



National College of Art and Design

Salvo and Contemporary Italian Culture
a Symbiotic relationship

by

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Introduction

There is a vast range of art found within Italy that spans centuries of time. Consequently there is a vast range of artistic influence that results in a colourful patchwork that displays the creative force of the entire country; and the ultimate visual imagery they produce is broad and versatile which is indicative of their wealth of (cultural) knowledge. This nation has, even through many crises, including, foreign domination, plague, war, Reformation and Inquisition, managed to produce cultural genius in many fields of the arts. Numerous examples including Dante, Michelangelo, Raphael, Pavese and Calvino, continue to emerge and shine through. Through the examination of the paintings of Salvo, whose recent works act as perhaps one of the most clearly defined, all encompassing, yet concise, metaphors that illustrate the timeless, self analysing element of Italian art in general, this thesis attempts to examine and define, through Salvo's work, possible reasons for the creative and prolific culture of the society.

It is necessary therefore to place Salvo within the context of Italian art, and define the conceptual similarities with other painters of his country and era. Chapter One aims to illustrate the affirmation and cultivation of Salvo's concepts, showing them in terms of their relations within the symbolic background that unifies all Italian art.

Secondly, looking closer at Salvo's individual approach to his paintings, principally those which date from the late 1970's, we discover that they perform a dual role. On one hand they are the artists personal enquiry into and examination of the functions and limitations of colour, and on the other, as evocative and inviting images asking the viewer to intellectually interact with the visual stimulation they produce, including an awareness of the background concepts.

Lastly, it is important to underline all of the information from the first two chapters with that which is fundamental to Italian creative and cognitive development. The metaphysics of Martin Heidegger¹ has been regarded as the one element of all

¹ Further readings by Heidegger can be found in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 1959.

philosophical readings that best describes the current state of contemporary Italy and is particularly relevant to the reading of Salvo's paintings. Chapter Three uses these writings on metaphysics by Heidegger, therefore, in conjunction with an examination of the social and cultural ideas behind those paintings, in such a way that they can be seen as windows through which Italy can be assessed as a creative, and contemplative nation.

This thesis begins in the Universal, at the level of Italian culture as a whole. With this knowledge, it then moves to the level of the Particular, in the form of Salvo's own individual work. Finally, using Salvo's work as a window, it returns to and re-examines the Universal. It is hoped that this method will help provide new insights, at both the level of the Particular and of the Universal, into both Salvo's work and the nature of Italian culture as a whole.

“Today, the human spirit aspires in a transcendent reality, to
transcend the Particular to arrive at the United, the Universal,
through an art of the spirit freed from all material...”

(Spazialismo Manifesto, 1947)

“Have you ever thought of the possible existence of an Italian spirit determined by inevitable reasons of geographic configuration of climate and history of the physical and metaphysical appearance of our peninsula?”

Giorgio de Chirico, *Valori Plastici* , 1921

Chapter One

Salvo's Cultural Inheritance

We are all the inheritors of the past. All past experiences and teachings are relevant to our present era, since they are the seeds from which the society we know today has grown. How the information given to us, is used, is left to our discretion. We have the choice to either neglect it, banish it to the history books and encase it in a museum cabinet, or treat it as something vital to the present and consequently to our future. Salvo's work does the latter. He combines the information given by art of the past with that of today, allowing it to become part of his own visual language, resulting in the dissolution of the artistic barriers of time. The past becomes an inexhaustible source with an unlimited catalogue of reference, that can be drawn from with eclectic indifference. The combination of these chosen elements, each possessing their own individual history, counteract and cancel out each others given history and so create a new and unique story. Salvo's large repertoire of work shows him to be perhaps one of the few artists of the past 20 years to have been able to successfully quote from history without reducing it to blatant plagiarism. As shall be illustrated below, Salvo encounters and interacts with social, political and art history at many levels.

What then was the particular history which the artist Salvo inherited? (To begin assessing Salvo's work, let us first examine the personal history which the artist himself inherited.) Salvo was born, Salvatore Mangione, in 1947 in Leonforte, Sicily. Like many Italians, his family moved north to Turin, Italy's former capital, filled with arcades and piazze, where Giorgio de Chirico worked and became inspired for his 'metaphysical' paintings of the early twentieth Century. Both the city of Turin and the painter de Chirico had a profound influence on Salvo since the beginning of his artistic career.

Salvo's approach to art showed his personal acknowledgement of his country's culture and history. As we shall see, this culture and history which encouraged and enlivened his work, highlighting his belief that art in its production cannot escape the history of its own language.

1943, before Salvo was born, saw Italy rise from the anti-fascist era like a cultural phoenix. By April 1947 the art Group Forma had published their first of many manifestos.

“The need to bring Italian art to the level of the current European Language forces us to take a clean-cut position against every silly and biased nationalist ambition and against the gossipy and useless province that is present day Italian culture.”

(The Italian Metamorphosis, p292)

This saw the beginning of a creative Italy with both strong national and independent values.

On March 15th 1967, Arte Povera was named by Germano Celant (Italian Metamorphosis, p 290) who created an exhibition including the works of Jannis Kounellis and Giulio Paolini. Kounellis’ work aimed toward a return to the base of nature and its elements, while Paolini was examining the enigma of the idea. This era was an extremely fruitful combination of photography, object and painting that initiated a free investigation of the broad creative media which is still ongoing today.

In 1968 there came demand for a revision of both political and cultural values in Italy. This emancipated society that fought for a return to the value of pleasure freedom countering the predominant ideas of opulence and economic power that ran free in Italian society. It saw the dissolution of censorship, boundaries by which pleasure and emotion are measured. This year began a rebirth of awareness, perhaps a second Renaissance when a new generation of people were protesting the consumerist way of life. This generated a critique of the socio-political boundaries, of pleasure and freedom which influenced the attitudes within the Arte Povera group. These artists desired to create work informed by elements of life and everyday experience. They breathed a certain sensuality into the work, feeling the need to expand the mental and physical boundaries of art which also contained that ever present questioning inherent in all Italian artists to follow.

In the midst of these influences, Salvo began, in 1969, working on a series of ‘self portraits’, a series of 12 in which he appears in the guise of many different persons

including, an American soldier from the Vietnam war, a Cuban Guerrilla, a Salesman, a Sailor and the Russian ballet dancer, Nurejev. This series of photo-montage work where he utilised images found in newspapers renders the original images dysfunctional by transporting them into the art world. What had become important to Salvo was to highlight his own role as the artist and to question that role in society, in this case by placing himself in other social positions. It seems that Salvo was quite content to be openly seen making direct references to art history in conjunction with his own doubts about with the role of the artist. His 'Autoritratto (come Raphael)', 1970 (Fig.1) illustrates this point clearly. Salvo has never tried to deny his use of historical imagery and here he cheekily places himself at the same level as Raphael almost daring his audience to award him that status. Salvo was not afraid to award himself that status. He produced a long series of text based work, following the same lines as Kosuth and Paolini.

He uses marble slabs, which in themselves act as a constant reminder of past achievements of Italian culture (achievements in sculpture and architecture). Their displacement within this temporal context add to their power, as do the word he chooses to display upon them. 'Salvo e vivo' 1990 (Fig. 2) and 'Amare me' 1971 (Fig. 3). They illustrate to us once more Salvo's multi-layered meanings and possible readings of the work. This whole body of text based work could be read as Salvo's attempt to place himself in the history books for all eternity by erecting, monuments to himself, or as a further examination and voicing of his own concerns about the role of the artist in society. This questioning does not begin and end with himself. Some of his later works include his name combined with the words 'Italy' and 'Sicily', thus deepening the quest for understanding of his role within society, independent of his artistic tendencies.

The powerfully direct text Salvo uses, ensured that the viewer does not misread his intentions. His self referential statements from 1970 show the multi-layers of influences upon his work. These solemn and monumental plaques of carved marble act on one hand as commemorative statements to the greatness of his culture, while showing his personal connection with his own work in a Narcissistic manner. On the other hand this personally involved series of works act as a commentary on how cultural and social evaluation of any successful artist has created a mould/standard that one must try to fit

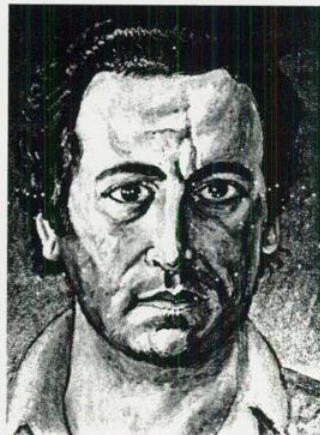


Figure 1

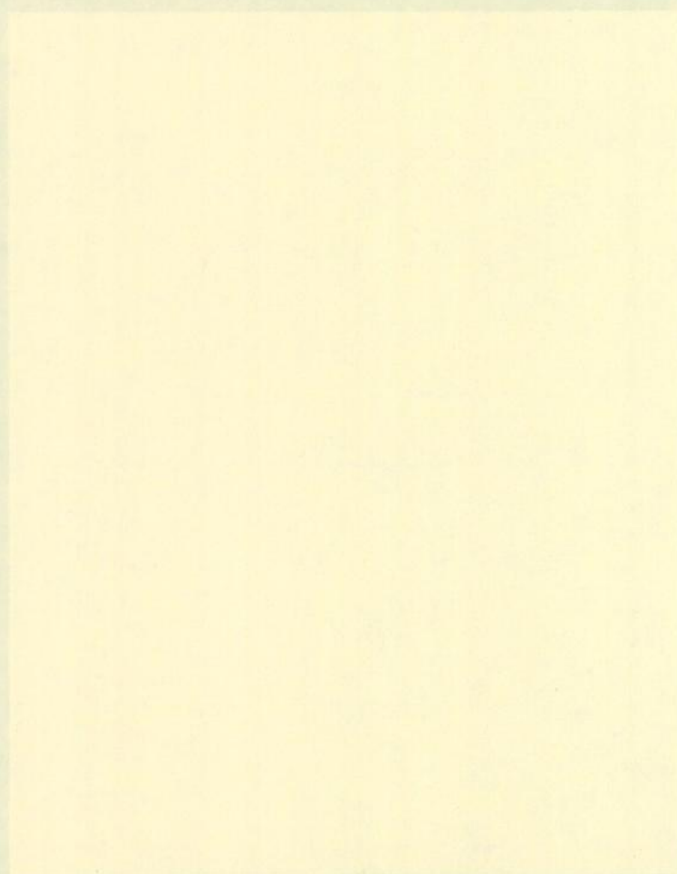
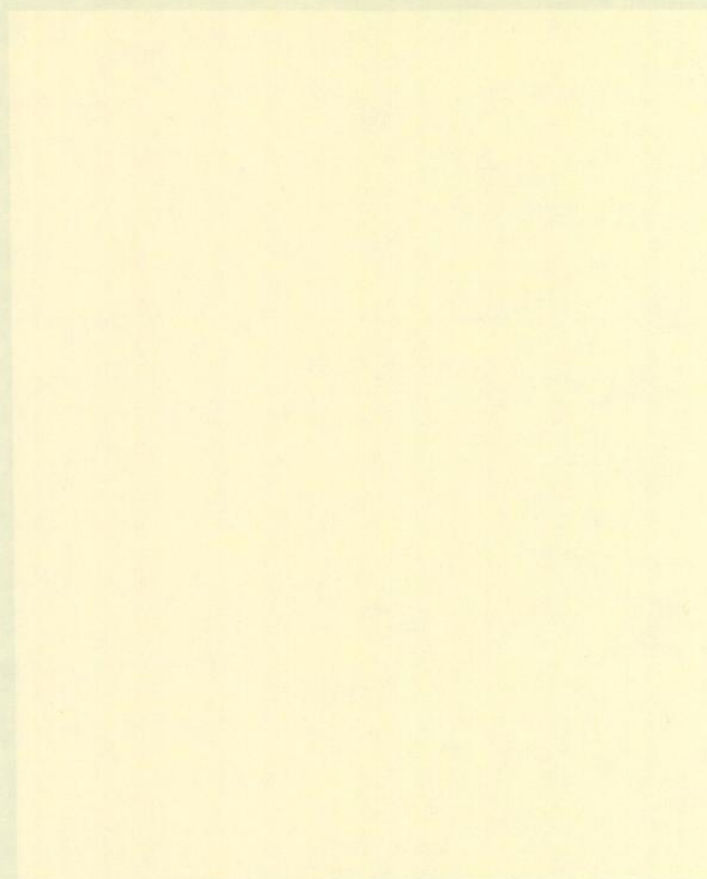
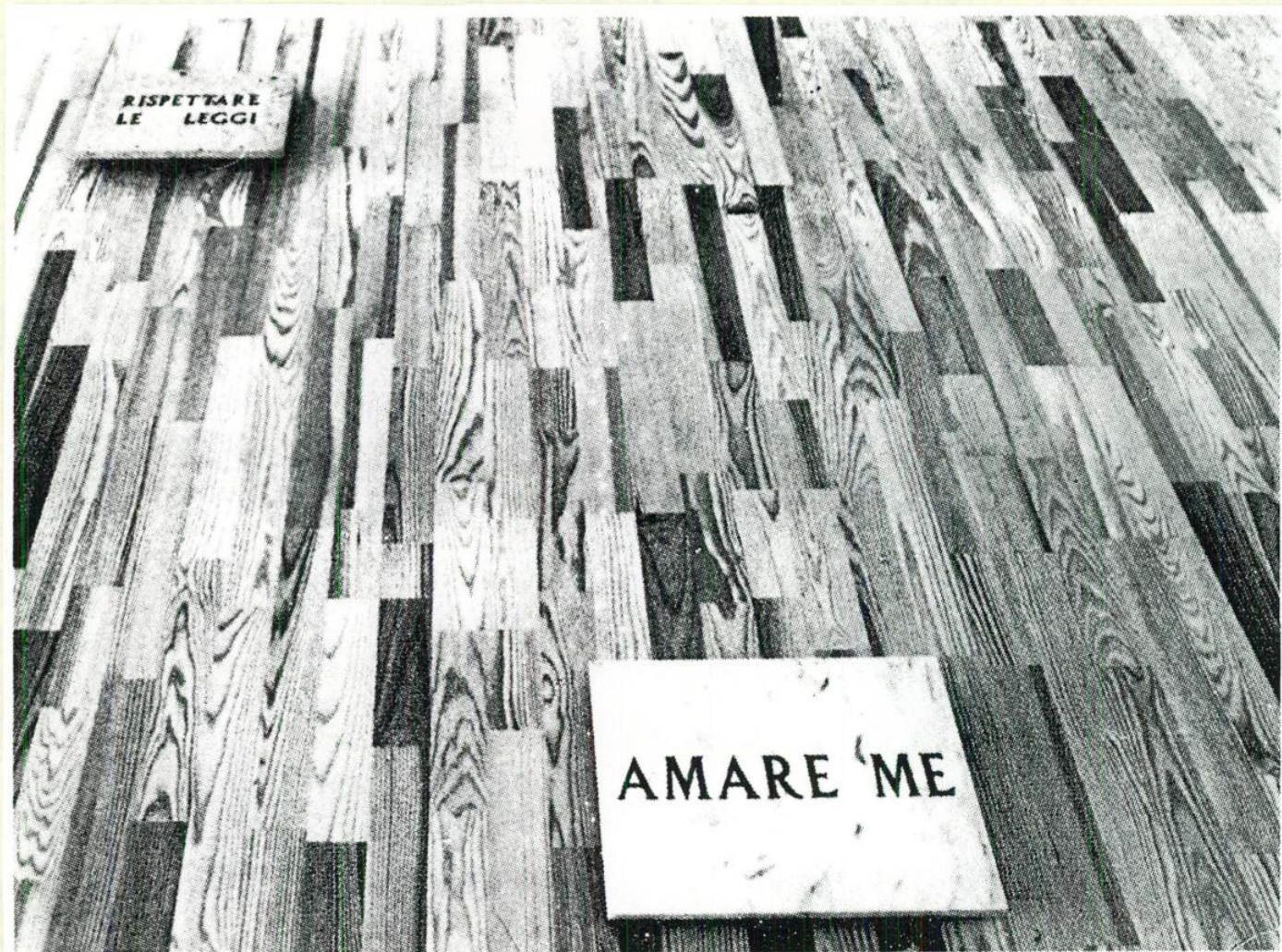




Figure 2







into. This issue first arose in Italian cultural history during the Renaissance and has become even more important since then. This however, is not unique to the thinking within Salvo's painting and is also seen within other Italian artists. Giorgio de Chirico, who was an influence on the concepts of Salvo's work, was not afraid to elevate his own creative spirit. "Pictor Classicus Sum" was de Chirico's self appointed title, it was to indicate directly his artistic intentions with Classical art, and does so emphatically by being a proud Latin term.

Though the directness of Salvo's art made him, for a time, almost a loner during the late 1960's among the Italian avant-garde, his later return to painting in 1973 was echoed by many other Italian painters of that time. Art (especially religious art) has played a key role in the education of the Italian people, and this century has seen many of its own contemporaries re-appraising their past masters, showing the rest of the world a solid and constant belief in the ideas that generated that art so long ago.

Apollinaire, French poet and critic, believed with the help of nineteenth century Nietzschean philosophy, that historical and philosophical ideas repeat themselves in cycles. Similar to this, is a concept of revival, that arose from the firm conviction that perfection was revealed at a certain given point in history. Philosophy and art of the classical era show this original concept; in which it's high standards helped later generations learn the measure of perfection.

In contemporary society it seems that not much has changed about this quest for perfection, the only difference being that the 'goal-posts' have shifted. The production of 'beautiful' images in magazine advertising, T.V., and in almost every form of mass media conceivable has enforced a certain standard of perfection on people through many aspects of their everyday lives.

On a broader European cultural level, the huge levels of perfection, beauty and logic held during Greek and Roman civilisations had profound influences on both their own development and that of other societies. The vast reach of the Roman Empire has left its mark in architecture all over Europe. The constant return to their systems of logic and measure of perfection is found throughout examples ranging from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century (Example: Neo classical architecture).

It could be argued that, looking at, and accepting the veracity of these examples, makes it harder therefore to believe the philosophy previously quoted from Apollinaire. The evidence we have readily available in art history indicates that the concept of a conscious revival is more likely than the possibility of the natural cyclical surfacing of ideas, either historical or philosophical.

During the 1980's an emphasis on re-examining the canons of art history stood out in Italian painting. Carlo Maria Mariani began to take visual quotation from the works of Durer, Duchamp and de Chirico and openly referencing the work in an attempt to criticise the modernist obsession with originality. Mariani's work illustrates however, a stronger relation to the history from which he quotes. His searching through neo-classical history shows an involvement that does not simply treat the art as a banal collage of stylistic and compositional excerpts, but offers a visual suggestion to reconsider inherited ideas about his cultural history. Many other groups of artists including, Nazarenes, Purists, and Romanticists, who have worked directly with this concept of rereading the past, have all been given their rightful position in the avant-garde

However, critics have posed questions about whether or not this reiteration of past ideas or ideals, as seen in these artists and also in the work of Salvo, is the right path for the contemporary artist to follow. They argue that this revivalism or slavish imitation of artistic convention was completely contradictory to all that has been discovered and defined by the modern avant-garde artists of this century. One thing that must be remembered however, is that the production of art begins with the questioning of given regulations, be they social, political or arts historical. This attempt to go against the flow, proved to be an important direction to take in art of the past.

In the cultural history of Italy, (of which Salvo, of course, is an inheritor), during the Renaissance, Mannerism created a stir by breaking the rules of Classicism and introducing new ideas into the rigid precepts of (Religious) art. In many ways, Italy's sense of its own art history has sent its advancing culture further into the future than could even have been anticipated by Marinetti in 1909, (founding member of the Futurist movement). A return in recent years to those afore-mentioned traditions of Mannerism and Classicism has earned immense critical attention. Mannerism was an

aesthetic approach of the Italian Renaissance, more specifically between the High Renaissance and the Baroque (1520-1600). Vasari, critic and painter of that era, was among the first to apply the term to any style of painting. In his montages on the 'Lives of the Great Artists', the term 'maniera' was used to indicate qualities of sophistication, grace and facility. The term has however been the cause of great difficulty and controversy within the criticism of art, and among the conflicting definitions is one which is found in the Oxford English Dictionary, here mannerism is defined as "excessive or affected addiction to a distinctive manner" (Some aspects of Mannerism are discussed further in chapter two).

The other term, Classicism, is easier to define but its use in many contexts has blurred its original and intended definition. It defines an artistic approach that illustrates the importance of adherence to rules and aesthetic ideals rather than encouraging the freedom of individual expression. In Alberti's terms, when discussing classical beauty in architecture, he gives perhaps a more lucid description:

"The harmony and concord of all the parts achieved by following well founded rules and resulting in a unity such that nothing could be added or taken away or altered except for the worse".

(Dictionary of Art and Artists, Chambers, 1978).

The re-utilisation of these styles through the eyes of a more advanced society has produced, as shall be seen, a genre of art that aims to draw out the innermost sense of the sublime and a feeling of spiritual and imaginative ascendance through art. As John Shearman has stated, the work produced shows an emphasis on "style and craft, as well as to share beauty and visual theatrics" that "indicates an overt desire for or 'bella figura', a decorous presentation of self" (Summerson, 1980).

The sensitivity within contemporary Italian painting stretches right across the board in painterly style. Artists such as Sandro Chia and Mimmo Paladino, with their expressionistic approach to painting lie on one side, and the masters of 'neo-classical' painting including Carlo Maria Mariani lie on another. Even with stylistic differences that are very apparent in their work, these artists cannot conceal the very strong iconic quality within the images they produce, which speak of things that go far beyond the realities they initially represented. By reverting to images of mythical or allegorical

origin they can avoid certain complications with the well grounded beliefs of Western Christianity, so allowing for a more intuitive response to their art.

