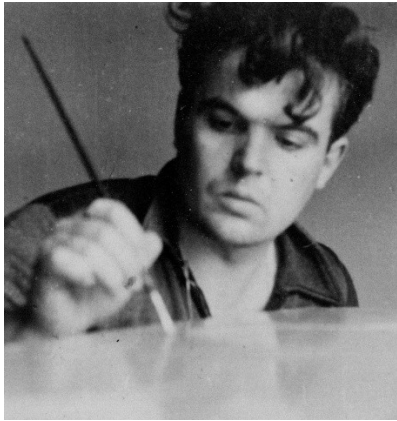




MAURO FRANCINI - Conegliano Veneto 05.02.1924 – Messina 07.23.1982

Born in Conegliano Veneto in 1924, Mauro Francini comes from a family of artists whose activities date back to the Middle Ages. He completed his classical studies while participating as an actor and set designer in the activities of the theatre of the Messina University.

The war took him to Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. In 1947, in Florence, he interrupted his studies in architecture to devote himself completely to painting and in 1951 he moved to São Paulo, Brazil, called by Adolfo Celi, as a set designer at the Teatro Brasileiro de Comedia. There he met Clara Heteny, also a painter, whom he married and with whom he had two children, Marina and Lando.

In Brazil, he became part of the “Cono Sur” artistic movement with solo and group exhibitions, as well as participating in the São Paulo Biennials and the Rio de Janeiro Modern Art Salons.

In 1959, he moved to Paris on a French government scholarship and in 1962 settled in Milan where, from 1967 to 1982, the year of his death, he taught History of Set Design and Makeup at the Civica Scuola d'Arte Drammatica del Piccolo Teatro.

Works by Mauro Francini are part of the collections of the National Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro, the State Art Gallery and the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo, the National Museum of Fine Arts in Montevideo, as well as private collections in Brazil, Italy, France, Argentina, Uruguay, Canada, Peru, the USA, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, Poland, and Hungary.

REVIEWS

"Mauro Francini exhibits paintings of singular value in terms of composition and craftsmanship. In his unvarnished canvases, he tends towards the mural. Rigour, discipline, careful treatment of the material and, above all, an implementation in curves and cut-outs of a graphic style organised into limited areas. A great technician, with an almost ascetic scrupulousness, concerned with problems that only interest the 'Masters'."

MANUEL GERMANO - "PARATODOS" - Rio de Janeiro - 1956

"Seeing the exhibition of the Twelve Artists of San Paolo, I asked myself the question: what are the boundaries between the abstract and the concrete? Art, after all, is nothing but poetry, only poetry... Francini's mural sense is part of this poetry."

MARCEL JANCO - IV BIENNIAL of São Paulo - 1957

"...a controlled restraint, oriented towards the primordial achievement of plastic, coloristic, and tactile values of refined essence, can be perceived in Mauro Francini's clear surfaces."

CORDOVA ITURBURU, critic - Buenos Aires - 1958

"Mauro Francini's painting truly allows us to establish connections with elements of the visible world, so that we can perceive it as a transposition of landscape motifs, impressions of cities, and forests. This painting leaves the surface of the canvases alive in their material structure, sometimes seeking mural aspects: we do not feel it as a fanatical search for new modalities, but rather as a link with the wall. This ensures it a new space within today's painting."

W. PFEIFFER, professor of Art History at the Modern Art Museum, São Paulo - 1958

"In large fields covered with printing ink, Francini marks violent black spots, establishing comparisons and compositional balances, wounding the large background field with graffiti that bring out the white of the paper once again. Drawings of extraordinary evocative power and spontaneous originality."

A. LEONCIO, critic - "FOLHAS da NOITE" - São Paulo – 1959

"In the current phase of his painting, Mauro Francini has left behind his many experiences and even the most dangerous aspects of the craftsmanship that allowed him to achieve success in various fields, first and foremost that of set design.

Now his attention is focused on the theme of "lithos," rich in variations and surprises, but capable of guaranteeing him a rare stylistic purity, an exploration of poetic themes, and a loving mastery of the material.

The inorganic world observed from within, as an allusion to the cosmic order, as a reference point for symbols and myths of natural humanity, becomes organic through a kind of epic exaltation, a virile affirmation of the concrete. Everything in this painting by Mauro Francini alludes to life...it is a powerful image of Sicilian truth that is transfigured through the impetus of the hand and the sharpness of the gaze. Here, abstraction is truly creation."

RUGGERO JACOBBI, writer, critic, actor and film director - Milan - 1962

Mauro Francini is exhibiting in Milan for the first time. He has fifteen years of work behind him: years spent between Brazil and France.

