

Carlo Bernardini

Biography

by Valentina Pinto

Carlo Bernardini was born in Viterbo in 1966. He started out his career in the early 90s with an abstract painting that concentrated on the dialectical relationship between line and monochrome, diversified moments of representative conception of space-light.

The light, however, will be identified later with the luminescence of phosphor, through lines and veilings, creating layers of white colour, visible in two distinct and autonomous visual conditions.

The first one is the vision in the real light, while the second corresponds to the vision in the dark, almost like a photo negative of the first one.

During the first half of the 90s, Bernardini starts dealing with the third dimension in his works. At first he has steel pipes come out of canvas or a board that cast real shadows; then, since 1996 he has been planning and working on big optical fibre installations, stainless steel and optical fibre sculptures-installations, OLF (Optical lighting film) surfaces and electro-luminescent surfaces that the viewers perceive in a different way and in a different form, depending on where their position in the space is.

This research carries Bernardini to presenting his works in 1996 at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome for the XIIth Quadriennale; the works carried out on a more than five-metre board, where he intervenes with pigments and phosphor, creating visual duplicity and making use of Wood light.

The use of optical fibre as a new medium, during the latter half of the 90s, leads Bernardini to conceive the possibility of designing space through darkness, using this really thin light line and transforming the environment into artwork itself.

In 1997 he writes *Divisione dell'unità Visiva*, a theoretical essay published by Stampa Alternativa.

In the 1990s Bernardini works in Rome and has his first personal exhibit in 1999 in Spaziotemporaneo in Milan, the city where he later moves. In the late 90s the first environmental installations in big outside spaces were commissioned to the artist; among the most important ones are the installation at the Galleria Nazionale della Pilotta in Parma (1998), the environmental project in Reggio Emilia in the spectacular sixteenth-century location of the Chiostrì di San Domenico (1999) and the great installation in Padova, realized in via Fiume, at the Palazzo della Ragione (2000).

In 2002 Bernardini is invited to the XXth Triennale in Milan and to *Sculpture Space*, Utica (New York); the year after that to the XIVth Quadriennale at the Palazzo Reale in Naples.

He is a two time winner of the Overseas Grantee award of the Pollock Krasner Foundation in New York receiving grants in 2000 and in 2005, and in 2002 wins the Targetti Art Light Collection *White Sculpture* award.

In 2004, with the Brazilian film-maker M.Sobral, he presents at the Bruna Soletti Gallery *La Quarta Direzione dello Spazio*, a visual experimental hypothesis where inside of the optical fibre installation, interactive videos of abstract light in movement are activated in the passageway of the viewers aiming at the creation of simultaneous overlapping of dynamic perception over the static one.

In 2005 he is invited to present an environmental installation at the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca in Rome.

Given the aspects of the evolution of vertical forms in his works, the choice of materials and the technical development, in 2000 he starts travelling to New York whose appealing, rational, vertical and luminous architecture, with its reflections of the urban skyline, is crucial to the conception of new sculptures, where the linearity underlines the movement and the upward push creates luminous geometry in empty space.

Among his most important international exhibitions it is worth mentioning the great exhibition in 2004 at Museo Paço Imperial in Rio De Janeiro and in 2007 the presentation of the installation *Event Horizon* at the Swing Space in New York.

The project *Light Waves* is realized in 2008, a permanently installed artwork at the entrance to the Brindisi airport, where Bernardini generates an impalpable sense of total space, modifying the perception of place through the use of the interaction between his prismoid light sculptures and the audiovisual installation.

In the same year he also presents a gigantic environmental installation in the *Umbracle* of the Ciudad De Las Artes y de Las Ciencias in Valencia, placing his light geometries inside a dialogue with the renowned architectural work of Santiago Calatrava. At the same time, he projects an installation for the La Nau Museum of Valencia University that extends in height over three floors of the exhibition room, creating a drawing that changes according to the points of view and the movements of viewers who find themselves both inside and outside the artwork.

A further experimental development of the language can be seen in *Interrelazioni nello Spazio* at Rivara Castle, where the only optical fibre installation eluding the physicalness of the walls, englobes at its inside three rooms and a corridor, passing from one side to another without continuity.

Again in 2008, his personal exhibition at Museo di Lissone takes place, where he presents not only a spectacular intervention in the Museum rooms, but also an impressive aerial installation outside the Museum. Likewise, in the beginning of 2009 he presents *Codice Spaziale* in Piazza S.Stefano in Bologna, for *Art First* at the Bologna Fair.

In 2009 Bernardini takes part in D.U.M.B.O. Festival in New York, presenting his installation and in Twister project for the Lombardy Museums' network.

He completes a great environmental sculpture for MAM – Museo Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Gazoldo degli Ippoliti (MN) and an installation at GAM in Gallarate, where he makes the optical fibre run through the Museum space, combining the upper and lower floors.

The same year he finalizes a great optical fibre prism and OLF film entitled *Fantasma di Duchamp*, for an exhibition at Museo d'Arte Villa Ciani in Lugano, Switzerland.

His three most recent solo exhibitions are: the project *Codice Progressivo dello Spazio* at the Velan gallery in Turin, in Milan at Grossetti Arte Contemporanea, where the optical fibre crosses and goes beyond the gallery walls and at Delloro Contemporary Art in Rome, where he completes an installation, that starting from overlooking buildings, penetrates and develops at the inside of the exhibition rooms.

Carlo Bernardini lives and works in Milan; he teaches Multimedia Installations at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan.