



## Press release, 17 February 2021

Exhibition title:

'Antonio Scaccabarozzi. Acquorea'

Exhibition venue:

Fondazione l'Arsenale, Iseo

Dates:

Friday 26 March to Sunday 16 May 2021

Press conference:

Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 11 a.m.

An exhibition organized by the Archivio Antonio Scaccabarozzi, Milan  
curated by Ilaria Bignotti in collaboration with Camilla Remondina  
with the support of the Galleria Clivio Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Milan and Parma  
under the patronage of the Municipality of Iseo.

### Works on display:

Works from the 1970s to early 2000s, from the following cycles:

*Immersioni (Immersiones)*;

*Iniezioni (Injections)*;

Acquerelli e acquerelli (Watercolors and watercolors);

*Quantità Libere (Free Quantities)*;

*Polietileni sagomati (Shaped Polyethylenes)*.



The exhibition opens to the public on Thursday and Friday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., on Saturday and Sunday from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Entry to the exhibition is free.

For further information, see: [segreteria.arsenaleiseo@gmail.com](mailto:segreteria.arsenaleiseo@gmail.com) and [www.fondazionearsenale.it](http://www.fondazionearsenale.it).

An important exhibition devoted to the work of the Italian artist Antonio Scaccabarozzi (b. Merate 1936–d. Santa Maria Hoè, Lecco, 2008) opens to the public on 26 March 2021 at the Arsenale in Iseo. An exponent of Conceptual Art in the 1970s, Scaccabarozzi was the revolutionary creator of a new approach to painting from the 1980s to the early 2000s. Curated by the Archivio Antonio Scaccabarozzi — directed by Anastasia Rouchota, the artist's wife and sole heir to his work — and Ilaria Bignotti, the exhibition focuses on the artist's work in its **relationship with water**, intended not only as an element present in the majority of his mixtures of paint and **pictorial experimentation**, but as a **theoretical expression of his poetic purpose**.

Also seeking to pay **homage to its prestigious venue in Iseo** (located on the homonymous lake), this exhibition comprises a wide range of Scaccabarozzi's main painting cycles, spotlighting those in which water — either as a constitutive component of the work or just hinting at its colour — plays a fundamental role.

Thus, the exhibition begins with the cycles of works entitled ***Immersioni* (Immersiones, early 1980s)**, where the artist tests the capacity of the unprimed canvas to absorb paint diluted in water, obtaining colour fields partially dominated by the paint that has been absorbed and diffused, but also in part connoted by emptiness and absence. Next come the ***Iniezioni* (Injections, early 1980s)**, where, by using special syringes, Scaccabarozzi examines the different ways the support reacts to the varying density of the paint injected into it, creating grids and dots of colour of mesmerizing beauty.



Also on display there are the so-called **Acquerelli (Watercolours)** in which the artist symbolically seals paint diluted in water in a bottle, which is placed next to works painted with the same liquid, resembling a mysterious map entrusted to the survivors of the art of the future. The exhibition continues with the works executed until the early 2000s using **sheets of transparent or coloured polyethylene**, plastic sheets that Scaccabarozzi transforms either into surfaces where he gives free rein to his brushstrokes: the **Quantità libere (Free Quantities, 1982–90)**. In other cases, the coloured or transparent polyethylene is shaped and cut in order to form barriers and squaring up of the field of vision: at the end of the 1990s, the artist was fascinated by the concept of **'seeing through'** objects and the limits of the power of vision.

This theme is linked to that of ecology: the reuse of the plastic sheets is seen as an act of recreating this humble, everyday material, but always with the precision and perfection that is the hallmark of Scaccabarozzi's oeuvre.

These are some of the themes for reflection that this exhibition offers its visitors, making it an unmissable rendezvous with contemporary art and Italian culture in general.

### **Fondazione l'Arsenale di Iseo**

Located in the historic centre of Iseo, the Arsenale is a space housing exhibitions and other cultural events that range from those featuring the artistic output of the surrounding area to solo and group shows seeking to promote modern art.

From its establishment to the present day the foundation has hosted numerous exhibitions and other events, making it a beacon in the cultural landscape of the province of Brescia.

Its permanent collection comprises over 140 works by 110 artists, offering visitors a significant sample of the local artistic and cultural output from the mid-twentieth century to the present day.

Since September 2014, the Fondazione l'Arsenale has offered visitors, scholars and art lovers an opportunity to consult the books forming part of its archive: this is a collection of about three thousand publications, including catalogues and art books donated over the years by both private citizens and their authors.



In accordance with its policy relating to culture and tourism, the foundation, a non-profit organization, seeks to preserve, maintain and promote the historical and cultural assets that it has received or acquired in various ways, always fully aware of their original context. In particular, the foundation aims — also in collaboration with third parties — to foster: the best possible enjoyment on the part of the public of cultural assets and touristic activities; the organization of exhibitions, studies, research projects, scientific initiatives and educational activities of various kinds, also in collaboration with schools, universities and Italian and foreign cultural and research institutions; the organization of events and cultural activities, including those linked to museum assets of local, regional or national interest and the organization of cultural tours characterized by the association between cultural and environmental assets, in collaboration with the bodies responsible for tourism.