It immediately became clear to me that he is not the usual follower of the latest trends. It is neither a coincidence nor a revelation. Nor does he have any presumptuous problems, developments, or revolutionary resolutions to flaunt. In short, he lacks all the qualities that seem to be essential for withstanding an initial confrontation.

The reason is that, for a young man like him, with a refined and rich culture, a high level of education and an equally high level of control and critical awareness, unrealistic displays are neither possible nor permitted: he can only show his deep and precise roots.

So his cultural experiences are covered and consumed. It is clear that South America has left the magical and fabulous mark of the Incas on him, France some precious essence, but what matters to me is the deep and secret beat that can be heard behind and within these roots of his."

ENNIO MORLOTTI, painter - Milan - 1962

"Mauro Francini, whom some seek to place in the abstract realm—evidently failing to identify his content according to a qualitative expression of research and intellectual achievement— transcended by a natural technique based on the uncommon singularity of natural and geological evolution—arouses the habitat of his suggestiveness in a lyrical objectification which, touching on a metaphysical tangent, reworks the voice of creation in an imaginative synchrony with the silent words of stone and sun, so that the aesthetic process is the effect of a marvelous cause born and identified in the very content of matter.

We are in the presence of an object-subject matter through which the chromatic perspectives are a clear expression not only of technique and mixture but, above all, a clear symbiosis of man and matter for an artistic evolution that proposes beauty for aesthetic consumption capable of bringing the human becoming closer to that reality for which art has reason to be defined as such.

The source of his colors seems to arise from a world of submerged cathedrals crystallized in a play of moderate and measured shadows for the exaltation not so much of man understood as a definition of himself, but of humanity expressed in the direction of communion of pure affections.

Stones, sacrificial lithos, peat, and abyssal plants: the homogeneity and affective prodigality of Mauro Francini's painting initiate a dialogue between man and creation of considerable cultural significance, as well as a tactile excavation of living matter.

The horizontal dimension rests on the axes of his work with a fresh emotional immediacy for the observer, who is drawn into a kaleidoscopic play of orthodox images with the canons of the brush understood as self-identification of the soul.

The consumption of images becomes in him an image of consumption, and the reversibility of the preposition firmly exchanges the variety of commitment to good manners for the anti-simplicity of the acultural, amoral, and hedonistic. His canvases offer a focal point of poignant optical resonance, whose magic consists mainly in implying parallels and combinations that are not only figurative. His "sacred lithos" - just to give an example - recall the acoustic sonority of the theater of Epidauros.

From ruins and mineral fragments, he creates waters and skies, basilicas and corals, notes and harmonies: his instinctive emotional reception is pigmented with elaborations that could perhaps also be understood in a cultural direction but which, in my opinion, summarize deontological postulates for which color is only a means and the effect an immanence itself on the miracle of the most objective manifestation.

Expressive strength and robustness, dynamic and soothing constructive calmness, soul and clay are the constituents from which Mauro Francini distills the virtue of his works, before which all animosity is disarmed and all enchantment takes shape."

RENATO COLOMBO, poet - Serravalle Sesia - 1969

SOLO AND GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- National Exhibition of Contemporary Painting, Messina (1951)
- São Paulo Biennial (from 1953 to 1967)
- Modern Art Salon, São Paulo (from 1952 to 1959)
- Contemporary Art Gallery, São Paulo (1952)
- First August Salon, São Paulo (1953)
- Museum of Modern Art, São Paulo (1956 - 1957)
- Modern Art Salon, Rio de Janeiro (1955 - 1956 - 1958 - 1959)
- Twelve Artists from São Paulo at Galleria das Folhas, São Paulo (1957)
- Leirner Prize. São Paulo (1957 - 1959 - 1960)
- Abstract Painting at the Museum of Modern Art, São Paulo (1957)
- Galeria das Folhas, São Paulo (1958)
- 9 Artists from São Paulo at the Antígona Gallery, Buenos Aires (1958)
- Exhibition of Brazilian Artists at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro (from 1959 to 1961) Haus der Kunst in Munich, Art Museum in Hamburg, Museum of Modern Art in Paris, Atheneum in Madrid, Art Museum in Lisbon, Museum in Utrecht
- Galleria Minima, Milan (1962)
- Galleria Il Fondaco, Messina (1962)
- Sicily Industry Award (1962)
- Galleria Sistina, Milan (1963)
- VI Capo d'Orlando Award (1963)
- International Exhibition of Small Paintings, Palermo (1963) and Tunis (1964)
Province of Palermo Award (1966)
- Galleria del Milione, Milan (1966)
- Galleria Alberti, Omegna (1969)
- *Artistic Paths. Heteny and Francini between Europe and Brazil* at Palazzo Canonici, Barbarano Mossano, Vicenza (2025)

