

# MARCO TIRELLI

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25 June - 4 September 2021

## CARDI GALLERY

LONDON - MILAN

22 Grafton Street, London W1S 4EX

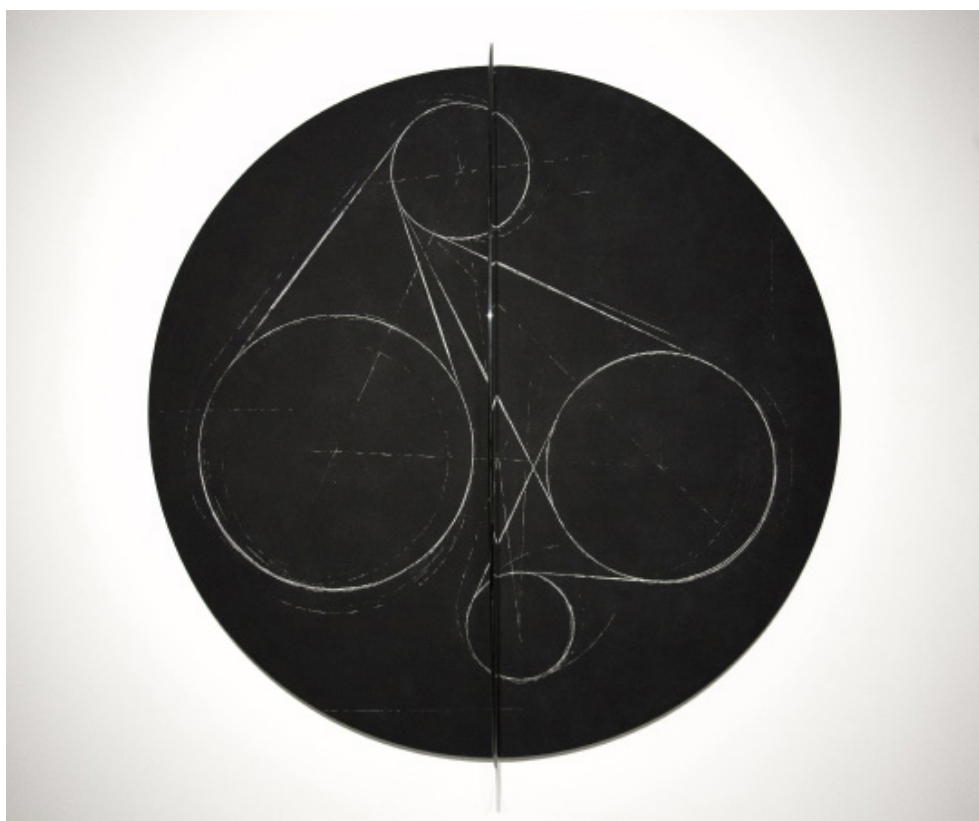
Press Preview: 23 June, 10am to 1pm

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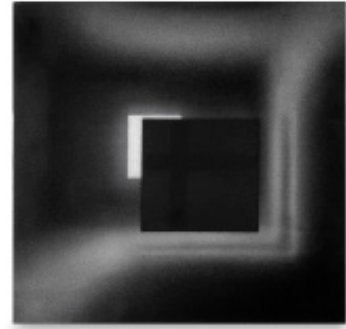


*Marco Tirelli, "Untitled" (2021). Mixed media on wood, diameter 240 cm*

“Some say that appearances are deceiving,  
I’d rather say that it is us who deceive appearances; they are simply  
themselves.”

Marco Tirelli

Cardi Gallery is proud to present the first major solo show in the UK of Italian contemporary artist, Marco Tirelli (b.1956, Rome). Featuring over 150 works in an allegorical journey developed over four storeys of Cardi Gallery London's space, this exceptional museum-scale retrospective includes drawings, paintings, photographs, and small sculptures, many of which produced for the exhibition.



A member of the New Roman School in the 1980s and 1990s, Tirelli was trained in set design. The artist's background, paired with the visual complexity of the layered histories surrounding him in his hometowns of Rome and Spoleto have deeply informed his highly personal and allegorical vocabulary of memories.



Marco Tirelli, "Untitled" (2021),

Mixed media on canvas, 94 x 97.5 cm

His works populate a complex visual archive, one that the artist has been systematically building over time since his early childhood. They activate mental realms of cultural recollection, collective memory, and conventional conceptions of value representation through the webs of associations and connotations they are capable of unleashing.

"To activate echoes in the viewers, by immersing them in an interplay of images, symbols, and allegories, in a game of references and reflections", as the artist himself states, he incorporates display strategies borrowed from the late Renaissance, such as the Studiolo - a room filled with interesting things, meant as a nobleman's locus of contemplation - to construct marvellous immersive installations inhabited by grids of drawings and bronze sculptures that function as spatial and visual streams of consciousness.

Geometric shapes, elements from the natural world, manmade tools and pieces of machinery, architectural forms, objects from the everyday world, all meet in his compositions characterised by a strong tension between illusion and reality, between light and darkness. They are things generated by space itself as they are written with light; they originate from the shadow and therefore become visible. Tirelli has mastered the secret of shadows, and his works perfectly embody this impalpable mystery. Viewers are reminded of Tanizaki's description of the beauty of a Japanese alcove "[...] we gaze into the darkness that gathers behind the crossbeam, around the flower vase, beneath the shelves, though we know perfectly well it is mere shadow, we are overcome with the feeling that in this small corner of the atmosphere there reigns complete and utter silence; that here in the darkness immutable tranquillity holds sway. [...] the uncanny silence of these dark places. [...] Where lies the key to this mystery? Ultimately it is the magic of shadows. Were the shadows to be banished from its corners, the alcove would in that instant revert to mere void."



