orizzonte* with a publication edited by you. It was very helpful for me from a human point of view, of growth. Then the fact of that space on two floors, extremely reduced, with that incredible proximity to Piazza della Signoria, where there was a very strong crush, it's true that you had to go outside every now and then because it was really excessive. It seemed like being an astronaut when they do tests in the decompression chamber and they prac-

tise for going into another world, and we were going into that other world. Michele was there coming in and going out, because outside there were some problems that he had to take care of, like a light that came on and went off, or it came on with such force that it blew a fuse and you had to go outside. It was strange that work of mine that tried to find itself again, for the last time. It had become an ideological work, but also very rigid. It was a starting over.

**B.C.** From that moment in fact a cycle, a situation, closed and there opened another as you said. The need to travel begins. Which is not always only a physical shifting, but is also the will to find yourself in comparison with other cultures, other understandings, other knowledges and then there was the continuous attempt to find, and to find oneself; it was then a self-cognitive voyage, while the acquaintance with other cultures came about. Which was the first voyage towards Greece?

**D.E.** I started travelling to Greece in 1975, '76 and '77. But I have to make a preamble: a very important encounter for me was meeting Paola Betti. She was working with Franco Toselli and at a certain point we started living together. Meeting Paola was extremely important because she was a person totally immersed, and with intelligence, in the art world, with a truly unique creative sensibility. Together with Paola I started making trips to Greece. It had become my adoptive country. As Fernand Braudel writes, "the most beautiful testimony to the immense past of the Mediterranean is that of the sea itself". Greece is not only territory, its civilization knew how to amalgamate extraordinary and also very diverse cultures. The sea keeps their traces in itself, also geologically. But without the pre-Socratics, without Plato, without Aristotle, without Pythagoras, Western thought would not exist. We visited most of the archaeological sites and spent three nights in Delos. It was an exceptional event; only archaeologists are allowed to sleep on the island. In antiquity neither being born nor dying were permitted on Delos.

**B.C.** In the Mediterranean though, parallel to the Greek one, there is an Arabic thought, a Sumerian thought, an Islamic thought. You weren't curious about these other Mediterranean lands and civilizations?

**D.E.** In Turkey we had some friends like Mustafâ Aktar, who graduated in England, and Nazan, who studied art. We did a trip through the ancient Greek cities of Asia Minor. We had with us the text of the most important Turkish archaeologist and expert of Ancient Greece in Turkey, with all the maps and various bits of useful information. I took notes and did drawings all through the trip, which started in Istanbul. On the occasion of a show I later did at Luce Monachesi in Rome, she printed a little book that had our itinerary on the cover, a quantity of intersecting white lines on a blue background.

**B.C.** But the trip in the Mediterranean however began closer to home, with a trip to Stromboli, where the work *La casa impossibile* (1977) was conceived.

**D.E.** Paola had already been to Stromboli years before. We slept in an old mill... Tucci Russo and his wife Lisa were also with us. It was very beautiful, but the presence of the volcano was quite disturbing for me. Also when you couldn't see it, you felt it... it shook, it had sudden movements and then you felt the precariousness of our house, in fact the place was of the volcano... you were there as a guest... you were always a guest, there! Once I had a wonderful experience

because one night with Giovanni Anselmo, who had been going to Stromboli for many years, we started out before dawn and we went up the volcano. When we arrived to look over the main mouth, it was always night time, there were others who were sleeping. We too lay down to sleep, but I couldn't. I had my legs inside the mouth that was calm, while the others erupted. The earth beneath me was extremely hot while the rest of my body was cold. The volcano attracted me and scared me... a stronger eruption or a change in the wind direction and... Then the dawn was fantastic because we were above the cloud line, which from time to time opened and we saw parts of Stromboli, parts of Calabria... it was like being in a Japanese painting. The return journey was a real adventure, because we got lost in an immense canebreak with a rather sheer drop to the sea!

On the volcano I took some photos, others I had taken at the door and at the window of our house. And so I put an iron structure around some glass panes and I did the show I called *La casa impossibile* because it was the house on the volcano.