Such historical referencing has always had a part to play in the development of art, perhaps particularly so in the case of Italy. However, preservation of the past has been a constant drain on Italy both financially and culturally. This preoccupation, has resulted in countless examples of Roman ruins taking precedence over contemporary art. Italy has only two main centres for contemporary art, one in Rome and the other in Milan. It may now seem logical that the Futurists at the beginning of this century had wanted to rebel against historicism and its preservation. They felt there was a greater need for concern with future development rather than glorifying “old canvases, old statues, old objects ... rotten with filth, eaten away by time ...” (Futurist, Manifesto, 1910).

Their intention was to clear Italian history away and make room for the young headstrong artists of the early part of this century. However, their cultural past lingered and the resulting combination of innovation and tradition became part of the great strength of twentieth century Italian painting. Italy has shown itself throughout its history to be in many ways socially dysfunctional, but the strengths in its social configuration that are due to theological and philosophical input over the centuries, has helped the nation to overcome its social problems. War, plague and Reformation in Europe have resulted in Italy's constant political, and consequently social, upset. In this century alone Italy has had more than forty changes in political power.

It can now be seen that Italy's strong creative spirit has been influenced and driven by its own changing situation, and they may now perhaps have desire enough to finally achieve a national identity in the future, voiced, possibly, through the nation's creative artists and subsequently involving, a united social understanding of that (perhaps an idyllic but inspiring goal). As has already been stated, the art of Salvo responds in many ways to the cultural history of Italy. It also, however, forms a part of the cultural milieu, and in whatever small way, has a part to play in defining the terms of Italy's future.

The 1960's saw attempts to moving art closer to the people. Arte Povera brought the art object to the level of everyday human experience. Real objects made art more tangible,

accessible and understandable to the viewer, who came from outside any artistic or creative circles. However, in the years after 1968 and Arte Povera, young artists began to generate a reaction to this conceptualism. The arrival of the 'Transavantguardia', christened such by critic Achile Bonito Oliva, saw Italy once again at the forefront of a conscious return to painting² (Also well underway in German Art of this time).

This revival by the artists of the 'transavantguardia' was perhaps one of the most important stages in Italy's artistic history. It received more international press, and widespread acceptance than any other preceding artistic concentration within Italy since the emergence of Futurism.

American interest in Italian art was very strong during this time. The Hirshorn was the first American institution to openly recognise the vast artistic activity that makes up the Italian contemporary art world. It, showed the "New Romanticism" exhibition in 1985 and the "New Metaphysical dream" in 1986. The transavantguardia are familiar to American audiences now thanks to the Hirshorn, who have also shown a number of works by members of the 'anacronisti' group as well as Umberto Bartolini and Carlo Maria Mariani from the Pittura Colta group.

Overall, the feeling American art audiences have been said to receive from looking at this genre of Italian art, is, that it contains an optimism, viability and value to Italy's culture, (and hopefully to other cultures), and also that they fully appreciate the present, to which is brought an understanding and appreciation of their cultural history.

Sandro Chia, Mimmo Paladino, Enzo Cucchi and Francesco Clemente were the central figures of this essentially figurative school of painting, but the influence of it's predecessors (Arte Povera and Conceptualism) could not be forgotten. This then resulted in an eclectic montage of ambiguity and personal mythology.

One specific Italian artist who exemplifies this is Mimmo Paladino born in 1948 in Benevento, Southern Italy. His complete immersion with Italy and its cultural make-up,

² One reason for this could be that Italy has an extremely rich heritage in painting that is hard to avoid when immersed in that culture.

has influenced and made his work reflective of his experiences through his own visual language. Salvo himself, also illustrates that creativity is directly connected to and influenced by one's own experiences and existence. The fundamental drive behind Salvo's whole creative career has been the challenge of the new. By taking on board different styles and re-examining them until he is unable (technically) to find a solution. Salvo said himself, that this method is as a self-examination and a personal education via experience. He parallels an arrival at a fault or mistake in his work, with his own personal development. This results in his proving, at least to himself, that creativity is directly linked to and influenced by one's own experiences and existence. Salvo treats this then as a measure, a method of self-examination and personal teaching. This basis of searching for truth within art along with a willingness to accept its imperfections, challenges the theories upon which early Italian art and architecture are based.

Returning to Paladino it is also not difficult to see the strong contextual elements within his work. However, in Paladino's work, this evokes a more obvious sense of worship (a worship of what is unclear), than in the work of Salvo. Paladino's colours of red, gold and green place his paintings on a parallel with religious icons paintings of the 1300's for example Duccio's Madonna (Fig. 4). His paintings are full of figures, some taking part in a larger narrative. These figures are treated in a simplistic way that contain an undoubted influence of historic artistic achievement. Some of these figures are, for example reminiscent of the black (on red) Etruscan vase figures. We can see this particularly in *Qualli che vanno, Qualli che restano* - Those who go those who stay, 1994 (Fig. 5).

This narrative, (whether in fact it could be called a narrative decisively, is perhaps questionable since the ambiguity of the piece in question is more important to the creation of the story and Paladino does not try to force a participative reading on the viewer), also contains faces that openly invite the viewer to relate and understand the message of the painting. This treatment adds to the ambiguous (but completely necessary) concept within the work.

"it gathers fragments of memory and, with a cadence of classicism, scatters them in space" (Paladino, p. 13, *En Do Re*).



Figure 4





Figure 5

This affirmation by Paladino reminds us of our small part in this existence we vaguely know. And in turn this serves as a reminder of Nietzsche's view that the infinite is the " tiniest fragment" of the world (Neill and Ridley, The Philosophy of Art, Readings Ancient and Modern, 1995). Metaphor and symbolism within his personal painterly syntax occurs in the work both by his own intention and due to a subconscious affectation within him. This occurs through the process of creation.

Paladino's images refer us to the basics of interpretation. They are not self explanatory and so, via a form of personal interpretation through viewer-image interaction the content can be manipulated and formed into many different answers all of which are valid and correct (if a correct answer should seem necessary). The quality of symbolic imagery, (symbolic because he does not try to force an answer upon the viewer), incorporated within the work enables the viewer to take part in a reconstruction of a history. A reconstruction of the original is impossible just as attempting to paint a direct copy of a past master can never truly stand up on its own due to exclusion from important social and cultural factors. This fragmentation of information leaves it displaced or estranged from normality as we perceive it, resulting in mentally challenging and unusual readings.

Paladino's work shows how Italian painting in it's historical referencing has helped itself to move forward. No longer does Paladino have to trouble himself with a necessity to create something innovative (ever since the abandonment of the modernist aesthetic of the new); this is now a natural process within his work. Such a commitment to creativity should certainly instil (within the creator) an understanding of the human condition. Painting and Sculpture have become for Paladino, like Salvo, a *modus operandum*, which examines man's existence. Through art they try to bridge the gap between spirit and matter, the soul and the world.

In general, Italian art, with its referential allegorical methodology, creates a metaphysically aware culture that in its turn enhances the metaphysical awareness of any individual within that culture. It is impossible to read Italian art/culture as linear. A linear temporal scale is invalid to a reading of this nations actual 'history'. Paladino's work, and equally that of Salvo, existed before its creation and current state, and therefore will exist after its eventual destruction/deterioration.

Paladino's works are, without wishing to diminish them in any way, merely illustrations, fragments of thought that he has offered up for criticism and for interpretation. They are part of an interactive and interchangeable culture where one element enhances and educates another, increasing the stock pile of its own collective referential material. Italian art illustrates to us a belief or 'existence' of metaphysical understanding. This does not necessarily mean that this is an exclusively Italian concept, or that other nations are ignorant of this line of thinking. In fact W.B. Yeats illustrates this concept of a collective, perhaps universal, well of information most clearly in his writings on magic.

- “1. That the borders of our minds are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
2. That the borders of our mind are ever shifting and that our memories are part of one great memory, the memory of nature itself.
3. That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols”.

Yeats (En Do Re.)

Carlo Maria Mariani is perhaps the contemporary Italian painter most noted for his work being a commentary upon art. Although usually it could be seen as neo-classical, one must remember that he is a contemporary painter. His art is ironic and cultivated, and Mariani has no desire to let it be misinterpreted as anything else, especially a copy of eighteenth century art (Fig. 6). Paralleling a self-questioning also found in Salvo, Mariani's work creates a world of idealised Olympian figures, that are conventions of classical art and treated as demigods. Consequently, as with Salvo's work, we end up with realities beyond our normal understanding and everyday experience.

It has been argued throughout this first chapter that art develops out of art. It develops overall cultural values and appreciation, which in turn increase the quality and quantity of information available to further the production of art. It was through this belief that Salvo began his return to painting. He began to 'copy' and 'paraphrase' classical paintings in his own style, using his own image as an obvious and constant reminder to the viewer that he is a complete part of this creative process and that he himself is still



Figure 6

striving to come to terms with the role of the artist. Having said that there are also paintings that discuss 'art', but they do not possess any obvious 'Pop art-esque' overtones seen so readily in Roy Lichtenstein's 'brushstroke' paintings. Salvo's work revolves around the concept of a non definable temporal existence or longevity. The re-iteration of past artistic works being a tribute to their artistic greatness rather than just a blatant pastiche of it. His 'quoting' from their art is an attempt, rather to bring it back to the forefront of artistic attention, helping to demystify art from other eras.

Overall, the natural instinct to question oneself is strongly felt throughout Italian painting. Through the process of re-examination of experience Salvo attempts to follow that instinct but as an artist is aware of his audience. He offers his questions and his answers to them, encouraging the audience them to do similarly as he had done in the process of creating, that is to invent a new way of looking.

It could be said that Salvo's recent paintings seem to be the most successful. Their strength is in that they are clearly (successful) illustrations of Salvo's answers to his own doubts and queries, portrayed in a way that combines all those qualities he admired so much about the history of painting, and perhaps are finally the answer that he has been searching for via his own visual language. In the next chapter, some of the questions and answers which are illustrated in Salvo's work will be examined.

“When I make a painting one of the reasons that guides me is the certainty that Giotto, Leonardo, Rembrandt, Goya, and Van Gogh are (were personally) great painters”.

Salvo (Mazzotta, Milan 1992)

Chapter Two

Salvo and colour

In the previous chapter, we discussed some of the qualities within Italian cultural history as a whole, by which Salvo was influenced in his art. In this chapter, some of the aspects which he inherited, more particularly, from the history of painting itself, will be examined. We will also begin to discuss the uses which Salvo makes of this inherited past, in his work.

Probably the first thing one notices when confronting the paintings of Salvo is the strange off beat use of colour in every one. His pictorial intentions are to use strong drawings, be they landscape, interior or figure as a basis upon which he can apply his interest and examination of colour. The colour range of greens, reds, yellow ochres and the blue hues, evoke an almost celestial colour palette that is reminiscent of painters of the Quattrocento. An examination of any one of his paintings could act as an intense lesson in colour theory. The balance of tone, density of hue against hue, and the value of that to the subject it is illustrating.