### **Antonio Scaccabarozzi, the artist**

Antonio Scaccabarozzi was born in 1936 in Merate, in the province of Lecco.

From 1951 he attended the painting class in the evening applied arts course at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan. Involved in the Milanese artistic milieu of the period, he frequented the Brera area where he met such artists as Carlo Carrà, Piero Manzoni and Lucio Fontana.

After obtaining his art diploma in 1959, he moved to Paris where he worked as a scene painter and deepened his knowledge of the contemporary artistic styles and the early avant-garde movements. These clearly influenced the works he produced at the time, with references to Hans Arp and Fernand Léger. From Paris he went to stay in London and then travelled to the Netherlands and Spain.

From the mid-1960s Scaccabarozzi's work drew inspiration from Concrete Art, Arte Programmata and Nuova Astrazione; he described his own visual language as ***Equilibrio Statico-Dinamico (Static-Dynamic Equilibrium)***, with clear reference to Neoplasticism and European Kinetic Art.

After returning to Milan, he spent a brief period in the Quartiere delle Botteghe in Sesto San Giovanni, coming into contact with artists such as Enrico Castellani, Agostino Bonalumi, Arturo Vermi, Fernando De Filippi, Luciano Fabro and Hidetoshi Nagasawa. From the end of the 1960s, Scaccabarozzi

programmatically set out a work plan based on a rigorous methodology, leading over the years to the creation of a cycle of works where the tension between respect for the rules and their inevitable transcendence produced unexpected results that were innovative with regard to the European art scene.

Dating from the early 1970s, the ***Fustellati (Punched Works)***, were formed by a series of cylindrical elements and created by working with a punch and applying to the neutral support modular elements, either in relief or concave, of various sizes.



Thus Scaccabarozzi found his ideal place — and source of inspiration — in the artistic climate of northern Europe. Also in the early 1970s, he created a new cycle of works, called **Prevalenze (Prevalences)**: the neutral support is strewn with dots, firstly monochrome, then coloured, arranged on the canvas or panel in an order that is the result of a precise mathematical calculation. In 1983 the artist started a new phase, based on the idea that spreading a quantity of paint is itself an artistic gesture, thereby freeing himself from the need for calculations and any set form with its fixed schema. This gave rise to the **Quantità libere (Free Quantities)**, which then encouraged Scaccabarozzi to experiment with a new material: polyethylene sheets. If the *Quantità libere* were the body of his painting, the **Essenziali (Essentials)** — this is what the artist called this cycle of works produced in the 1990s — became its framework.

Meanwhile the first retrospective exhibitions were devoted to his work, comprising 'Retro-spektiv 1965–1993', at the Galerie Hoffmann in Freidburg, and another one at the Villa Zanders in Bergisch Gladbach in 1994.

At the end of the 1990s Scaccabarozzi started to use the support that he had already employed in his *Quantità libere*; **polyethylene**. Gradually these sheets of polyethylene became membranes of colour fluttering in space, suspended from the wall and ceiling with nylon thread. From 2002 onwards he started to develop the **Ekleipsis (polyethylene)**, formed by two plastic sheets with different colours. In 2003, Scaccabarozzi produced his **Banchise (polyethylene)**: this was a variation on the theme of polyethylene, focusing on the relationship between the sheet that is clearly visible and the other hidden one.

Around 2005 the artist felt the need to return to painting: he spread very thin layers of paint on a coloured ground applied to canvas or canvas board, thus creating a film that either absorbed or diffused the incident light: these were the **Velature (Glazes)**.

Scaccabarozzi tragically lost his life in an accident in 2008. His legacy is under the stewardship of Anastasia Rouchota, his wife and sole heir, who in 2010 founded the Archivio Antonio Scaccabarozzi.

### Archivio Antonio Scaccabarozzi

In 2010, two years after the artist's death, the Archivio Antonio Scaccabarozzi was established in order to consider the artist in a historical perspective and permit an adequate, well-informed appreciation of his work. The principal activity of the Associazione Archivio Antonio Scaccabarozzi is that of studying and promoting the work and practice of the artist Antonio Scaccabarozzi (1936–2008), with reference to the whole range of his creativity. To this end it undertakes the methodical archiving of his oeuvre through a database specially set up in order to allow all of the artist's catalogued work to be published.

In keeping with Scaccabarozzi's ideals and beliefs, the association promotes the study of the artist's work, encouraging the younger generation of scholars and actively cooperating with research organizations at a



national and international level. Its recent activities include the creation of an installation allowing the artist's work to be accessible to the blind and visually impaired that was developed in association with the Istituto dei Ciechi (Institute of the Blind) in Milan. Another initiative was the setting up of a workshop with students of the Accademia di Belle Arti Albertina in Turin, which aimed to focus their attention on the underlying themes of a universal and social nature to be found in Scaccabarozzi's art: the vision and complexity of the relationship between perception and knowledge; ecology and the reuse of plastic materials; awareness of issues related to space and environment; the concept of democratic art accessible to everybody.

Moreover, the association organizes days devoted to study, talks and round-table conferences, which, starting with these themes, seek to raise public awareness and involve the academic and cultural worlds. Special attention is also paid to the function of the archive intended not simply as a way of cataloguing the artist's work, but also as a means for promoting relations, exchanges and collaboration with the archives of other artists.