

MART (The Modern and Contemporary Art Museum of Trento and Rovereto) exhibits Pietro Consagra's *Trama (Weave)*, *Un Millimetro (One Millimetre)* and *Sottilissime (Extremely thins)* until 28 July 2018

Focus by Denis Isaia

Exhibition setup: Ruggero Moncada di Paternò

In collaboration with Archivio Pietro Consagra

Right from the start Consagra's sculpture expressed a tendency to step outside itself, not into interior self-isolation but into the life of everyone and, at the same time, remaining intimately bound to the artist's hand and perceptions.

At the beginning of the fifties Consagra's sculptures called *Colloqui (Colloquies)* stood, with their frontal positioning, in a direct and immediate dialogue with the beholder. Then in 1968, with the *Città Frontale (Frontal City)* project, they became "continuous curved plane" habitable forms, destined to elicit an active behaviour by stimulating the imagination of the *Interior author* (into this the artist envisaged transforming every inhabitant) who "will find himself in a provocative space-height, be it in the work, in encounters or in resting.

From the loose knit town planning scheme of the *Città Frontale (Frontal City)* there grew a spatial inspiration of the opposite nature. In 1972, at the 36th Venice Biennale, Consagra presented *Trama (Weave)*, an environment to pass through at the entrance to the central Pavilion for access to the exhibition "Aspects of Contemporary Sculpture".

Spectators found themselves amid seven wooden sculptures, taller than a man and coloured sky-blue, white, black and brown, standing on a platform close to one another which made it impossible to contemplate them from a distance. Towered over by diversified sculptures, for the visitors it was as if they had penetrated a dense forest of curves set in layers, of surfaces that interfered one with the other and of which they became part. At the end of the itinerary, on a pedestal designed by the architect Carlo Scarpa, there was a book in steel that one could pick up and leaf through, consisting of twelve sheet-sculptures: Consagra named it for its overall thickness, *Un Millimetro (One millimetre)*. From the plastic values of a compact space one passed to the experience of the extreme thinness of the sculpture-sheets.

Already in 1968, with the *Sottilissime (Extremely thins)*, Consagra had reduced the surface to two tenths of a millimetre, almost depriving the sculptures of weight and achieving an astonishing transparency. In fact at less than one tenth of a millimetre the sheet bends, generating *Sottilissime impossibili (Impossible extremely thins)*.

The present installation of *Trama* and *Un millimetro* reprises the original setup at the Venice Biennale and includes a simplified reconstruction of the pedestal bearing *Un millimetro*, Scarpa's original and its design having been lost.

If first in the *Colloqui (Colloquies)* the further space was perceived by the eye that crossed the voids delineated by the form, with the *Frontal City* and *Trama* the involvement of the other becomes not only mental but also corporeal. In the steel membrane of the *Sottilissime* on show, it is the environment instead that permeates.