All colours and each individual intensity of that, is created by the amount of light it absorbs. Salvo shows his full awareness of this within the creation and build up of tonal values in each painting. Each painting contains a single light source, for example a street lamp or a sunset. Salvo uses this as a central point for light, (which is white). He builds up a series of outwardly radiating circles of colour bathed in light, always mixing his colours with white pigment to help enhance the effects of light on colour as accurately as he possibly can, (via the theory of the colour wheel), through the use of artificial pigments.

The huge background to Salvo's work means it can be read in several ways, for example, as paintings about colour, alternatively as strange comments on his pictorial heritage, or even as inviting and sublime images designed to create an emotive response. Combining these readings can result in individual (and valid) interpretations, showing a multi-layering of interest within each work.

The range of subject matter within his paintings include scenic gardens, idyllic and romanticised ruins, mythical figures, everyday street scenes, and even books. The variety of subject matter he uses confirms his own claim that he feels inspired by people ranging as widely as Giotto and Carra.

Since the late 1970s his main and primary concern is the investigation of colour and the techniques he can employ in order to combine this interest with his long running existentialist form of self-examination.

Viewing his landscape paintings from 1984, we find Salvo creating a strange but inviting world. The immediate foreground of 'Tramonto' (Fig. 7) does not seem to hold any strange or displacing factors with the local colour being naturalistic in tonal value. The beautiful sanction of colour that makes up the background seems incongruent to the foreground, but the combination of the two ensures that the complete image is solid and believable. This visual confusion is perhaps what allows us to accept Salvo's bizarre world almost without question. Since the colours do not clash completely, making a judgement that defines the images as being wrong is in itself the wrong answer.

Salvo's painterly approach gives every aspect of the work the same attention. We find heavy solid cloud formations that defy gravity. They only remain afloat because of the lightness of their purples hues against the strong orange, then green, sky. These clouds are as formidable as the stone structural remains in the foreground.

Salvo's knowledge of colour theory, learned so well through his study of Italian painting, afforded him the artistic licence to force one colour against another in the knowledge that they will compliment each other well enough to clarify or strengthen the imagery concerned. The results show a definite involvement with the practical dealings with paint as a medium combined with an appreciation and understanding of all theory and linguistic grammar of painting.

The similar subject matter in 'Rovine al Tramonto' 1982 (Fig. 8) is perhaps a more realistic image (or reflection of truth) to our eyes, with it's much more subtle use of colour and tone. Salvo proves his worth, more than adequately illustrating in both images his understanding of colour balance within the limited dimensions of a painting, and the subsequent effects they may have on the viewers interpretation.

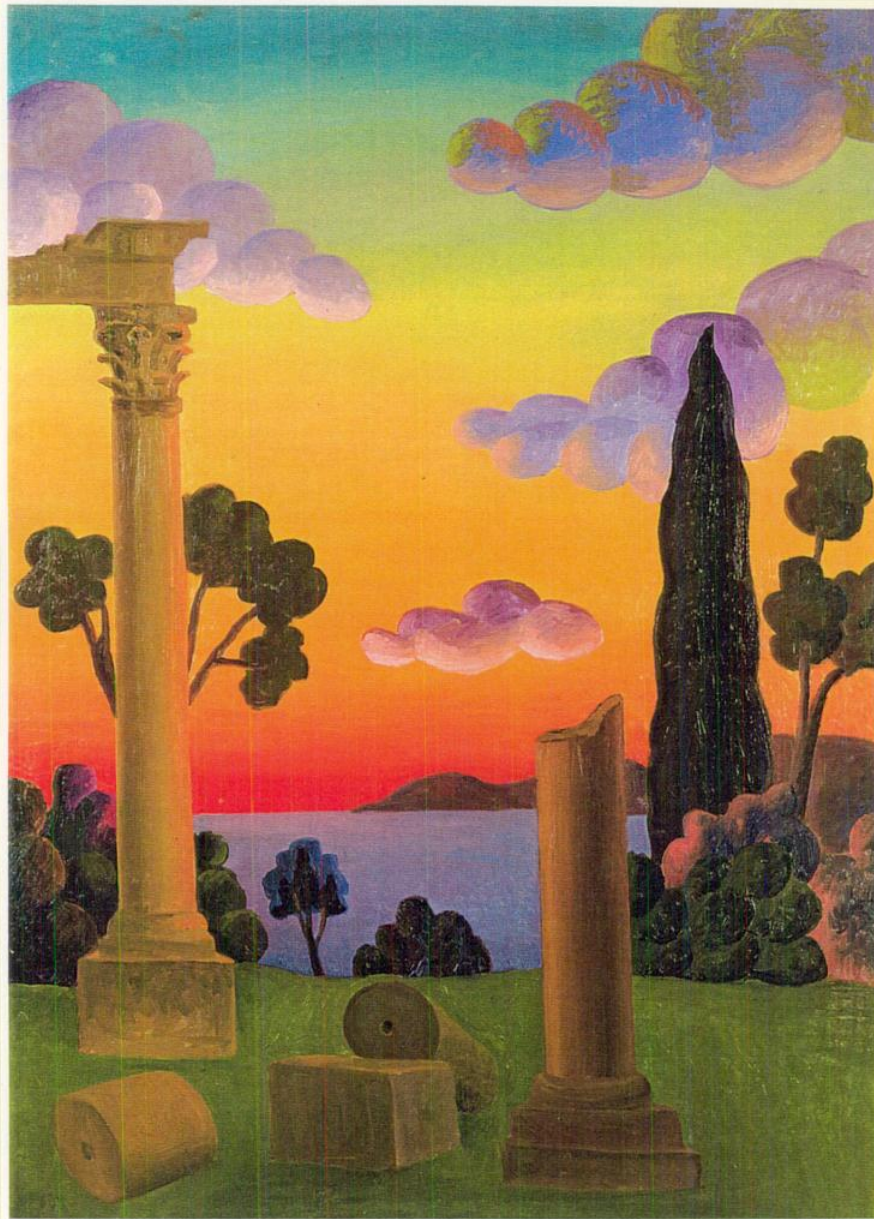
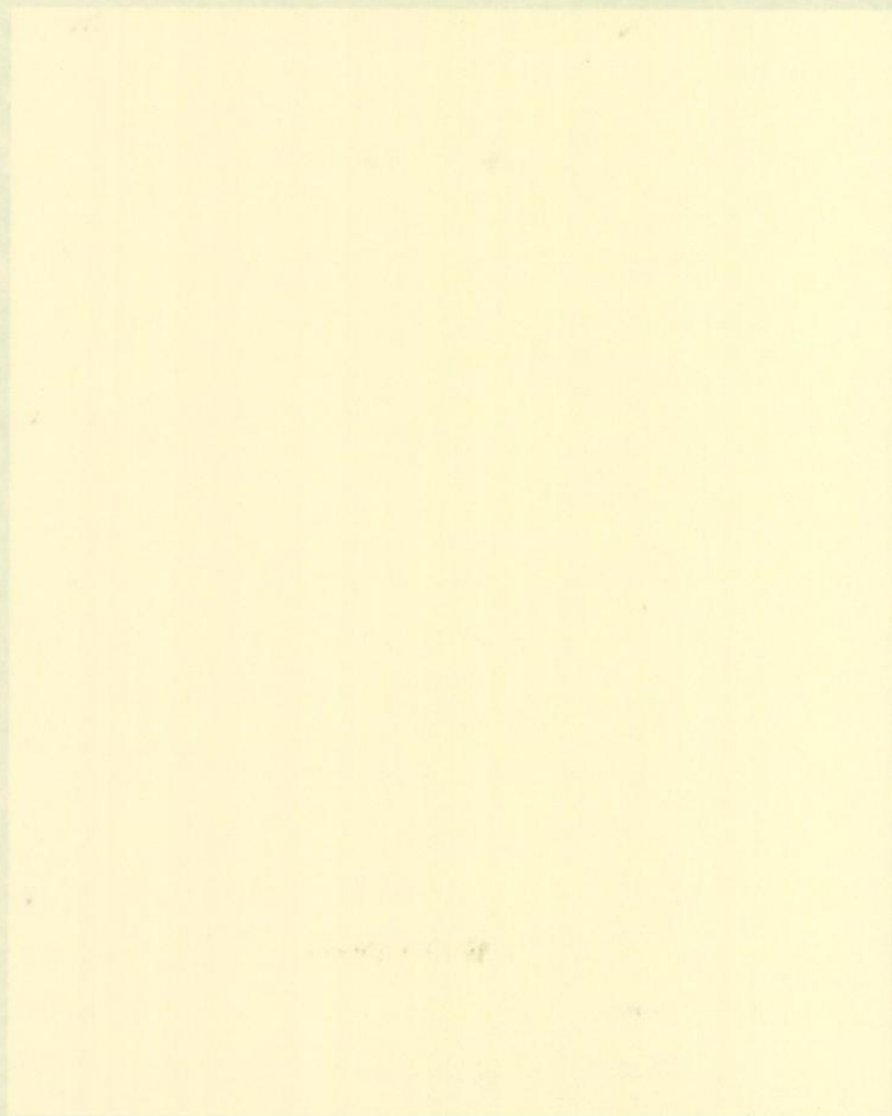