**B.C.** When the voyage begins the concept of orientation also becomes evident. And in these voyages the work *Il volo dell'uccello notturno* was born which it is naturally based on different elements like photographic documentation but also something impalpable, as the emblemized light of the yellow painting could have been. Then other works lead from that moment to the problem of orientation.

**D.E.** I don't mean orientation in a horizontal sense but in a zenithal, let's say symbolic sense, and therefore a research of places not in the geographical, but spiritual sense. *Il volo dell'uccello notturno* was born in Greece, on two islands, Symi and Patmos. On Symi, during one of my curious trips around the island, I discovered a mosaic of black and white pebbles with the design of a ship and a siren which was sinking it. The siren had hair like the Medusa... it was the first time that I had seen an image of that type I immediately set about getting information from the local inhabitants. The was well-known, it is one of the things they tell to Greek children. The siren meets a ship and asks: "Is Alexander the Great alive?" If the ship answer "No!" the siren goes into a fury and sinks it. If the ship replies "Alexander the Great lives!" it can continue its voyage. And so I painted the blue paintings with the drawings of the siren of Symi. At that time I was reading Daumal's *Mount Analogue* with the imperceptible peak, and I made a sculpture with a triangular base in polystyrene and plaster which was all drawn with graphite, until the surface obtained a sheen that gave out flashes of light. Mario Merz and Vincenzo Agnetti came to the opening of the show. Merz straightaway went to touch that thing and dirtied his hands... Agnetti, who had been a chemist and had worked as such for a certain time in his life, explained to me that graphite is used in industrial machines and also in ship's engines as a lubricant. In the show there was also a large yellow canvas that reflected on the wooden floor, with a shadow of light. Inside this light shadow there were coloured folded canvases.

**B.C.** Those canvases wrapped photographs of visited places. Let's stop a moment at this problem of colour and of the yellow canvas because yellow is a chromatic value that comes back both in the exhibition at Paola Betti in Milan, in the entrance courtyard, and at Vera Biondi in Florence; and it seems in a further version in this show at the Palazzo Fabroni. Isn't that so?

**D.E.** Your question is very perceptive. In the meantime, for the show in Milan (1980) we sent the invitations after the opening. We only wanted a few people at a time, available in the evening when it was already dark. As soon as you opened the main front door of that old Milanese building, you saw a yellow light at the back illuminating a small garden, by coincidence triangular like the base of the graphite sculpture that was inside. It was like a dream image, to be viewed from afar. Then you went into the internal space and you found the yellow painting that reflected onto the floor. It was like a synergy between the internal and the external, between the small yellow coloured garden and the painting that irradiated the colour yellow. Yellow is clearly symbolic, it is radiant light... however it is also spirituality, the illumination that lets you see, an interior vision, an enrichment.

We found that yellow colour again after some years at Vera Biondi in Florence. I had lit the window and the entrance of the gallery yellow, very beautiful because it was in an old palazzo. But it annoyed me that it was on the street... there was a lot of noise, a busy thoroughfare that is very beautiful but also touristic. That yellow light was no longer to look at, but was almost mithraic in the sense that to go in you had to pass through that yellow wall of purification. Inside there was a yellow mosaic with the route for arriving at Epheus.

**B.C.** Can the use of mosaic be placed in relation with the works with glass and therefore with a conception of transparency or of light?

**D.E.** I had done those works with glass many years earlier, at the same time as the torn papers.

**B.C.** You were also interested in the problem of iridescence?

**D.E.** Yes, I had also done a work on a glass door of the kitchen at Maria Mulas' house. I put a circle painted in various colours that I called *Luce bianca*.

**B.C.** The light, which reveals itself as a constant interest, brought also by the reflections on the colour yellow, on Goethe's theory of colour, like expansion, passes through the experience of the mosaic, which is one of the vehicles of irradiation, of multiplications of light used since Byzantine art.

**D.E.** Yes, it's true, it's strange but I hadn't thought of the mosaic at Venice, not at Ravenna. I discovered it in Istanbul, which is already in itself a place with incredible, very strong light. I was struck with the need to create, with a technique, a further multiplication of that already strong light. At that point I also used mosaics. A very difficult thing to do because it seemed a contradictory choice, almost reactionary. I had however understood that the problem was not in the technique, not in the material, but in how it was used. I used it as a primary element, as something containing light.

