

Franco Mazzucchelli & Santo Tolone

Franto Sanco

28 February - 12 April 2025

Opening 27 February, 6 - 8 pm

Simeti Project Space
Via Seneca 4/6 - Milano

From SPS comes a dialogue between Franco Mazzucchelli and Santo Tolone, born from a shared subject: a lemon.

With his iconic approach to inflatable objects, Mazzucchelli creates an enormous oversized lemon, designed specifically for this exhibition space. The artwork, with its imposing presence, almost completely invades the environment, obstructing the view and transforming the space into an immersive and surreal experience. Pop language, irony, and exaggeration are key elements in the artist's research, and here they manifest in a radical alteration of proportions. The lemon becomes an obstacle, an object that is at once playful and disorienting, evoking the suspension of reality typical of Magritte's paintings, particularly *The Listening Room*, where the enlargement of the object alters the perception of the surrounding environment.

Tolone, on the other hand, focuses on a minimal detail of the fruit: its seeds. He translates them into an essential sculpture that, in its small and measured dimension, amplifies the sense of disorientation generated by the whole. While Mazzucchelli's work imposes its playful and overflowing physicality, Tolone's suggests a more intimate experience, inviting a different mode of observation. The artist's work moves between subtraction and formal precision, offering an image that seems suspended between reality and abstraction.

The exhibition thus takes shape as a form of play, a dialogue between two perspectives that are generationally distant yet united by the desire to explore the representation of a simple and universal subject. The result is an exhibition experience in which the perception of space is transformed: the large and the small, the invasive and the discreet, the inflatable and the solid confront each other in a play of references and contrasts, where the distance between the two interventions becomes a point of contact.

Franco Mazzucchelli (1939, Milan) is renowned for his pioneering experimentation with synthetic materials during the 1960s and his creation of large-scale, public spatial installations that disrupted the quotidian conventions of local communities. The works temporally became part of the urban landscape, and the contact with passersby activated their unexpected social roles: the public did not passively admire the artworks but was rather keen to touch them, move them around, play with them, and even take them away. Since the early 2000s, his exploration has expanded to include inflatable canvases known as *Bieca Decorazione* (pure decoration). He self-deprecatingly employs this term to narrate the rationale behind the painting as pure aesthetic enjoyment and its relation to commercial logic.

His inflatable sculptures and spatial installations have been displayed in several locations in Italy and abroad, such as Alfa Romeo Factory, Milan; Piazza San Fedele, Milan; Brera Academy of Fine Arts, Milan; Sforza Castle, Milan; Piazza dei Priori, Volterra; Como Lake; Munich; Camargue. His works have been shown in historical exhibitions, including the 60th Venice Biennale, Venice (2024); the 13th Quadriennale, Rome (1999); the 11th Quadriennale, Rome (1986); the 37th Venice Biennale, Venice (1976); the 15th Triennale di Milano, Milan (1973). His works have been exhibited at MACRO – Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome, Rome (2021); Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz (2021); Cité de l'Architecture, Paris (2021); ArtScience Museum, Singapore (2020); Konsthall Lund, Lund (2020); Kunsthalle Wien, Wien (2019); Center for Art and Media – ZKM, Karlsruhe (2019); nGbK, Berlin (2018); Museo del Novecento, Milan (2018); among others. Mazzucchelli received the Alfredo d'Andrade Lifetime Achievement Award in 20

Santo Tolone (1979, Milan) has studied and worked between Italy and England. His educational background was largely shaped by a long-term involvement with Isola Art Center in Milan, an artist-run and community-based organisation. With interventions ranging from video, photography, installation and sculpture, his practice is an overall attempt to trace the path from mental construct to signification and from pattern to realisation, thus becoming the opposite of abstraction. In his practice he uses formal and compositional abstraction, the artist modifies the characteristics of objects and situations by redefining their forms but still leaving the perception of them recognisable.

His work have been exhibited in various public institutions in Italy and internationally, including Fondazione Nomas, Rome (2018); La Panacée, Montpellier (2017); Fondazione Barucchetto, Rome (2016); Triennale, Milan (2015); Palazzo della Permanente, Milan (2015); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2014); Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2013/2014); Palazzo Reale, Milan (2011); Tate Modern, London (2010); Le Magasin Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble (2010); Villa Necchi Campiglio, Milan (2010); PAC Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan (2010). Tolone was awarded the Present Future ILLY prize at Artissima, Turin in 2012