

**Catalogue of the exhibition “Ricostruzione teorica di un artista; Bruno Munari nelle collezioni Vodoz – Danese, Milano, 1996**

**BRUNO MUNARI: BRUNO MUNARI THE PAINTER by Marco Romanelli**

This is not an exhibition: it is the story of a life (Munari's) spent, among other things, painting (from his earliest work dated 1914, when he was 7, to the penultimate, of 1966. The latest will come). But it is also the story of an encounter, in 1955, between Bruno Munari himself and Jacqueline Vodoz and Bruno Danese. An encounter that changed many things: to start with, three lives, those of the two Brunos and that of Jacqueline, and them, incidentally, the story of design. An encounter that with time became an unshakeable friendship. An unshakeable friendship which in time grew into an art collection. The one presented here today.

Jacqueline and Bruno have followed every step in the other Bruno's career, including those of the past (by buying the works of the past). They have produced other works by him in multiples, and others they have given away as travel sculpture gifts.

After exactly forty years this year, of common endeavour, the home of Bruno Danese and Jaqueline Vodoz (and, consequently, the Association that bears their names) is home to an extraordinary collection with one main character in it: Bruno Munari. We have chosen to show only a part of this collection: the part concerned with the so-called major arts (painting and sculpture), as they were called when their adepts were known as painters and sculptors. Why this choice? Because we wanted to affirm loud and clear, quite apart from the will of Munari himself (an anti-specialist), the place occupied by Bruno Munari in the history of contemporary art. His place as an indisputable master, though this is not really what we are interested in: what interests us most of all is his place as an experimenter, an eternal forerunner. His were the first mobiles (“useless machines”, from 1932), his the idea that the painting and the wall together create the work's space (the “negative-positives”, from 1949), his the idea that today's technology, that today is yesterday, should be instantly preserved (“fossil of the years 2000”, from 1959), his the idea that art can also be folded up and carried around from house to house, from hotel room to hotel room (“travel sculptures”, from 1958), his the idea that writing can become an artistic story (“illegible writings”, from 1947), and finally, his the idea that even machines, if turned on by the artist, can produce art (the slides-projector with “direct projections”, from 1951, but, most of all, the machine for photocopies with “xerographs”, from 1964). In short, to show Munari the PAINTER, all together, also means showing how much Munari, who has hidden behind the fabulous fact of his being simultaneously graphic/designer/illustrator, has influenced the backgrounds and experiences of numerous other artists that have chosen to be artists only. To show Munari the PAINTER in the private collections of Jacqueline Vodoz and Bruno Danese means furthermore to show, or to afford glimpses of a long journey that started in 1927 and is still evolving.

To show Munari the PAINTER means above all, at the end of this second millennium, to pause for a moment to get our breath back before the long millennium that will soon be here.