**B.C.** But it's curious that this use of the mosaic as an element that has light in itself and that refracts it and irradiates it, carries from there in a short time to the "black bodies" and the "invisible objects". How is that so?

**D.E.** It is however always a problem of light. If you arrive at an excess of light, you don't see anymore. Objects arriving at incandescence are called black bodies. They become invisible. It is the series that I showed for the first time in Rome at Luce Monachesi.

**B.C.** Was there a connection between the name Luce (light) Monachesi and these works?

**D.E.** I like this play on words, on complicities...

**B.C.** So these *Corpi neri* and *Oggetti invisibili* (1985-88) let loose some opposites, but also introduced, in their own way,

another research that became manifest in you, of your way of conceiving art. I'm alluding to the problem of loss, of disappearance, of the abandonment of the artistic body with the *Invisible Object Inclined towards North-West*, of that experience in Turkey. Do you want to talk about it?

**D.E.** In Istanbul I was attracted by a very small island, almost exactly in the centre of the Bosphorus, where there was a tower which is now a lighthouse. It signals the border between Europe and Asia... In fact Istanbul is between two continents, one part in Europe, the other in Asia. The island of Leander, for so it is called, is a border made lighthouse. Borders for me have always been places of attraction, not of separation. It's a magnificent little island! For some years I had been thinking of doing a work right there. When I said as much my Turkish friends were quite worried. The island of Leander is a military area... But for artists military areas don't exist... So they put me in contact with an extraordinary person, a grand musicologist, a man of great intensity and very social, who knows everyone in Istanbul! He took me to the offices of his friend, the Admiral of the Bosphorus. They gave me permission quickly, but only for a limited time, a stay of not more than two hours. We got prepared... The next day we rented a boat, the people at the lighthouse were warned: we arrived, we placed the work on the top of the tower and a professional Turkish photographer took some photos when a red-painted ship was passing... Then, back on board, I let the sculpture slip into the sea next to the island of Leander. I don't know if it is in Asia or in Europe. The wonderful thing is that it didn't sink immediately, because it was hollow inside. It started spinning round and, little by little, as it filled up with water, it spun always more vortically. Paola managed to take some impossible photos... She took one when the sea was exactly at the edge and another at the instant when the sculpture began sinking, with the colours that lost their definition, that were dissolving. And then there was the last image, that of the disappearance... It was a ceramic sculpture, done at the studio of a noted Turkish ceramicist. That too is a rather strange story... but beautiful.

**B.C.** Modelled, painted and fired in Istanbul?

**D.E.** ...Yes, painted and fired in that city. Only that the ceramicist was deaf and only spoke Turkish. I made drawings to speak to him. A wonderful relationship developed between us, all through drawings. One day I'd like to make a book of those drawings.

**B.C.** The disappearance is consequent to a stance. Why did you want to make this body disappear?

**D.E.** Disappear in the sense that, for me, things never disappear, but you have to let them disappear sometimes to be able to protect them.

**B.C.** After this exercise in the absence more than the presence, in the disappearance more than the appearance, the work submerges in one sea and re-emerges in another, in Venice, re-emerges as an embryonic form from the waters like Venus, as an idea of beauty, and finds this site at the Dogana.

**D.E.** It is not by chance that this takes place in Venice, in the sense that experience starts from Istanbul, the ancient Constantinople, and arrives at Venice. Venice was the direct heir of Byzantium, as Florence was of Athens. Venice is a city which has given me a lot... where the quality of the light is extraordinary, and could be defined as "an exceptional event". Venice is almost a utopia. It is a place suspended

between two mirrors, the sky and the water, the city is immersed in a continuous luminous vibration.

**B.C.** After *Oro* (1987), *Intervallo* and *Specchio* (1989-90), at a certain moment works bearing the problem sonority are born. They are that collection of works that could be seen at Mesola Castle (1991).

