

The background of the entire page is a detailed architectural drawing in a dark blue ink on a lighter blue background. It depicts a classical building facade with several arches and columns. The drawing is somewhat sketchy and includes various details like a rooster, a sun, and some inscriptions. The title text is overlaid on this drawing.

THEATRA PINO MUNDI PASCALI

VILLÆ

VILLA D'ESTE TIVOLI

7 December 2022 –

7 May 2023

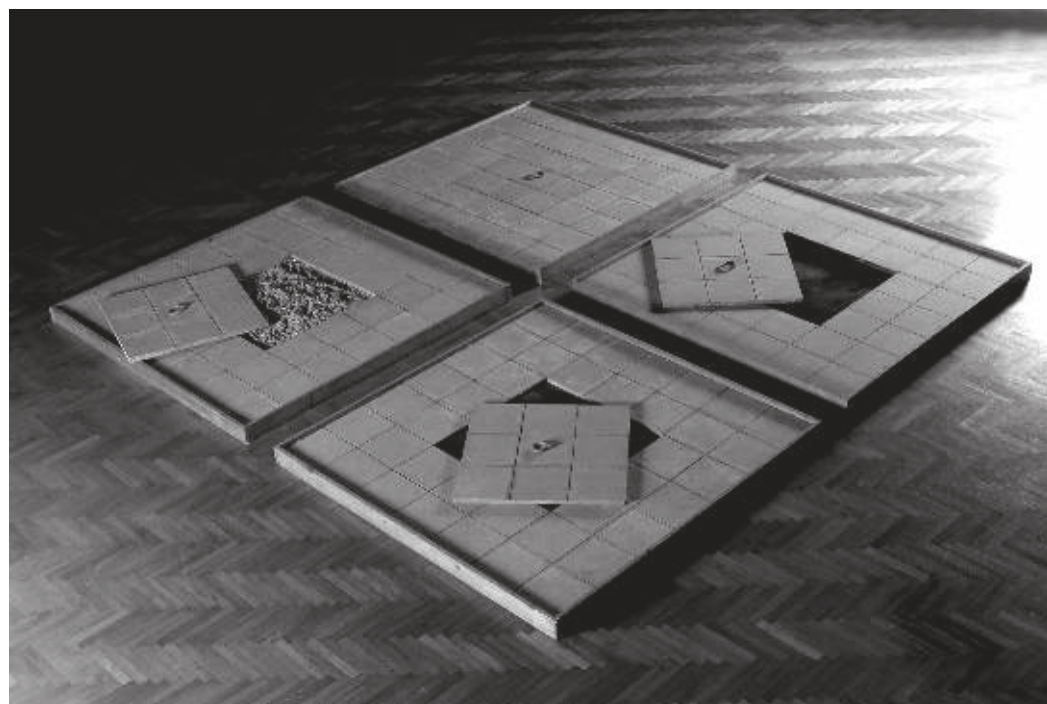
Curated by Andrea Bruciati

english

When in 1915 Giacomo Balla and Fortunato Depero published their “Futurist Reconstruction of the Universe Manifesto”, the futurist movement was moving towards a second phase in which the demand for a total art aspired to influence a number of aspects of existence through a radical transformation of the environment. The idea of using different materials – metals, fabrics, liquids, etc – to create works of art was also considered and put forward in an anticipation of polymateric art: “We futurists, Balla and Depero, want to create this complete fusion in order to rebuild the universe and to make it more joyful, in other words, completely recreating it. We will provide a skeleton and flesh for the invisible, the intangible, the imponderable, the imperceptible. We will find abstract equivalents for all the shapes and elements in the universe, then we will combine them together, according to the whims of our inspiration, to create three-dimensional wholes that we will put into motion”.

As well as a painter and sculptor, Pino Pascali (Bari 1935 – Rome 1968) was an animator, graphic designer, advertising artist, set designer, actor and photographer. From his earliest work, Mediterranean archetypes and myths came together in his imaginary world, becoming entwined with contemporary inspiration and creating an ironic production that is deeply surprising and sometimes irreverent. In 1955 Pascali moved to Rome to study set design at city’s Academy of Fine Arts. He and his colleagues were particularly enthused by the lessons given by Toti Scialoja, who taught stagecraft, and was an iconoclastic spirit and the promoter of a free use of materials.

Pino Pascali, TRAPDOORS OR WORK IN PROGRESS, 1967, wood, water and sand



Toti Scialoja’s work in theatre set design, which has not been researched very much, was an essential part of his artistic and intellectual career. A multi-faceted and prolific artist, Scialoja’s prominent role in the cultural landscape of the second half of the twentieth century is not yet fully recognised.

Starting from the second half of the 1950s, Scialoja didn’t just impose himself on the international scene as the foremost exponent of abstract Italian expressionism, but he also took on theatre direction and set design: painting, poetry and theatre were thus strong passions, and ones that were cultivated with equal intensity so the painter and set designer operated in parallel, exchanging intuitive feelings and brilliant formal solutions.