Figure 7





Figure 8

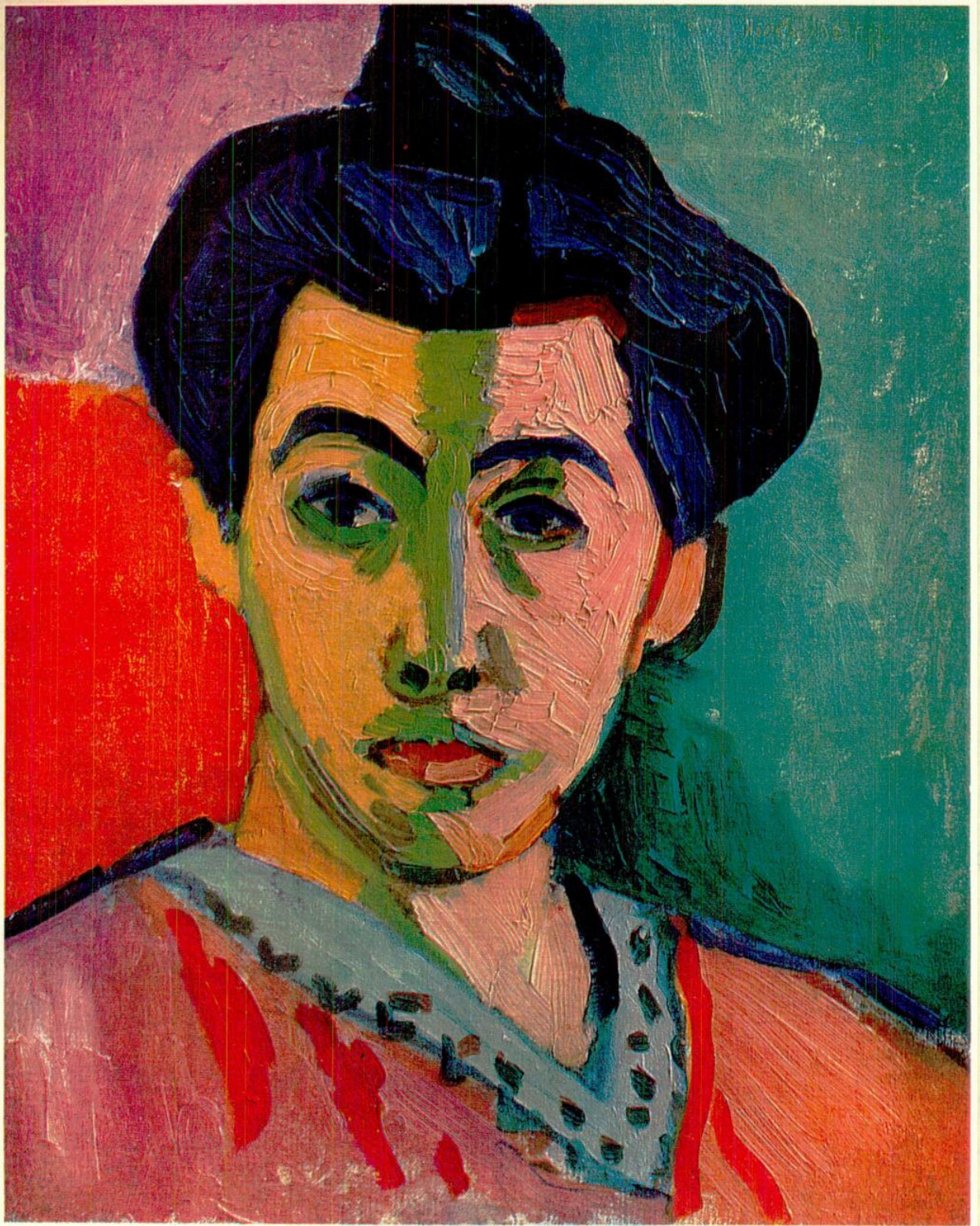


Through the subtle process of metamorphosis (via colour) he merges fact and fiction, dream and reality. The landscapes of the 1980's introduce a paroxysmal interchange of parts where each element can be re-read as another part of the same work. Each aspect being given the same treatment, the trees, columns and clouds. Salvo's rereading of reality is perhaps reflective of the thoughts of St. Thomas Aquinas, who describes truth as being a conversation and subsequent understanding between the mind and reality, the process by which forms, and their passing through into intellectual evaluation systems obtain meaning. With this as a base Thomas Aquinas developed a complex metaphysics of knowledge. (Marshall, 1995, p95). For example when the intellect combines its understanding of an object to the reality of it only then it is considered to be true ('grass' and 'green') what it combines them otherwise ('grass' and 'purple') then the intellect is false. But the intellect cannot perceive this or evaluate this without the infiltration of information gathered from everyday experiences and emotions. This combined with Aquinas' theory, creates the context within which visual sensations take on their specific character and meaning.

Salvo's paintings do provide us with an illustration of this line of thinking, but his intention is not quite to render the image as false but to create an awareness within the intellect of the definite possibility of rereading a 'truthful' image in a variety of ways, with each one maintaining its validity. Salvo attempts this through his systematic and chromatic use of colour.

The use of striking colour is found in many styles throughout the history of painting. The one that does seem to correlate with Salvo's colourful approach is the work of the Fauvist painters from the early twentieth century. If we take the famous portrait of Matisse's wife 'Green Stripe' (Fig. 9) as a prime example, we can see how well Salvo understands his palette.

The Fauvists were renowned for their 'challenging' colour symphonies, and this painting of Matisse's wife shows a range of blue, pink, orange, red, green, ochre and yellow. The strength of colour in the background would, without doubt, ensure the loss of definition in the portrait if this infamous green stripe were missing. Matisse was concerned with being able to "place blue, red and green side by side and assemble them in an expressive constructive way" (Matisse, Fauves and Fauvists p61).



Henri Matisse (1869-1954): Portrait with a Green Stripe, 1905.



The colour intensity remains constant throughout Salvo's painting. His paintings are never shocking or abrupt, but gradual in a way that echoes the theories of Renaissance chiaroscuro techniques. The gradation from light to dark is adapted by Salvo but employed in his own way almost as if looking through a filter of the colour spectrum. Each colour is allowed its own existence with each one being as valid as the next.

Colour can no longer be merely regarded as the decorative element of the surface. Light creates colour, and a painting concerned with this should be illuminated from within, creating depth and atmosphere. Sixteenth century Mannerism made a certain use of colour and light that was considered distracting and reduced the impact and true intention of the paintings contents on the viewer. However, it is often forgotten by the viewer that the effects of light and colour are produced from solid tangible pigments along with their play against one another rather than the natural play of intangible light. Dexterity in the manipulation of these pigments is important to the success in the creation of the 'mood' or 'expression' of a painting. Therefore colour and degrees of luminosity seem capable of evoking emotion. This is the root of colour symbolism which was greatly investigated in sixteenth century art but is an over simplified explanation of the very complex theories developed during the Renaissance.

Mannerism, or anti-Classicism, displays a contradiction or revolt against the ordered compositions, ideal forms and controlled emotional content found in the work of Raphael and Fra Bartolommeo during the High Renaissance.

The first Mannerist painters during 1520-1550, produced work that is restless with decorative uses of light, shade and colour³.

Pontormo, an early Mannerist painter from Florence whose work exemplifies this contro-traditional approach of the time.

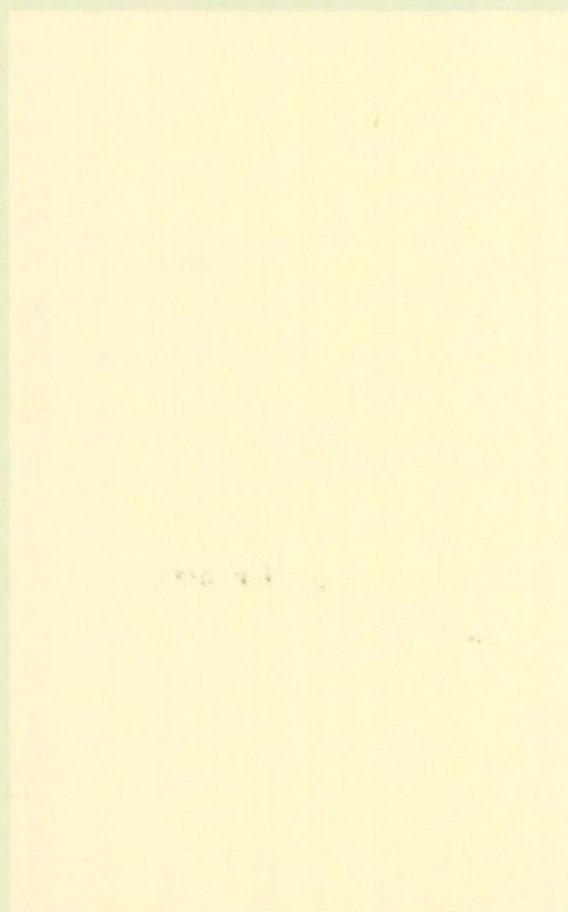
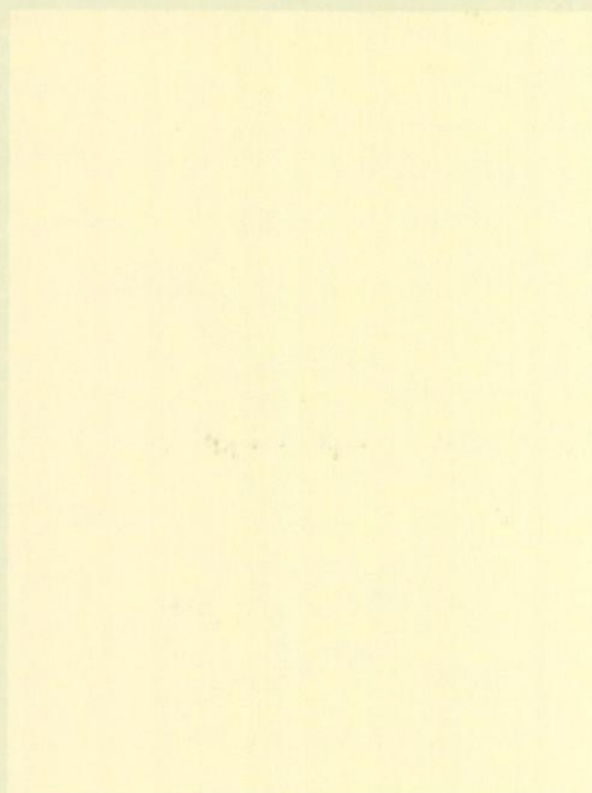
Figure 10, shows an example of Pontormo's work that illustrates his use of unusual colours; pinks with orange shadow, yellows, grey blues, strong oranges and strange

³ Vasari criticised this genre of painting blaming this change of style on Northern influences (Durer's prints were coming into Italy at that time).



145. PONTORMO (1494-1557): *The Visitation*, 1528-30. Panel, 79½ x 61½ in. Florence, Pieve di Carmignano





greens. The strange colouring of the figures combined with the compact pictorial configuration produces a strange emotional effect that radiates from the figures looking out from the picture at the viewer.

The artists of the Renaissance endeavoured to use colour and learned painting techniques, in order to produce realistic and recognisable images of nature. The aesthetic values and the fascination about light and colour within the viewer is rarely discussed in Renaissance art writings. What takes precedence however, is their functional aspects, i.e. light and colour being used to illuminate bodies, making them visible and presentable. Colour is a surface quality of an object and helps to create the (natural, recognisable) form of the object or figure, with light being used to enhance the realism. Taking these functions as being the norms of appreciation and quality during Renaissance art, we can discover a criticism of the representation of dazzling light and iridescent colour as distracting from the original intent of the painting. The recognisable images of nature are conditional by cultural traditions and inherited definitions through which images acquire their specific meanings⁴.

Salvo's approach enables him to deal with what was deemed in sixteenth century Renaissance art as 'picture colour' rather than 'object colour'. Sixteenth century theory speaks in terms of colour which draws out emotions, and frequently references are made to specific feelings being attributed to specific hues (for instance blue evoking a sense of reverence when used in the representation of the Madonna figure). For Salvo colour is individual to human experience and sensation. Perception and visual reaction to colour are independent of what takes place outside the pictorial world. He sees colour and light as having a function separate to that which describes surface and atmosphere. This approach may seem in contradiction to the concept of producing beautiful, appealing and recognisable images where light and colour are an intricate part of the overall image (as in sixteenth century painting), but for Salvo, they are creations of manipulated pigment and he continues to treat them as such, since there exists an obvious tension between the 'abstracted' colours and the figurative drawing in his paintings.

⁴ This clarifies the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas on visual perception and the recognition of truth.