**D.E.** The exhibition at Mesola Castle was held in four rooms, with four titles: *Stanza degli organi sottili - Stanza del pozzo - Stanza della musica - Stanza del cielo*. In the grand central hall, the *Stanza degli organi sottili*, there were two sculptures... The first was *Cerchi di luce*... formed by seven circles of different colours, placed on a vertical axis. The second was *Orientata*, a sculpture in blue, with a directional element mounted on the top. Then there was the *Stanza del pozzo*... I had put the sculpture in the centre of the room, on the same axis as the *Cerchi di luce*. There you could see from the entrance through the coloured circles. To have more luminous vibrations, I had a fanlight that was on the back wall re-opened, above the *Pozzo*... That light source gave a big prominence to the white of the *Pozzo*. Moreover it was the first time I had used MDF. To the right and to the left of the *Pozzo* there were *O blu* and *O giallo*, which were two sculptures in fibreglass in an elliptical concave form.

In the *Stanza della musica*, which I had also called *Luce dell'udito*, there were four works on the walls and a sculpture, *Forma sonora*, on the floor. The works were all black and white. I had placed them in such a way as to create an ensemble... polyphonic. They had articulated forms or were in overlapping planes, like *Suono* and *Schermo*, that accentuated the sonorous effect. *Colore verso suono*, which is on show here at the Palazzo Fabroni, also has a dominant base of black and white. I wanted to give the ground a chromatic and formal stability, that would accentuate the dynamism of the coloured circles. It is like a sort of dynamic poise.

**B.C.** With this summary, we are practically at the threshold of the 1990s, close to the idea of the show at the Mudima where new works appeared: *Dualitudine II* (1989-93), *Arco* (1993), *Giardino* (1993). And also that unvisitable place that you hold closed. With respect to the problem of sonority, these places where form is condensed and that also bear evidence of a treatment, for example the idea of furrows, or of luminosity, or of reflections, like *Arco* or *Dualitudine*, what are the criteria that at this point are driving the new action?

**D.E.** The show at Mesola was one that outlined the need to formalize an orientation... there was the will to select some elements already present in my work because they had gone through a sort of decantation. There were two points of force: the light, a white light, a metaphysical light emerging from the *Pozzo*, a light that can't be seen because it is itself that renders visible: the formalization of the sound in the *Stanza della musica*, an idea giving the sound form in a clear and distinct way, and that had already been manifest in *Forma sonora*. An idea that was further strengthened in the *Stanza* at the Mudima that resounded with the reverberation of the gold.

**B.C.** So when did you make the first trip to Japan?

**D.E.** In October of '92.

**B.C.** So, straight after the show at Mesola Castle?

**D.E.** Yes, about a year after... and in fact in the Mudima show you can already sense that experience. The importance of the space as suspension, as rhythm, as interval. The importance of the void, of time, of space-time... Concepts as important for the architectonic space as, for me, for the

conception of the same artwork. Mudima is a space that is developed in a vertical sense, it has one, two, three floors and when you arrive at the top, that cut between the second and third floors gives you the chance to see the gold of the arc. For the *Stanza* there were two readings... in the sense that in the absence of any indications... which was the *Stanza*? The *Stanza* could have been both the room where you entered and where that work that we find also here of the engraved circle was, and the room closed with MDF, that turned out however as a place of concentration.

**B.C.** I'd like to reflect on the *Pozzo* and on the work that in Perugia at Opera upset the valence.

**D.E.** You're speaking of the *Soffitto* in Perugia?

**B.C.** Yes, the ceiling in Perugia.

**D.E.** The ceiling in Perugia of 1991 was in reality a false ceiling in MDF with a panel at the centre from which you could perceive a colour blue in the depths. It was made in a room adjacent to the one where I mounted the *Pozzo*. I had the windows of the room closed so that you entered into darkness... then, little by little, your eyes adapted to the dark and the opening in the ceiling began to pulsate, without perceiving the distance...

