



REWIND*Italia*

Summary of Interview with Guido Sartorelli

Interview by Laura Leuzzi in 2011

In this interview, Guido Sartorelli explains that video allowed him to continue his research into his analysis of painting at a time when painting as an artistic technique was about to disappear, due to the development of Conceptual Art. In some way, he wanted to create a testament to painting, from a structural point of view.

He explains that different from many artists at the time, he decided to explore some qualities of video as a medium. For example the pixel, the format of the monitor, the impossibility of allowing editing to be seen as a resource, which from his point of view contributed to create a language.

At the Cavallino Gallery they decided to continue to work without video editing, even when it became possible, choosing to leave it as a complete continuous sequence.

He talks about how the advantages and disadvantages of using video instead of film (which Sartorelli never used –there are some films that are mistakenly attributed to him) were made by the artists of Cavallino as part of the specificity of video as language.

He also explains how he never produced videos himself. They were always produced by either Paolo Cardazzo's Cavallino Gallery or by Palazzo dei Diamanti which was run by Lola Bonora. The video cameras were operated by the Gallery's assistants. Following a Conceptualist Art point of view, he never took an interest in the devices and dematerialised himself as a person (following the dematerialisation of Art as Lucy Lippard stated in her famous book).

The Paintings of the Great Italian Masters from the Renaissance (such as Antonello da Messina, Bartolomeo Montagna, Piero della Francesca, Giovanni Bellini) have always been an active part of his video work. It gave him the possibility to de-structuralise them, to extract from them the 'Time of Painting', which they contained. With the new technology of video, it gave them the 'Time' that was within the painting itself.

He worked to bring to light, perspective, as one of the 'elements' of the structure of Renaissance painting, as a basis to create the sense of the illusion of space.

During the 1970s his work with traditional techniques (drawing and painting) continued in parallel. These still images allowed the viewer to develop their own critical spirit because the artist did not give the 'Time' like it would be for the moving image.

In that period he already knew Gerry Schum's videotapes and Nam June Paik's main pieces. When he stopped making videotapes in the 1980s he took an interest in it only as a spectator. At the time he was not interested in the idea of video-sculpture, which was the most widely used video practice.

Paolo Cardazzo in the 1980s decided to stop producing video artworks because he could not continue to support their production as a private gallery owner.

Sartorelli began to work at Cavallino Gallery in 1971, and had 4 exhibitions before they started video production so he had already formed a good working relationship with them.

Sartorelli also made three videos at Palazzo dei Diamanti. One of these, regarding Raphael, unfortunately got lost. He has fond memories of his time there.

He then describes *Tempo Spazio Superficie*, in which he elaborates again on the theme of Time, which in his opinion should have been one of the main features in video practice.

Among his various experiences, he recalls the Video Encounter in Zagreb (1976) in which Cavallino Gallery, art/tapes/22 and Centro Videoarte of Palazzo dei Diamanti took part. There were not many artists involved so there was an opportunity to have fruitful discussions on the theory of videoart.

Among his experiences as a curator he organised the exhibition *Nuovi Media* (New Media) in 1978 at Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation in Venice in which he selected a group of Venetian artists who worked with technology to highlight how in Venice there was this 'technological' artistic experience.

He also recalls that in 1977 he assisted with a conference at ASAC in Venice, which was organised by Maria Gloria Bicocchi, where Marshall McLuhan was invited to speak for the first time in Italy.

In 1974 he took part in one of the Encounters of Motovun, dedicated to the urban development of the small Croatian village, Motovun. On that occasion he didn't work with equipment, it was Cardazzo that produced his first video (*Da zero a zero*), inspiring him to use the new medium himself.

In his opinion his video practice didn't influence the following generations. He taught at university for seven years focusing especially on the origins of video art.

Nascita Sviluppo e morte della prospettiva was the last video he made at Cavallino. It was a kind of synthesis on the concept of Space, in painting, from the 12th century up to Leger, Giotto and the perspective of the Renaissance in between.