

# Shōzō Shimamoto. Recent Works

*Curated by Ilaria Porotto*

May 11<sup>th</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Opening: Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 6.30pm

Dellupi Arte, Milan

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## Press release

From May 11<sup>th</sup> until June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Dellupi Arte gallery in Milan is delighted to present the exhibition **Shōzō Shimamoto. Recent Works**, a solo show dedicated to the Japanese Master and co-founder of the Gutai Artistic Movement, born in 1954 in the Kansai region of Japan. Considered to be among the most audacious and experimental interpreters of post-World War II, Shōzō Shimamoto's research commences with the strong personality of fellow artist Jirō Yoshihara (1905-1972). Inspired by the works of Jackson Pollock and Georges Mathieu, in which we «perceive - as Yoshihara writes in the Gutai Manifesto of 1956 - the shrieks of the material but can feel the mutual need for vitality», the artistic movement promotes a new language that cuts with the traditional expressive criterions and represents an instinctive liberation of creativity, departing the traditional Japanese pictorial gestures and aiming at unrevealed and original expressive approaches. The works of the artists in the group are stylistically very different, but bound together by a pronounced concern for the instantaneity and the procedural development rather than for the final outcome. Guided by Yoshihara but without a common poetics or a homogeneous style, the members of the group - each with different techniques and expressive results - create according to unrestrained imaginative associations, following their own drive and avoiding as much as possible the control of their creative impulse.

Shimamoto is immediately encouraged to experiment with techniques and artistic languages that can break the codified patterns of traditional painting, placing himself on that thin line between creation and destruction. His apparently violent and aggressive actions, which have also become his peculiar pictorial technique, serve to trigger an explosive and uncontrollable process. Following the advice of Master Yoshihara, Shimamoto is interested in how to convey his creative impetus instantaneously, transcending the brutal nature of his technique in favor of an impulsive, direct, almost cathartic expressive need. Following the death of Yoshihara and the dissolution of the Gutai group in the early Seventies, the improvisation that has characterized the whole of Shimamoto's poetics is now combined with greater theatricalization: the vehemence of the casting of color is accomplished in movements that are more choreographic, the action is enriched with rituals shared with the audience. Elements such as music, the scenic setting, the participation of actors transform the artistic action into increasingly audacious and spectacular performances.

*«The artwork is a castle in the clouds. In a normal profession you must move paying close attention to each step you take [...]. In the art world instead, being castles in the air, you need to focus on the infinite and dream of the furthest future».*

The exhibition - which comprises about a dozen works including paintings and sculptures - shows some of the paintings created with the technique of color casting, the *Bottle Crash*. Shimamoto uses for the first time the technique of color casting in 1956, in an impressive performance for the *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition* when he crafts a rudimentary cannon by hand to shoot bags of color on a monumental canvas suspended among trees. Later that year, he accomplishes his first real Bottle Crashes: vigorously throwing bottles filled with different pigments against a boulder placed on the ground in the middle of a large canvas.

Among the exhibited works created using this technique: *Silk Road 19* (2006-07) and *Magi 908*, performed in 2008, where fragments of glass, tangible traces of the performance and the explosive throws of the artist are visible mixed with the color on the surface of the canvas. The latter, created at the MAGI '900 Museum in

Pieve di Cento (Bologna), is the result of an intense performance, in which the artist has launched various color containers on some sculptures (*Magi 948*) and on large textile sheets spread on the floor while accompanied by music. Still dating back to 2008, there are also a couple of works realized during a performance at Punta Campanella (Naples) – *Punta Campanella 14* and *Punta Campanella 09* – in which the artist also engaged a group of dancers in wedding dress, bearing on their heads glasses full of color. Dating back to 2003, the work *Venice Biennale 04* is realized in that year on the occasion of the Master's presentation of the *Brain Academy Apartment Project*.

### **Shōzō Shimamoto**

Born in Osaka in 1928, Shimamoto is one of the most important exponents as well as the co-founder of the Gutai artistic movement, formed in 1954 in the Kansai region of Japan, together with the artists Jirō Yoshihara, Akira Kanayama, Saburo Murakami and Kazuo Shiraga. Their activities anticipated the great changes in Western art of the early Sixties. The name of the movement, *Gutai bijutsu kyokai*, in Japanese means Association of Concrete Art. Their artistic activity is in fact mainly directed to the search for the intrinsic expressiveness of the color matter taken in its individuality, no longer distorted or otherwise controlled by the gestures of the brush, but left free to expose itself in its corporeity.

Engaged in academic teaching at Kyoto University of Education, the Master was President of the Takarazuka University of Art and Design as well as of the Japanese Disabled Artists Association. His works can be found in major museums around the world, including the Tate Gallery, Pompidou Center, Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, Art Museum in Bern, Gallery of Modern Art in Venice and in almost all Japanese museums. His works have been exhibited in a series of important museum exhibitions, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), Modern Museet (Stockholm) and Jeu de Paume (Paris), and are also included in the permanent collections of Tate Modern (London), Art Institute (Chicago), National Museum of Modern Art (Rome) and in almost all Japanese museums. Shimamoto died in Osaka in 2013 at the age of 85.

### **Dellupi Arte**

Dellupi Arte gallery, founded in 2015 by Luigi Dellupi, deals with modern and contemporary art, with a special attention for the most important Italian masters of the twentieth century and for European informal art, focusing its exhibition activity specifically on pictorial art. The gallery, located in via Spinola 8/a, inside the residential complex designed by Daniel Libeskind, is therefore founded to represent a point of reference and excellence for collectors and amateurs – in the national and international scene – guaranteeing a personalized and adequate consultancy service to satisfy every request, thanks to the skills acquired by its director in this field.

### **Information**

#### Venue

Dellupi Arte  
Via Spinola 8/a, 20149 Milan  
+39 02 4695211  
info@dellupiarte.com  
www.dellupiarte.com

#### Opening hours

From Tuesday to Saturday  
10am – 1pm / 2pm – 6pm  
Free entry

#### Opening

Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, from 6.30pm

### **Press office**

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