His use of colour to create tension is perhaps best noticed (and specifically in terms of metaphysics) in the works of de Chirico, who was able to produce imagery that via its own imposition upon the viewers vision, caused a feeling of insecurity and superstition within an illusionary space existing beyond the given picture plane. These 'metaphysical' paintings of 1910-1917, allowed or invited the viewer to look into this strangely realistic world by a series of coloured planes, the format of which was directly determined by the strange perspective created with architectural forms. There is a very definitely similar approach to this found in Salvo's Church interior paintings that are discussed further in chapter three.

To any painter, colour is of vital importance to the realisation of the image. Not only does it have to illustrate the specific artistic intention but it also has to answer to the interpretations it may have within its particular context. A variety of interpretations have been applied to colour. Salvo's intention through a varied range of colours in his paintings, is to give each viewer the opportunity to interpret their own unique meaning and in doing so he achieves his aim of the viewer also being the narrator. This is seen clearly in his series of church interior paintings. They have been given the collective title "interni con funzioni straordinarie", but each individual painting has no specific name, allowing the reader the opportunity to read them as he wishes (or as his wishes allow him).

“There are moments in our lives, there are moments in our days when we seem to see beyond the unusual. Such are the moments of our greatest happiness such of our greatest wisdom.”

Robert Henri (The art Spirit, 1960).

Chapter Three

Salvo, theology and philosophy

The architecture of Italian churches exudes an austerity and remoteness. It necessarily contains a reposeful dignity, a solidity and purposefulness that is immediately impressive.

The Athenian Pantheon stands as the most important monument in the entire realm of Mediterranean architecture and a chain of Hellenic architectural development can be found throughout Crete, Sicily, Italy, Ionia and the Archipelago's. The basic design of Greek temples indicate some of the most important qualities of Hellenic architecture - abridgement and selection. Rome in its conquest of Greece adapted the basic styles it found and incorporated sculpted decoration which advanced Roman architecture towards a more complex and comprehensive architectural composition.

Salvo's recent paintings based on these grand structures illustrate a love of obscurity rather than a love of abundance (almost reiterating the style of the Greeks). Reducing the picture surface into basic forms dictated by the forms of Cathedral aisles and arches, Salvo attempts to make a direct and definite connection with the viewer. By using confident yet incongruent colours, which play off one another around the columns and arches, Salvo creates an almost holographic interior, recognisable yet strange, almost reminiscent of those inconceivable but confusingly convincing drawings by M.C. Escher (Fig. 11).

Salvo's subject matter has already a strong power in its inherent importance within Italian society. Italian art and architecture that has been a source of inspiration for Salvo's work, has itself been dictated and manipulated by its own religious and political hierarchy centred in Rome since before the Renaissance.

The church in Renaissance Italy was of paramount importance to the family at that time, when wealthy families found it necessary to display a strong unity and identity to other similar 'competitive' families. Unity with the church enhanced the social status of the family and so a strong family-religious link was forged.

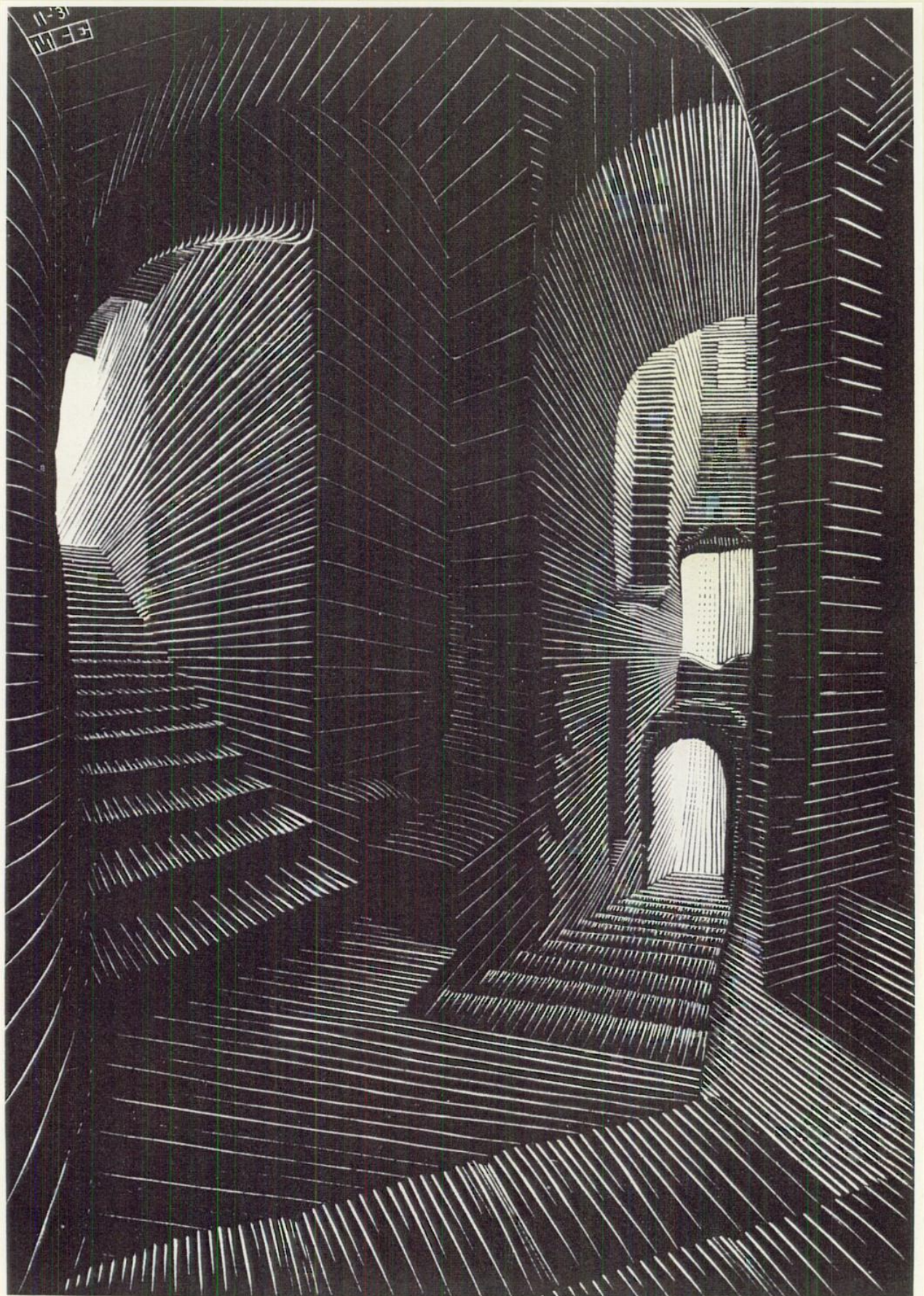


Figure 11



From the thirteenth century, families all over Europe paid to be almost 'immortalised' in the histories of religious architecture. Strong architectural symbols had been developing since the time of the defensive tower, which were emblems of family status. This developed over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, resulting in a concern with patronage of family chapels. The Renaissance era also saw definitive ties between religion and politics, which became so involved with money, patronage and business, that they had themselves evolved into a unit. The necessity of strength within each component of that unit (sometimes not present), was extremely important to the families concerned. An analysis of this allows us to see how contemporary Italy could easily have become dissatisfied with this tangled web of religion and politics⁵.

Looking back even further we find that during the middle ages the church had a monopoly on 'scholarship'. These church scholars were, even then, concerning themselves with the reassessment or rediscovery of classical Greek and Roman teachings. Being preoccupied with human culture, society and values (Hearder, 1990, p103).

These 'humanists' believed 'L'uomo è la misura di tutti le cose'⁶ that is man being producer and product of society. Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), was one of the most influential scholars to preach his beliefs and theories on humanism during the Renaissance. Salutati believed also, that God had given the world an irreversible 'timetable'. According to this, God therefore did not manipulate the acts or will of the human but, as creator, was ultimately responsible for them. This foundationalist reasoning of God as creator of the world, is in direct opposition to metaphysics. The teachings of the Christian Church say that we are all created in the image of God. Within these theological teachings we are expected to turn our attentions outwardly, and aim to better ourselves by aspiring towards our creator. However, this concept of self

⁵ An in depth discussion of this can be found in *Architecture and the after life*, Howard Colvin, Yale University Press, 1991.

⁶ "Man is the measure of all things"

and the human position in the world is challenged by every human being, in their natural instinct to question and fear the unknown.

The Christian spiritual search for 'God' is informed by our (Christian) understanding of our incorporation within time and space as 'imago Dei' (Lewis, p30). The influence and nature of mortality invites a deconstruction and examination of this. A theological and spiritual 'space' is created in which we can attempt to re-read our tangible reality, thus asking for an abandonment of our 'amor Dei' (Lewis, p30).

Salvo's church interiors are perhaps among the best illustrative examples of the cultural and social condition to be found in present day Italy. A gradual shifting from ideological and philosophical precepts of previous decades, a dissatisfaction with theological methodology combined with a politically informed media, has resulted in individual Italian's re-assessment of their standing within (and understanding of) the nation.

All scholars, sculptors and artists of the nation have been pushed to their (creative) limits, which perhaps leaves them with the option only to juggle it's social, political and cultural content. It seems therefore that the attention to philosophies centred on metaphysical beliefs is the strongest guide they now have to help them through their day to day lives. The philosophies of Heidegger, which follow on from the intensity of Nietzsche's teachings brings these readings to a level on line with the modern (Italian) society in which Salvo works.

Heidegger's philosophies, from the outset pose the question - "Why are there 'essents' rather than nothing?" (Heidegger, 1959, p.1). This is the fundamental and widest possible question of any individual who seeks a definition for their existential purpose. The question looms over every individual even if they are unaware of it. It encompasses all unanswered and unanswerable aspects of living. This is the question that all theology tries to define, creating reasons and answers that perhaps numb the (questioning) brain of the inquirer, appeasing their investigative nature as mortals and resulting perhaps in the creation of a laxidazical and an all to submissive character.

Heidegger's theories of metaphysics dismiss the validity of all theology, and are discussed in particular in relation to Christianity. He specifies that in order to partake in

the asking and contemplation of this question one must dismiss all previous learnings through the Christian Church. Anyone who has a definite belief in the teachings of the Bible already possesses the answer to this question of 'essents', even before it is asked.

It transpires through Heidegger that philosophy cannot instigate the creative energies within any particular society, i.e. that this is beyond the power of any philosophy. It is said subsequently, that metaphysics should be rejected (in terms of the discussion of this creative energy), since it has not been part of the initial evolution of the nation from which these creative urges flow. However one should note that like society itself, beliefs and philosophies evolve. It must also be remembered that linear temporal existence has been almost dismissed in terms of discussing the nature of Italian creativity or art (as described in Chapter One), and so choosing a more contemporary branch of philosophy to assess personal social situations, should not be considered invalid or wrong, much less dismissed.

