



## **Turi Simeti**

Following the opening of his retrospective at Tornabuoni Art Paris, Turi Simeti reflects on his artistic practice from 1960s to present.

**You began your career as an envelope maker in Rome. How did this lay the foundation for your artistic path?**

I didn't sell envelopes but art books, the *Enciclopedia Universale dell'Arte* to be more precise. This led me to come into contact with a number of artists. It was then that I met Alberto Burri and approached the art world in a Rome, characterized at the end of the '50s and the beginning of the '60s by an intense artistic and cultural ferment. I used the envelopes during this first period, when I started working with collages, firstly using only orange envelopes, then exploring different shapes and forms of paper and cardboard, repeated at regular intervals, covering the entire canvas. In 1965, these early works were shown in Milan in Lucio Fontana's workshop alongside works of the "Zero Avantgarde" group with Manzoni, Castellani, Bonalumi and others.



Turi Simeti, *Composizione grigio*, 1972. (Acrylic on shaped canvas; 45 x 180 cm). Image courtesy of Tornabuoni Art.

**Your paintings focus around the reading of the canvas as an object rather than a surface, emphasising the three-dimensionality of the canvas. Do you consider all of your actions to be painting? Including the manipulation of the canvas?**

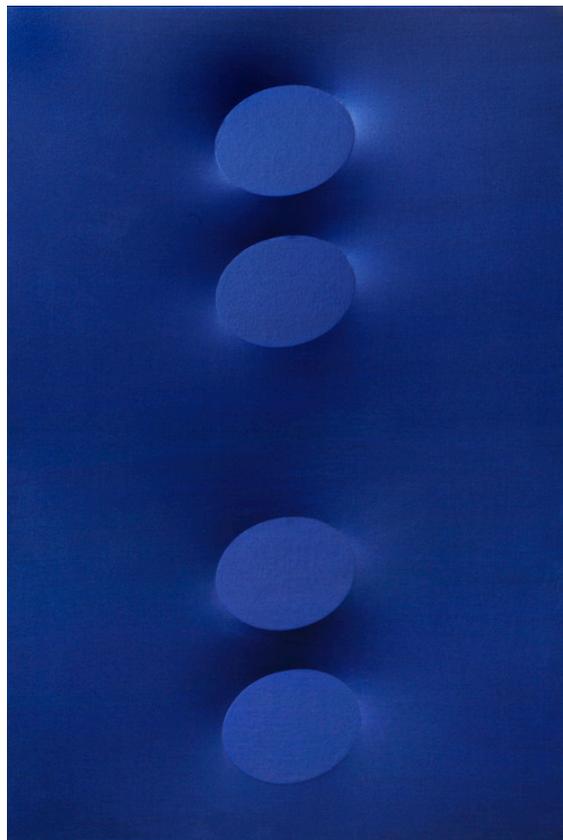
Personally I do not like the term "*pittura oggettuale*" used by Gillo Dorfles. I don't consider my works as canvas-objects. I work with shaped surfaces. What I am interested in is to change the surface (of the canvas) so that it loses all measure of neutrality, creating an evident connection with light.

**In geometry, the ellipse is characterised by its eccentricity. As a shape, it always seems to be suggestive of something more. What is it about the nature of this form that inspires you?**

I was never preoccupied with working with a geometric ellipse. The oval is not as clearly defined as the ellipse. It is precisely because of this variability that the oval interested me, as a form whose plasticity opens up to endless possibilities and variations.



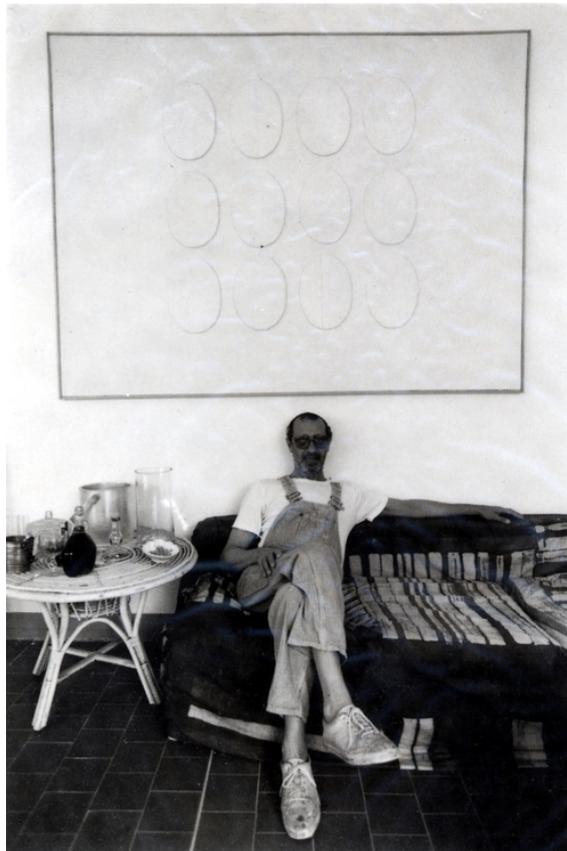
Turi Simeti in front of Quadro rosso, 2013. Photo by Bruno Bani. Image courtesy of Archivio Turi Simeti



Turi Simeti, Quattro ovali blu, 2014. (Acrylic on shaped canvas; 180 x 120 cm). Image courtesy of Tornabuoni Art

**Your work highlights the role of light and shadow as it interacts with the contours of the canvas. How do you feel shadows alter our reading of a shape? Does the light/shadow change the shape or vice versa?**

After the first collages, the need for an ever greater perfection led me to change the technique, that became dominant from the collages using a body placed underneath the canvas, pushing it out. The surface was modified with minimal intervention and created a presence highlighted by the relation between the canvas and light. It is the ovals that appear on the canvas, what interests me is the way light brings them out and their perception.



Turi Simeti in his studio. Photo by Luca Carrà. Image courtesy of Archivio Turi Simeti.

**Lastly, this retrospective includes thirty artworks from all points of your career. How does it feel to see all of these pieces brought together?**

Since I began my career as an artist in the beginning of the '60s, repetition has been a constant. That is why I can create a rhythm that is projected through the extroversion outward, toward the infinite. This retrospective at the Tornabuoni Art Gallery in Paris reflects the continuity of my research: "REPETITION CONTINUES, MODIFICATION CONTINUES".

*Turi Simeti's Retrospective runs from October 10 - December 20, 2014 at TORNABUONI ART PARIS, 16 Avenue Matignon, 75008 Paris. For more information, visit <http://www.tornabuoniart.fr>.*