

Pietro Consagra
A Breathable Landscape. Sculptures 1964 -1966

In collaboration with Archivio Pietro Consagra

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Pietro Consagra before Piano sospeso bianco, in his studio in Rome, 1968

It was Pietro Consagra's vision of life that shaped his first sculptures - meant to be seen whole from a single vantage point, dismissing the need to circle around them, establishing instead an immediate, equal relationship with the viewer - like looking straight into someone's eyes.

Already in 1952, in his writing *Necessità della scultura*, which countered Arturo Martini's *La scultura lingua morta*, Consagra affirmed the environmental nature of his work: sculpture that does not impose, but draws one in; that builds bonds between man, space, and proportion, giving form to a silent yet vital dialogue.

But in 1964, as the center of the art world shifted from Paris to New York and Pop Art rose to prominence, Consagra experienced another profound turning point - in his "bifrontali," in the *Piani sospesi* (which can be looked at from two opposite sides) in the *Giardini* of 1964–1965, and in sculptures set in motion by the touch of a hand: the *Ferri trasparenti* of 1965–66, or those that travel across walls, like the *Piani appesi* of 1966–67.

The allure of these sculptures deepens when imagined all together, forming a kind of artificial landscape - a plastic emotion of living, a fantasy made real. Monochrome in nature, painted in pink, blue, red, white, lilac, or turquoise, these works emerged in a particularly luminous phase of the artist's life - a time in which his ability to reinvent sculpture, to reconnect it empathetically with society, grew ever more vivid.

Accustomed to grappling with the heavy truths of metallurgy - transformed from the start into images of delicate thinness, almost threadlike - Consagra, in this phase, chose to make color the very substance of the sculpture's body, stripping it of all ideological weight.

In *Giardino bianco*, it's as if a sudden upward current lifts the fragments of sheet metal, thinning, curving, and binding them into a single image. As though, in a dance between gravity and grace, the sculpture were a cocoon breaking open in surprise. Painted with the industrial varnishes of automobiles, *Giardino bianco*, along with *Piano sospeso bianco*, *Piano sospeso rosso*, *Piano sospeso rosso combinato*, *Ferro trasparente bianco I*, *Ferro trasparente rosso*, suggests how sculpture might also embody the freedom to appear sensibly fragile, ever-changing - liberating itself even from the pedestal, to hang in air or glide across the wall. Pietro once said he created these sculptures with these movements: "I go from the inside out, and from the outside I try to return to the inside - for me, it's like breathing."

These new sculptures were exhibited at the Rome Quadriennale in 1965, at the Marlborough Gallery in Rome in 1966, at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam in 1967, at the Galleria dell'Ariete in Milan in 1967, at the Marlborough Gerson Gallery in New York and at the Solomon Guggenheim Museum in October 1967.

Since the beginning, Consagra's sculpture has expressed a tendency to go out of itself to appear not isolated but in dialogue with life. Over the years, different types of sculptures arose from creative moments in which emotional experiences generated in the Artist mental images that aroused the need to draw and from the drawings the birth of the sculptures.

Prof. Gabriella Di Milia, President of Archivio Consagra