Returning to the implications of the question initially posed by Heidegger, it is the unanswerability of the question itself which matters, and that it is itself the basis for the 'existence' of philosophy. We can see that a co-development of both philosophy and society is perhaps quite impossible. However, regardless of the development of a philosophy we must note that philosophy is external to the happenings of everyday life, that is, it is not a skill to be learned and it has no tangible use to any aspect of society. It should be accepted for what it is, a thinking that opens doors to previously unseen possibilities and perspectives provided by the knowledge of culture and history. Thus reminding us of the ideas discussed in Chapter One where we found that it is this knowledge that creates progression (and helps the progression of creativity). Ultimately the main and important function of philosophy is not to give definite solutions or answers to the problems one faces, but to make one aware of further alternatives or possibilities. It therefore, within the questioning of existence, challenges (by necessity) historical beliefs.

How can this be directed toward the examination of Salvo's culture? One must remember again the statement by Nietzsche concerning the immensity of our existence, 'infinite being the tiniest fragment of all'. This is explained further by Heidegger who reminds us of the 'grain of sand in the desert' theory. Taking this idea on board, one

can create a parallel (in terms of essents) between an individuals importance and the destiny of a nation as a whole. Heidegger's metaphysics calls for a re-thinking of the nature and action of God within Christian living. It calls for an attempt to discover our own complex identity and is a search to find one's place in the world, which may involve the suspicion and destruction of ones inner self. Salvo's recent series of paintings based upon the structures of church interiors, offers us a metaphysical world where man may find peace enough to contemplate these issues.

It should be said that religious architecture is not unusual to Salvo's work. Looking at his paintings from 1984-1986, it can be seen that he was directly influenced by his early Sicilian surroundings. The monastery of San Giovanni degli Ermiti (Sicily) contains within its architectural design, elements of Franco-Romanesque, and Byzantine/Islamic designed cupolas with their mosaics and barrel vaulted roofs. These mosaics with their brilliant colours provided Salvo with inspiration to impart to us a mysterious alien landscape filled with these architectural compilations amid the tropical Gardens of the San Giovanni degli Ermiti monastery. However, Salvo totally excludes any obvious connection with Christianity, both in these and the later church paintings. His paintings do not contain any Religious icons, for example there are no Crucifixes and his columns are not decorated with 'Angelic Putti' of Renaissance art. This illustrates his desire to leave the reading open to the personal interpretation of the viewer. This is vital since each persons comprehension of the existence of the 'other' can only be measured through the perspective of ones own individual experience. Salvo offers a transcendental and expanded reality beyond that which is 'realistically' present, local or specific. Therefore theological/religious overtones have, as indicated, an impact on the work, however deep within Salvo that may be.

Salvo through his instinctual approach to painting, has perhaps discovered the essence of art and the voicing of metaphysical beliefs through that. He has made his work an experience of seeing things in a certain way perhaps for the first time and so challenging the precepts of ordinary perception. The maturation of this in his recent work, which contains the theory and understanding of his cultural background gives us the feeling of Salvo having achieved something. It should be said that this achievement cannot be interpreted here as a (philosophical) answer, since the nature of metaphysics denies the

reader a definite answer. It is an achievement rather in terms of finding a balance between metaphysics and painting; an achievement in terms of conveying a message in the misinterpretative language of the visual arts, and is therefore a personal achievement and marker in Salvos artistic and perhaps personal development⁷.

Salvo displaces these church interiors from reality via a technical approach using colour as was discussed in Chapter Two. Salvo continues to use a strange colour palette, along with the obvious arches and columns which possibly evoke a sense of reverence within the viewer who is aware of the subliminal effects of church architecture (Fig. 12). His paintings have busy yet empty, spatial yet luministic qualities through which one can feel something 'happening'. The colour and light is charged with a tension enhanced by the angles and overlapping planes of the architecture. Although they are void of figures and objects they are filled with the 'external'. His rhythmical openings of perspective combined with a richness of colour that compress together on the surface causing an emotive tension. His images reveal a place where things are indefinable, loosing any emphasis that may be applied to any specific reading to them, making them fully open to interpretation. No boundaries remain. Salvo himself refers to the accessibility of every aspect of life with the availability of knowledge through the encyclopaedia and advancing technology the present culmination of that, the Internet, proving this point clearly.

Salvo's art places new values on old artistic ideas. He breaks away from the realistic, moving toward a more ambiguous image. Thus allowing the viewer to complete the image through their own ego: viewer = protagonist = narrator.

This concept is not new to Italian culture. Many literary works offer the reader the same opportunity. Dante Alighieri is perhaps the most famous poet of early fourteenth century Italy. His trilogy 'La Divina Commedia' offers the reader the opportunity to interact with the 'story' - which is a self assessing moralistic journey through life along the path to Heaven via Hell and Purgatory. The very first lines of the entire 'story', thrusts the 'reader - protagonist' head long into the journey.

⁷ Salvo sees his work as being a personal education as discussed in Chapter One

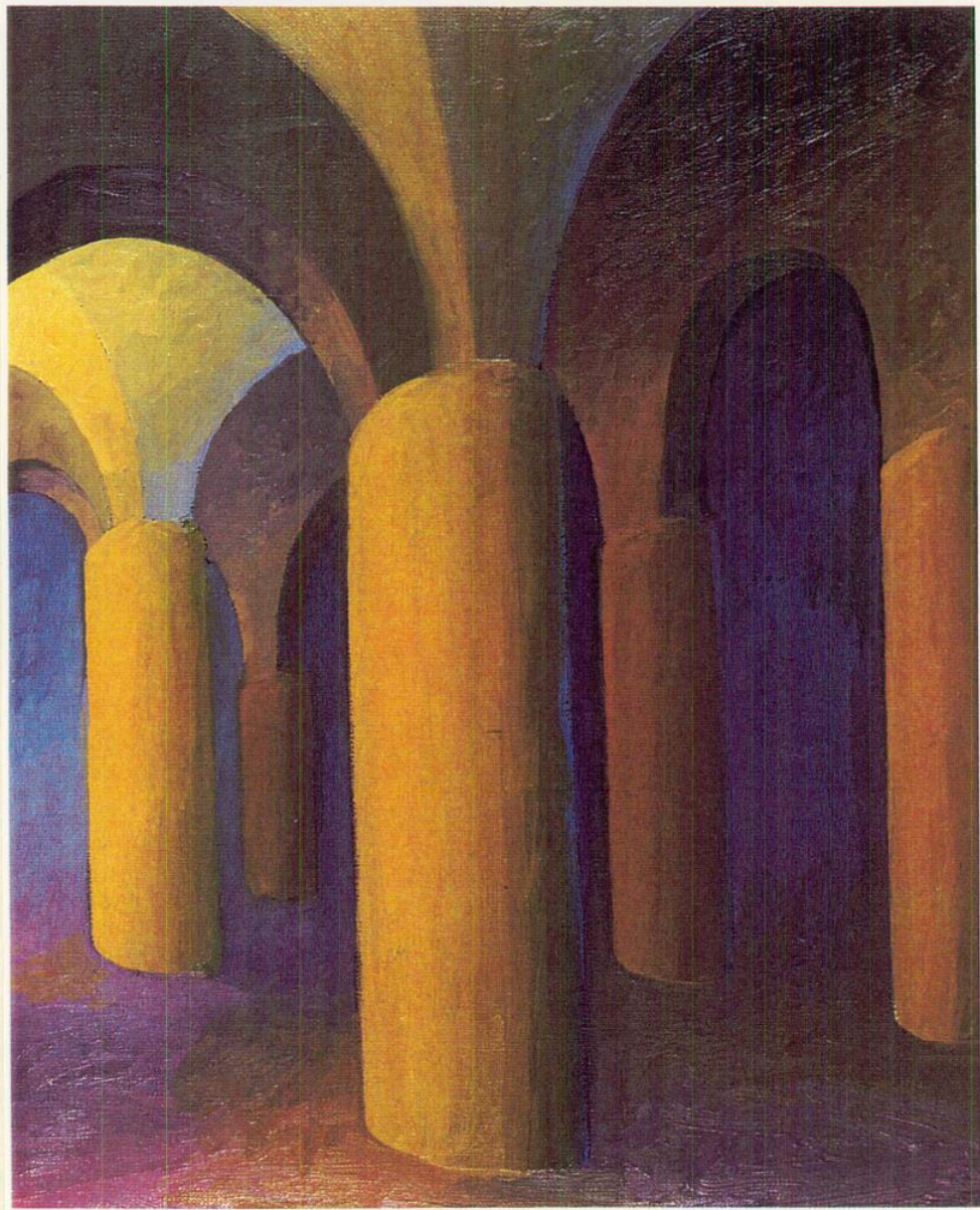


Figure 12



“Nel mezzo del cammin’ di nostra vità
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura”⁸

(Canto 1, Inferno)

Amid this confusion, the reader is forced to deal with the problem of disorientation and so is involved intellectually from the beginning. This adds to the ‘personal’ aspect within the work, creating a sense of participation from the readers perspective. This is comparable to the intentions and/or achievement of Salvo’s paintings. The poetry of Dante is written in the first person which automatically places the reader in the character involved in the story, aided by the story beginning ‘mid-way’. This is similar to Salvo’s work with the absence of the figure. The person then feels they are part of the image rather than watching a story unfold within the image. This broadens the range of responses that can result out of an ‘encounter’ with the work. In the context of a metaphysical experience this perhaps works on a more personal level than the work of Giorgio de Chirico. The strength and impact of paintings of a metaphysical nature is that the scene is almost too normal. A recognisable scene with a vagueness that can relate to any viewer, but the serenity or the sudden recognition of the vagueness displaces the viewer and causes an emotional reaction triggered by memory. Our memory defines normality. The instinctive recognition of an object or situation only causes a reaction, when it disrupts normality. The metaphysical aspect is created by the viewer and it is the scene or object, in whatever form one sees it that creates a reaction within the person. Thus personalising the scene and almost forcing the viewer to confront or examine something that exists beyond the realms of tangible reality.

De Chirico used figures or hinted at a human presence through the use of shadows or mannequins. He almost forces the emotional response by the direct content of the painting where as Salvo invites the viewer to create their own. This openness and ambiguity of ‘language’ found in Salvo’s paintings could be compared to the style of writing used by Italo Calvino. Both Salvo and Calvino approach their work with the knowledge that they have the ability to show something in a different way. A concept

⁸ Midway this journey of life, I found myself in a dark wood

that is found throughout art history and stated famously by Ozenfant, Surrealist critic and artist, who said “art is the demonstration that the ordinary is extraordinary”.

The direct relationship between life is in their invention and reassessment of social space. Salvo began this line of thought within his work in 1969 when he choose the medium of photo montage to re-create images. Calvino too, with his great descriptive techniques, clever use of onomatopoeia and syntax that combine to create an involving and emotive style, allows him the broad scope to set a scene or cultivate a story.

Italo Calvino has become one of the forerunners of Italian literature in this century. His work was considered to be a turning point in Italian culture (and the peoples acceptance/reception of that). He pointed Italy down a new path through literature with his works of ‘meta-fiction’ that changed the attitudes of people who were avid followers of realist literature an example being the works of Cesare Pavese.

