

# ROBILANT + VOENA

Ettore Spalletti  
July 5 – September 7, 2019

Robilant+Voena  
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Robilant+Voena is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Ettore Spalletti, born in 1940 in Cappelle sul Tavo, Italy, where he still lives and works. Ettore Spalletti established himself at the start of the 1970s under the relatively unknown definition of *inespressionista* or “anti-Expressionist”, underlining his wish to remove from the work any possible psychological content or value recognisable as individual expression. The choice and use of his typical chalky colours – pink, blue, grey and black, often edged by a gold border and of the jutting and slightly offset panels, do not eliminate expressivity however, but evoke a serene, soothing and calm construction, similar to a Tiepoloesque sky or a Piero della Francesca background. Usually, Spalletti’s process involved rubbing pigment into gesso, layer by layer over the course of several days, building up and sanding down, to create a desired tone using the *impasto* technique.

"Light is very important. Like a colour is born... a painting of mine has an elaboration of nearly 20 days. Every day I find a colour... I work a paste of colours, that is quite thick, that contains pigments and chalk. Fundamentally colour is constructed on the reality of white. It is on white that I add the pigments, and I add powders to dissolve the colour. Now it is quite fun to do. Before I would always mess it up. [...] I did not know what was going to be my colour formula. It was something that I used to invent, that I felt, that I experimented... [...] This is my obsession. [...] It is the pleasure to play with the colour powders, to find in what way and where can colour stop."  
Ettore Spalletti (Paolo Vagheggi, *Contemporanei, Conversazioni d'artista*, 2006)

Known for his minimalist installations of sculptures and paintings, Spalletti employs subtle aspects of colour and geometry aiming to immerse the viewer in a full sensory experience. Despite the fact that he came of age as an artist in Italy during the *Arte Povera* movement, Spalletti’s love of colour separated him from their often sombre sensibilities. Instead he found inspiration in the Renaissance frescoes of Masaccio and Piero della Francesca, from whom he borrowed the powdery blues and pinks often employed in his own work. The paintings on view in St. Moritz are great examples of Spalletti’s considered use of colour and form with the shaped panels underlined by gold and silver sections.

Over the past forty years Spalletti’s works have been shown at Documenta in Kassel (1982, 1992), at the Venice Biennale (1982, 1993, 1995, 1997) and in solo exhibitions in Essen (Museum Folkwang, 1982), Ghent (Museum Van Hedendaagse Kunst, 1983), Rennes (Halles d’Art Contemporain, 1988), Frankfurt (Portikus, 1989), Munich (Kunstverein, 1989), Amsterdam (De Appel, 1989), Paris (Musée d’Art Moderne de the Ville de Paris, 1991), New York (Guggenheim Museum, 1993), Antwerp (Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, 1995), Strasbourg (Musée d’Art Moderne et Contemporain, 1998), Naples (Museo di Capodimonte, 1999), Madrid (Fundación La Caixa, 2000), Leeds (Henry Moore Foundation, 2005), Rome (Académie de France, Villa Medici, 2006; Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna, 2010), Kleve (Museum Kurhaus Kleve, 2009), Venice (Palazzo Cini, 2015). In 2014 the most complete retrospective of his work, entitled *Un giorno così bianco, così bianco*, was shown in a museum circuit consisting of MAXXI in Rome, GAM in Turin, and Museo Madre in Naples. He has created two permanent installations of particular emotional impact: the *Salle des départs*, for the Hôpital Poincaré de Garches, Paris, in 1996, and the *Cappella di Villa Serena* in Città Sant’Angelo, Pescara, in 2016. A current retrospective exhibition titled ‘*Ombre d’azur, transparence*’ is on view at Nouveau Musée National de Monaco – Villa Paloma until November 3, 2019.

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