

ART SY

A Masterful Italian Artist Challenges Conventional Notions of Space in “Synchronicity”

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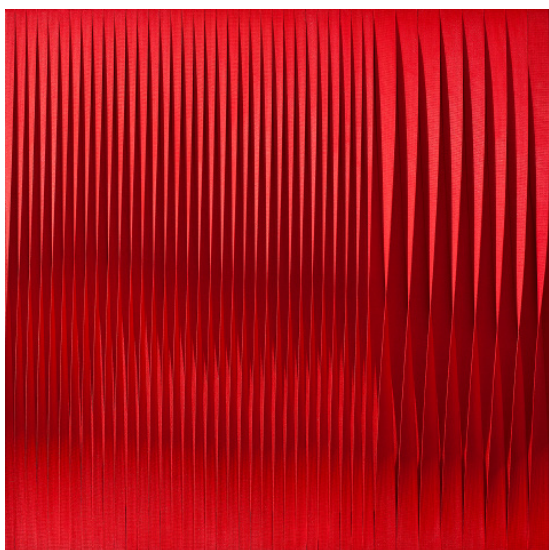
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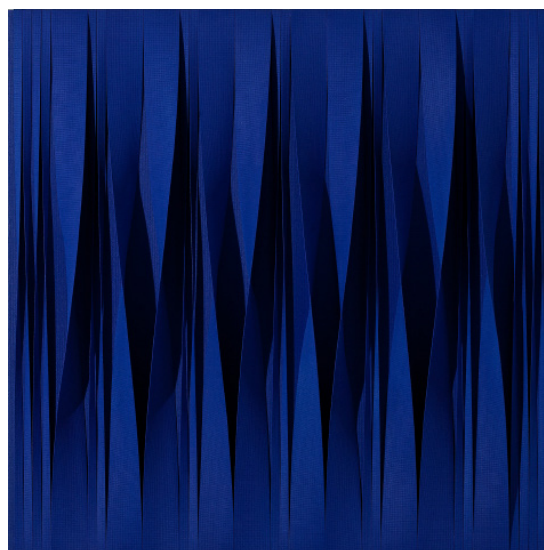
Italian has proven to be a particularly articulate language when it comes to fine-art terminology. Several Italian fine-art terms have been absorbed into the English-language lexicon—fresco, graffiti, chiaroscuro, among them. As Pino Manos’ solo exhibition “Synchronicity” at UNIX Gallery, makes clear, rigorismo is another such term we should know.

Installation view of “Synchronicity” at UNIX Gallery, New York. Courtesy UNIX Gallery.

For those who aren’t up to date on mid-century Italian art history, rigorismo is rooted in the Spazialismo (Spatialism) movement and the Zero Group, which initially developed in Italy and Germany, respectively, in the 1940s and ’50s. Rigorismo is, in a sense, what it sounds like: a rigorous use of space. The movement posits that space is an active element in an artistic composition, not simply an empty area to be filled in. Milan-based Manos, the subject of “Synchronicity,” has been one of the movement’s key figures for decades.



Pino Manos, 'Sincronico Armonico Rosso,' 2015,
UNIX Gallery



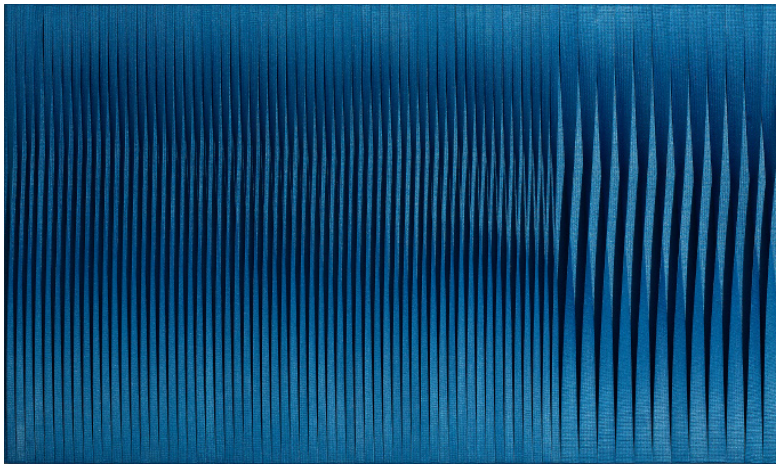
Pino Manos, Sincronico Blu Cobalto, 2015
UNIX Gallery

Despite Manos’s age (he was born in 1930) and the historical nature of rigorismo, the exhibition is not a retrospective. These works—mostly acrylic on linen and canvas—were created over the past two years, and are the latest expression of concepts that the artist has been working with since befriending Lucio Fontana (founder of Spazialismo) in the early 1950s.

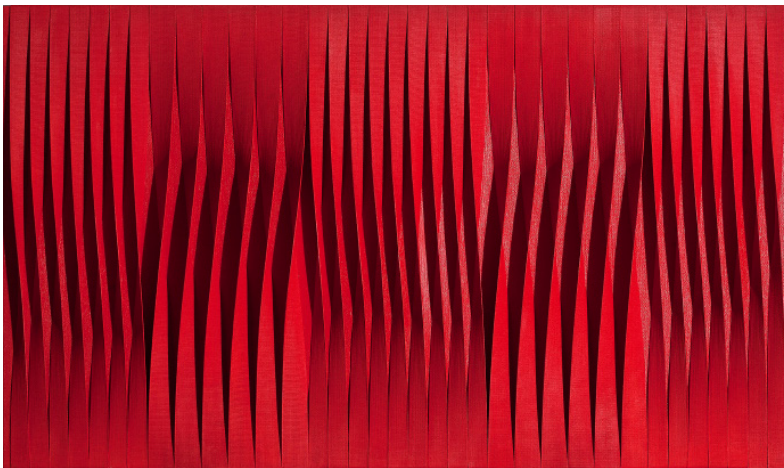
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Fontana does indeed come to mind, but these surfaces are not gouged. Rather, the material is systematically arranged into accordion-like layers. Intriguing, dramatic, and magnetic, these recent works are sculptural and boldly monochromatic, and a logical continuation of Manos’s practice. Manos uses twisted strips of canvas to create symmetrical textures and patterns. The effect of his experiments with light and movement is striking, and sometimes even disturbing. Some pieces seem to undulate mysteriously from within, as in Sincronico Armonico Rosso (2015) or Sincronico Armonico Cyan (2015). Others, like Sincronico Blu Cobalto (2015), center on a more logical pattern. Sincronico Rosso Cadmio (2014) plays optical tricks on the viewer, and it’s hard to know which way to look.



Pino Manos
Sincronico Armonico Cyan, 2015
UNIX Gallery



Pino Manos
Sincronico Rosso Cadmio, 2014
UNIX Gallery

It's an exciting selection of work, and an eye-opening articulation of the ideas that Manos has been exploring for more than six decades. In "Synchronicity," space is not an area to be filled, and a canvas is not just a blank surface for artistic expression: the canvas itself is the art.