Calvino’s style of writing is probably more comparable to the concepts of contemporary Italian painting than that of Dante. In “If on a winters night a traveller”, Calvino’s art lies in his ability to involve the reader by constantly challenging his ability to follow a story. He never gives the reader a chance to become too comfortable or complacent with their involvement in the reading. This challenge of technique and style does for Calvino’s novels what it does for Salvo’s paintings. The aim being to challenge the viewers comfortable, normal view of things and force them to become involved in reading things differently rather than simply offering them the creator’s own answers (Fig. 13).

This view is reflected again in Salvo’s dream-like, tempting interiors that call the viewer to examine the ‘other reality’ which is distant in space and time (but if truly metaphysical then distance in space and time is irrelevant), where the viewer can possibly partake in a transcendental experience and subsequently inquiry into their existence.

Salvo’s painting and the literature of contemporary Italy both co-exist within the creative sphere. All the fragments Salvo brings together in his work, link up to form a new horizon of meaning, in a world within which the elements of individual experience - the fragments of life - are woven together with history and the components of the

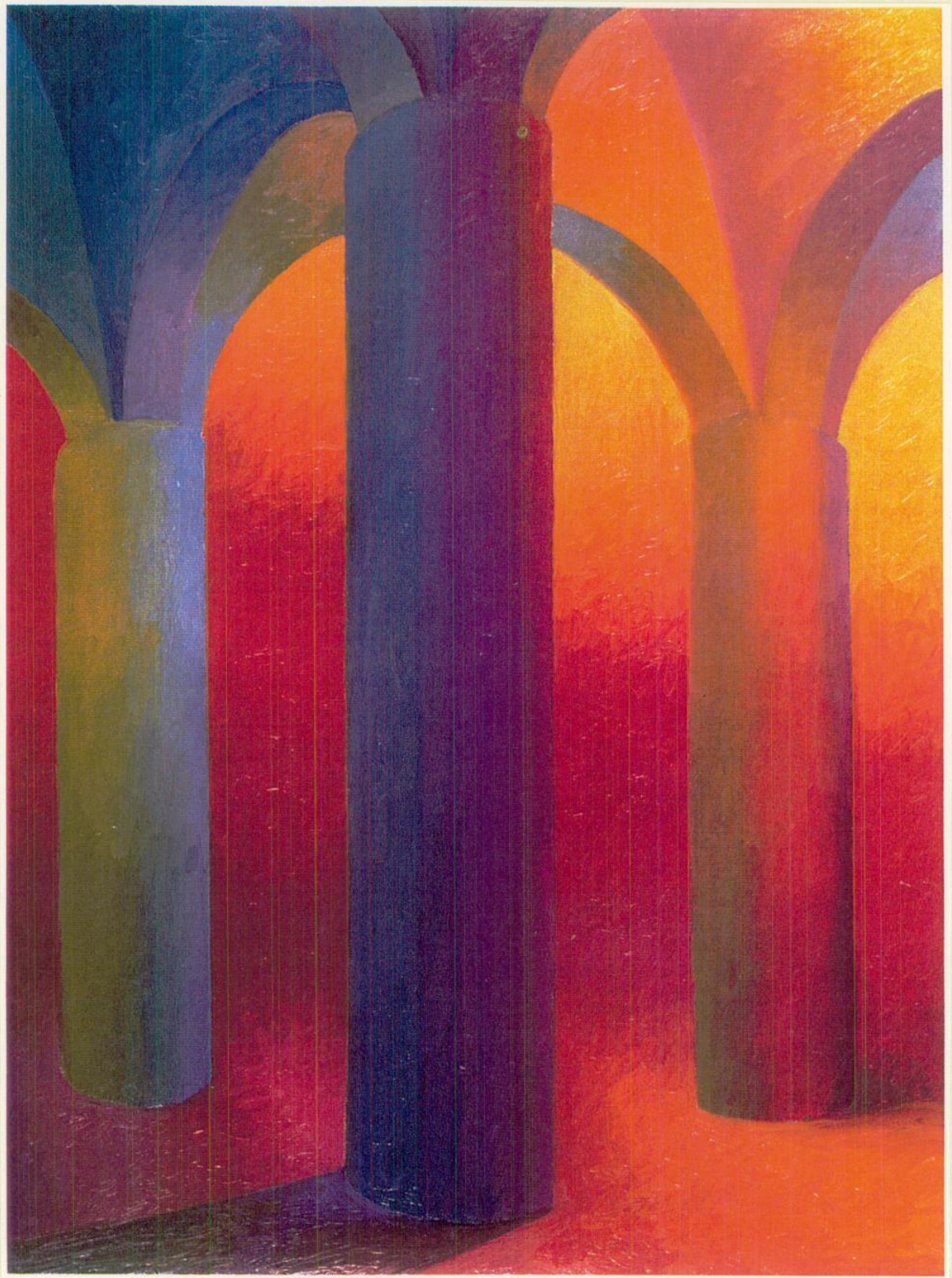
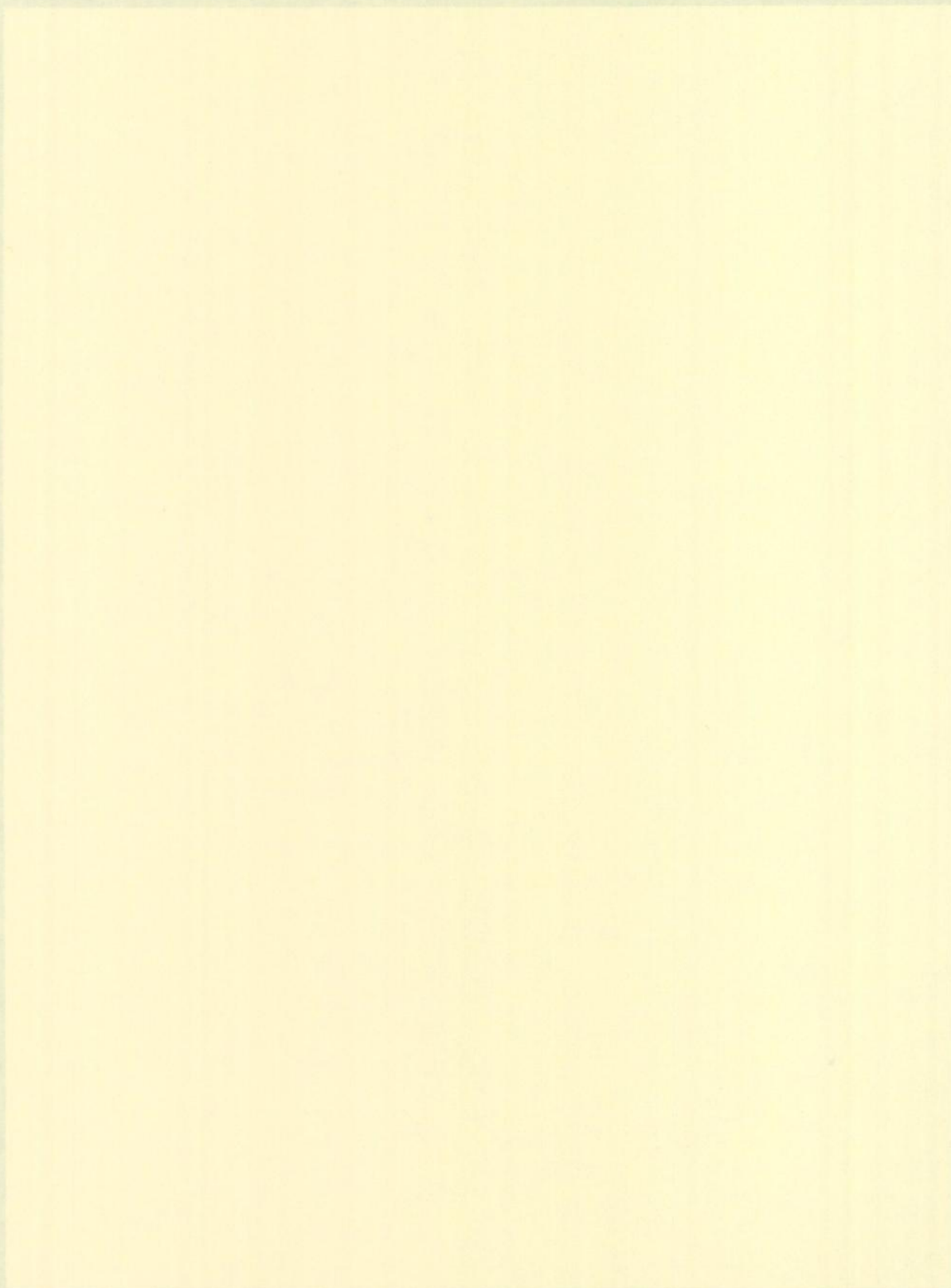


Figure 13



existential theories. Within the confines of Salvo's work one can narrate, explain, or share in life/living, therefore the work becomes a metaphor of the world.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to explain the cultural, social and philosophical backgrounds to Salvo's work. It has become clear from the beginning that Italy has a wealth of cultural history and that this is the main informant of its continually developing creative nation.

Italy, as a nation, proves itself to have a love and appreciation for life, constantly battling against power and social domination of economic or political origin. It looks rather for the affirmation of cultural identity, exalting from every manipulation of the aesthetic, theatre, music, literature and of course art. This results in a widely literate, creative society which excludes no aspect of its culture or deems it invalid to its general development.

It has been demonstrated that the inheritance of art of past Italian culture, is of extreme personal importance to contemporary Italian artists, and they are fully aware of the significance of this culture to their work. Salvo, as the primary example, shows a clearly defined awareness of the importance of this inheritance. Salvo also inherits and uses certain technical aspects from the painters of the past. However, it is his personal adaptation of these aspects in his use of colour which gives his work its importance, and his ability, in a more meaningful way than most other artists, to give each viewer the opportunity to interpret their own unique meaning.

However, Salvo also aims to challenge the viewer's comfortable normal view of things by forcing them to become involved in seeing things differently. It is through this idea of the viewer/narrator that both Salvo the artist, and also the focus of this study moves from the Particular back towards the Universal of broader Italian culture. Salvo's work interacts at many levels with philosophical ideas found in many areas of contemporary Italian art. By looking at Salvo's art in connection with these ideas we saw how each commented on each other.

Salvo works as an individual artist within a framework of reference, an inheritance, familiar to that of most of Italian society as a whole. The culture of any nation including one so rich and exciting as that of Italy, is ultimately made up of the creative

endeavours of the individual artists such as Salvo and others mentioned. In view of the study of Italian culture, through this thesis, it could be argued that Italy, being a strong religious nation for many centuries, has kept a hold of its passionate beliefs but is now perhaps questioning itself from a slightly different perspective. Whether or not this is so, it is clear that Salvo's work has had and will continue to have, a significant role to play in the fermentation of ideas that will mould the future of Italian culture.

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