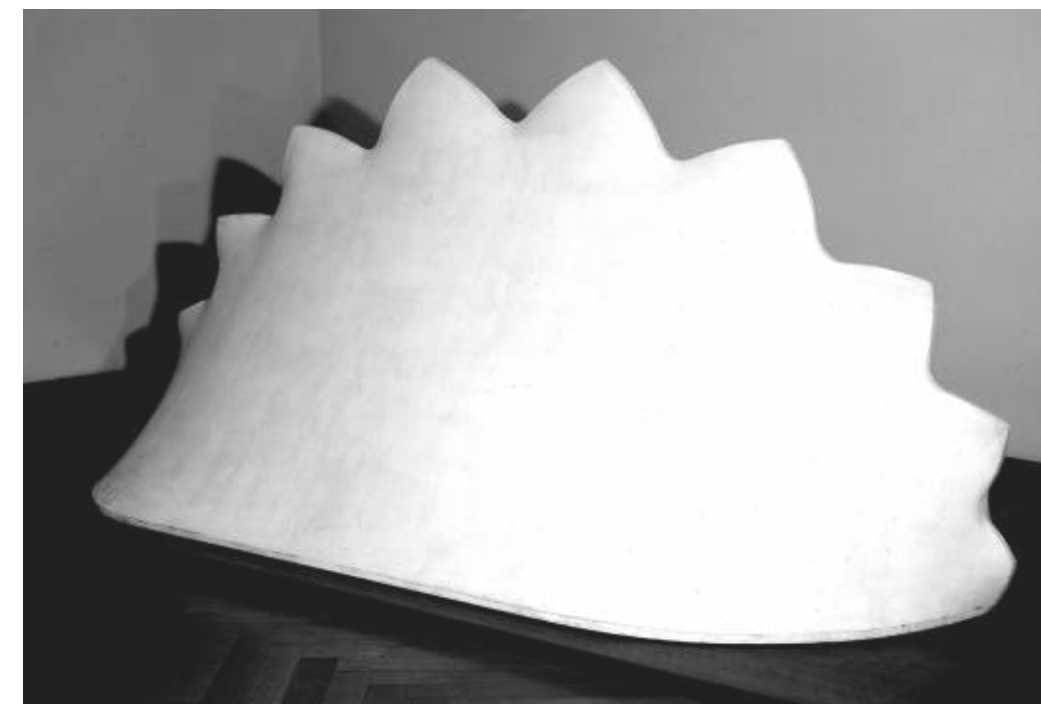
Pascali was both an ideal witness to this reformulation of the universe encouraged by futurism, and also inspired by a *maestro* who was acutely receptive of the notion of the world as a stage in which to inject his own contemplative – verging on the metaphysical – sensitivity. Starting from the 1964 Biennale, the one through which the Americans imposed their cultural, capitalist and consumerist model upon the world, Pascali reworked the themes of Pop Art in a personal language: anatomical pieces and Roman antiquities are treated as consumer objects, at the same time images of the present and remnants of a past that had never been fully eclipsed.

Pino Pascali, AGRICULTURAL TOOLS, 1968, groups of tools, rough wood, straw



In all of Pascali’s work, his clear propensity towards transformation clearly emerges, a mode that bestowed an artistic trajectory that was a tightrope, very short but nevertheless incendiary. This was a consequence of his reputation as an *enfant terrible*, a term that perfectly reflected his explosive temperament, irony, propensity for playfulness and fun, but also his extraordinary inventive capacity, which meant that he was able to make a significant mark on western contemporary art in under five years. With his implacable creative fury, he burst into galleries, and his shows followed unceasingly one after the other. All this in less than five years, from January 1965, when he had his first one-man show at the La Tartaruga in Rome, to 30 August 1968 (the day of his accident).

Pino Pascali, DINOSAUR AT REST, 1966, rough framed canvas treated with china clay



Villa d’Este, a place of metamorphosis and a unique syncretic setting combining the natural world and the artificial, hosts the theatrical and changing values of an artist who has put the wonderful and the world as a stage at his service, emphasising his central role as a workshop of the contemporary with strong roots in history. Two events, serving as significant precedents, will strengthen the links between Pascali and Villa d’Este: in 1956 Pino Pascali, who had just started at the Academy of Fine Arts, took part in the exhibition for young artists “Exhibition of Paintings from the Istituto Tommaseo in Tivoli” and in 2007 his two works, *Silkworms* and *River with Three Mouths* were displayed at Villa d’Este as part of “1950s – 1960s Sculpture in Italy”, an exhibition in collaboration with the GNAM of Rome. Exhibiting Pino Pascali’s work at Villa d’Este seeks to give continuity to the link between the artist and the theatrical mannerist residence by presenting it as the perfect setting to display the brief and extraordinary career of the artist, a resourceful innovator and multifaceted interpreter.