**B.C.** After these episodes, once again some trips to Japan seem to have deepened a certain type of sensibility towards the form meant as place of acceptance, as lived aspect, and I'd like very much now to discuss these presences, the work in Amsterdam, the interventions at the Villa Imbarcati, the relationship with the commission and with the open spaces of the Villa Jucker. Japan is an appeal both to nature and culture.

**D.E.** I was called to the Villa Imbarcati by Marco Dezzi Badeschi, who was projecting the restoration of the villa with Laura Bucciardini. There were four floors to do, at the four sides of the grand hall at the centre of the ground floor. The villa had a history and was, or rather is, very beautiful. We decided to do four floor works representing the four elements - fire - water - earth - air. Silvano Gori welcomed my interventions with a great openness and willingness... I spent some months looking for materials... coloured marbles, glass mosaics with gold leaf from Murano, mother of pearl for the Air room.

Then there was the extraordinary experience of the Villa Jucker in Gozzano, on Lake Orta. Marcella and Paolo Jucker had asked me to solve the problem of a stream flowing down a slope of their splendid park. I started working there using local stones and granite. I made seven ledges in granite slabs, carved in parallel furrows. The water flows in a threadlike way and falls from one slab to another as though it were combed. The different heights of the ledges create different sounds. At the foot of the slope there was a pre-existent basin. I did nothing more than raise the banks towards the inside and it became a sun. We started placing plants and flowers with the gardener. It was extraordinary seeing how, little by little, as time passed, a natural habitat was created along the stream,

In these private commissions I found a more natural way to express myself. I'd like to play with these words - nature - more natural.

Then with the exhibition at the Bicker Studio in Amsterdam in mind, I projected a work which repropose the stream and that I named *Cascata*. The space was very big because it was formerly a naval dockyard... it had a particular light, transparent, truly beautiful. The work was 18 metres long.

In Pistoia, in considering the space of the Palazzo Fabroni, with its splendid succession of doors, the effect of the *Cascata* which crossed them from beginning to end, was an image with a certain force. The function of the doors was distorted by the obstruction from going through them and however they signalled the blue line with a rhythmic succession. In Amsterdam I had mounted another work, *Pescatore del cielo*, outside the window, on the iron I-beams, where the just-built boats slid into the canal... On the surfaces I inserted moving elements that played with the wind and the rain.

**B.C.** There are in the end a series of works that you have brought here. Works that find again this interest for sonority and that seem scanned, them too, like a score: once with the colour blue, once with gold, but there is always this will to divide a surface through intervals and this of itself brings a rhythmic component. Always in the desire, I seem to gather, that colour and sound converge to create an intense and beneficial place.

**D.E.** Yes, these rooms of the Palazzo Fabroni have given me the possibility of beating out, of feeling even more these intervals, these passages, these pauses, these rhythms, these confusions. Palazzo Fabroni has a history across the centuries, it is formed by two palaces. The walls are like red ochre preparatory sketches for a fresco, giving the impression of seeing what is behind. The light is as though formed by many lights, it is not only the light of today, but it is the light of today through the light of the past. Then the view on Sant'Andrea, with its longitudinal cuts, light and dark... I thought of this exhibition as a route through different rooms, that in the end results in an *unicum* notwithstanding the apparent diversity... It is the alternative to the strong idea. The invisibility of the centre.

There are two works made specifically for the space, *Dialogo* and *Passaggio*. The light plays a primary role in both of them. In *Dialogo* it constitutes the light source and at the same time a diaphragm. It highlights the situation of calm expectation of the two central sculptures. In *Passaggio* it creates the interrogative, it accentuates the fluctuating element of the walls in MDF. But I would like to close hinting again at my experiences in Japan and at the meaning of the word *ma* that I heard as in keeping with my sensibility. *Ma* as a character has its origins in China, where it referred only to space, but when it arrived in Japan, it took the meaning of time as well. For this reason *ma* is far from Western culture, which tends instead to separate time from space. Amongst those who know the word, everyone gave their own interpretation. I have collected some... the void that exists between objects, the interval of space-time between things, the pause, the silence...

### Diego Esposito in dialogue with Bruno Corà on occasion of the exhibition at Palazzo Fabroni, Pistoia, 1998

"*Voyages, Intervals, Passages*"