

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GIANFRANCO CHIAVACCI

WORKS: 1957 - 2005

ON VIEW

SEPT. 13, 2018 - NOV 17, 2018

OPENING RECEPTION

THURSDAY, SEPT. 13, 6 - 8:00 PM



Sculpture Self Portrait GF1771, 1980  
© Gianfranco Chiavacci

(New York, August 2018) - Sous Les Etoiles Gallery is pleased to announce, "Works 1957-2005" the first survey exhibition in the United States of the Italian artist Gianfranco Chiavacci (1936-2011). Tirelessly inventive and driven by an insatiable curiosity, Gianfranco Chiavacci developed, over the course of his fifty-year-long career, a poetically experimental artistry that deviated from the conventional rules of creation. By intersecting the experiences of the binary language with the expression of abstract art, Chiavacci has demonstrated a pioneer vision seeking to decode this language by applying it in his paintings, photographs, drawings and sculptures. Chiavacci's work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions around Italy since 1967. In 2015, a joint exhibition with French artist François Morellet, founding member of op-kinetic art research group G.R.A.V., titled Chiavacci | Morellet, rigorosi, rigolards... was conceived as a dialogue between these two polymorphic artists.

A self-taught and innovative Tuscan artist, Gianfranco Chiavacci was born in 1936 in Pistoia, near Florence, where he lived and worked for all his life. Surrounded by exceptional artistic circles around Milan and Florence such as Fiamma Vigo's Galleria Numero, notorious for its unmatched flavor for the avant-garde and kinetic, abstract and geometric art, Chiavacci began his career as a painter in the 1950's.

In 1962, after taking a programming course on IBM's first computers, this new form of language sparked Chiavacci's curiosity. With aspects of optical and kinetic art, he began by making two and three-dimensional paintings experimenting with different materials creating geometric figures and forms, all while never using the computer, only the binary logic that is inherent to it. The adoption of the binary logic- defined by the artist " as a two-state logic (not to be confused with duality or dualism) and as an instrumental process-technique for creating and experimentally investigating the formal world pertaining in two-dimensionality", became an essential core of his theoretical thinking and practice (1). This discovery of the binary language, drove him to experiment and develop an almost obsessive aesthetic in his work. Chiavacci was also absorbed in the middle of two important Italian movements of the 1960s, Arte Programmata (2) and Arte Povera, which inspired him to create a style of his own.

Most prominent in his paintings, Chiavacci explores the experimentation of the binary logic starting with piece GF0005 in 1963. The idea of two-dimensionality is examined and occasionally extended within three-dimensional space, such as in piece GF0572 (1984) where the occurrences of three-dimensionality find their dissolution. Moreover, the juxtaposition of materials, threads and colors, all of them primary, despite the diversity of their function, have the same importance. These elements taken separately or in their entirety coexist according to pre-determined rules and arithmetic equations. Each work appears as a programmed experience. To this point for example, in 1964, his red machine-like sculpture, GF0220 (1964) is an exceptional sculpture that anticipated the vision of the network and the creation of computer language's accessibility. Three years after, the artist built his first analytical machine, GF0076, ten years prior to the creation of personal computers.

<sup>1</sup> Binary language is a code commonly used by computers to represent information using two numbers, 0 and 1. Gianfranco Chiavacci uses this logic to represent his philosophy that everything we experience has two sides: yes or no, vertical or horizontal, up or down, existence or non-existence. He wrote much and always accompanied his work with a personal diary in which he annotated his thoughts, the combinations and the technical aspects of the work. He has created his own word Blnarieta to define his own approach.

<sup>2</sup> The Arte Programmata movement became an important abstract art movement of the 1960s in Italy after the exhibition of May 1962, presented at the Olivetti showroom in Milan, Arte programmata. Arte cinetica. Opere moltiplicate. Opera aperta, curated by Bruno Munari and Giorgio Soavi. The exhibition included works from Giovanni Anceschi, Davide Boriani, Gianni Colombo, Gabriele Devecchi, Gruppo N, Gruppo T, Bruno Munari and Grazia Varisco. It later travelled to Venice, Rome, Düsseldorf, London and the United States circulated by the Smithsonian Institution from July 1964 to July 1966.

SOUS LES ETOILES GALLERY

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In the 1970s, Chiavacci began to use photography as a tool of investigation of his binary experimentation. By separating himself from the common use of the camera, he researched, recorded and repeated the movements of objects in space and time. Using compositions, photograms, solarization, three-dimensional sculptures, color slides and most importantly, light and effects, he developed his most extensive series *Ricerche Fotografice* (Photographic Research), a body of work representing the purest form of abstraction. In 1971, Chiavacci used the camera to develop a series that reflects the movement and detection of light in the viewfinder. In "Translations, Rotations, Blurs" (1971) Chiavacci used the movements of simple objects such as cardboard to create a variety of movements in space and time.

Throughout all of his series, like his "Cibachrome" series from 1973, also known as *Ilfoflex*, and his self-portraits and photo montages, Chiavacci never ceased to integrate his passion for the binary. Whether it was during a family vacation or daily life, Chiavacci's use of complementary colors or the use of negative and positive space show the viewer that he was constantly in search of new two-dimensional opportunities.

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### Most Recent Exhibitions

2015: Gianfranco Chiavacci | *François Morellet rigorusi, rigolards...* curated by Alessandro Gallicchio, Artforms and Die Mauer, Prato, Italy.

2013 "Fotografia Totale," curated by Valerio Dehò, Palazzo Fabroni, Pistoia, Italy.

2012: "Gianfranco Chiavacci - Ricerca Fotografica," curated by Angela Madessani & Aldo Iori, Milan Image Art Fair 2012, Milan, Italy.

2007: "Gianfranco Chiavacci," curated by Aldo Iori, Centro di Documentazione sull'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea Pistoiese, Pistoia, Italy.

2003: "Gianfranco Chiavacci," Galleria Vannucci, Pistoia, Italy.

1994: "Gianfranco Chiavacci. Limiti," curated by Bruno Corà, Opera Associazione Culturale per le Arti Visive, Perugia, Italy.

1996: "Fernando Melani (e gli amici di Fernando Melani)," Galleria Vannucci, Pistoia, Italy.

1984: "Por la Paz, Mostra Internazionale di Mail Art," Santo Domingo University, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

1973: "Gianfranco Chiavacci. Binarietà," Ti. Zero Center of Experimental Aesthetic Research, Turin, Italy.

1967: "Gianfranco Chiavacci," Galleria Numero, Florence, Italy.

1966: "Piccolo Formato," Galleria Numero, Florence, Italy.

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