*Marco Tirelli, installation view Padiglione Italia, Biennale di Venezia, 2013, Photo: Giorgio Benni*

Tirelli's subjects are not objects per se, but their representation. Reminiscent of Plato's allegory of the cave, they question our ability as humans to experience and know the real world. Contained by surrounding space - a space viewed as the universal potential of the connections between objects, as described by Merleau Ponty - with its overall sense and perceived depth, these things-objects are existential. They force the viewer to question the perception of reality in a way that allows to unmask and unleash the symbolic potential of the depicted object. As Nietzsche sustained: "reality does not exist, only interpretation exists."

## Marco Tirelli

Marco Tirelli was born in 1956 in Rome, where he currently lives and works. The artist began to exhibit in the 1970s. At the end of the decade Tirelli joined, together with the artists of the so-called New Roman School, the spaces of the former "Pastificio Cerere" in San Lorenzo. In 1982, he participated in the Venice Biennale for the first time as part of Achille Bonito Oliva's and Harald Szeemann's "Aperto 82" section. Shortly after, the artist was featured in group exhibitions nationally and internationally: at the PAC in Milan and at the XI Quadriennale in Rome in 1986; "From the return to order to the reference to painting 1920-1987", a travelling exhibition hosted by the Kunsternes Hus of Oslo, the Anteenim Taideemusee of Helsinki, the Matildenhöhe of Darmstadt and finally the Kunsthalle of Bielefeld in 1987; at the GAM of Bologna in 1988; "Diptych, Aspects of Abstract and Figurative Art in Italy", a travelling exhibition between the Istanbul Modern Art Gallery, the Ankara Museum of Contemporary Art and the Tel Aviv Museum of Modern Art in 1989.

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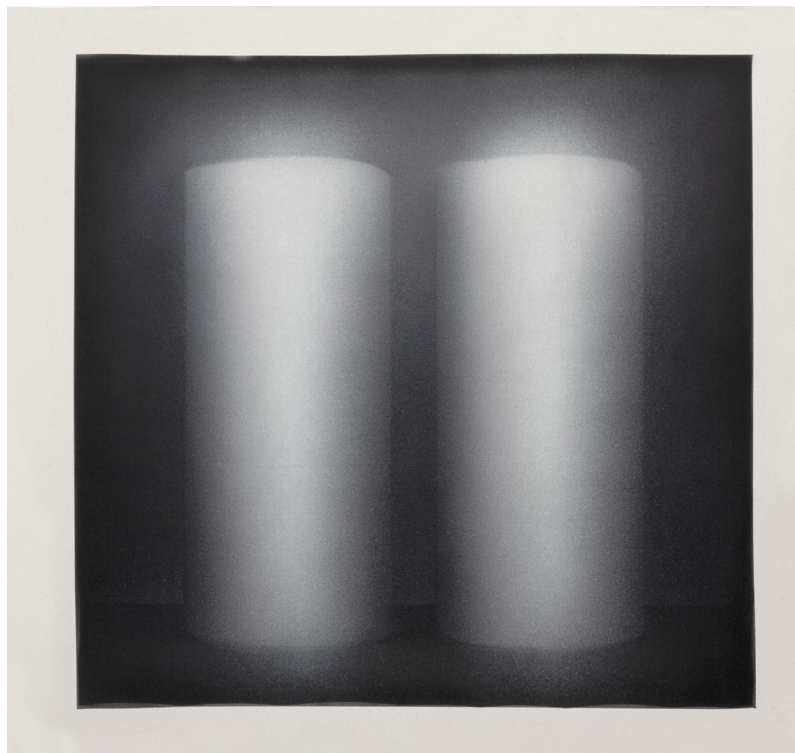
At the beginning of the 1990s, Tirelli participated in an exhibition at the American Academy in Rome, placing a large installation of drawings in dialogue with some Wall Drawings by American artist Sol LeWitt. This seminal exhibition was followed by Tirelli's participation in the Venice Biennale in 1990. Later that decade, Tirelli would take part in exhibitions such as: the 1990 Sidney Biennale, the 1991 San Paolo Biennale, Prospect '93 at the Kunsthalle in Frankfurt in 1993, the XII Rome Quadrennial in 1996.

In 2001, he exhibited at the Fondazione Volume! of Rome, where the artist created a site-specific environmental installation featuring one of his paintings. In 2002, the Darmstadt Kunsthalle dedicated an important anthological exhibition to Tirelli, titled "Das Universum der Geometrie", presented again the following year at the Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna. In 2004, he exhibited in a group show at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Roma, in 2005, at the MART in Rovereto and in 2006, at the San Lorenzo group exhibition at the Villa Medici, home of the French Academy in Rome. Tirelli also practices as a sculptor: in 2009, he created large bronze sculptures for the Gori Collection at the Fattoria di Celle. In 2013, he produced a large-scale installation, composed of hundreds of drawings and sculptures, created for the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale curated by Bartolomeo Pietromarchi. In 2013, he produced a large-scale installation, composed of hundreds of drawings and sculptures, created for the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale curated by Bartolomeo Pietromarchi.

Among the most recent exhibitions are: “Marco Tirelli”, Museum of Palazzo Fortuny, Venice (2010); “Marco Tirelli”, MACRO, Rome (2012); “Soltanto un quadro al massimo”, Accademia Tedesca di Villa Massimo, Rome, together with Bernd and Hilla Becher (2013); “Marco Tirelli”, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica di Roma (2013); “Osservatorio”, Fondazione Pescheria - Centro Arti Visive, Pesaro (2014); “Proportio”, Palazzo Fortuny, Venice (2015); “Marco Tirelli”, Fondazione Cerere, Rome (2016), “Marco Tirelli”, Musée d’art moderne et contemporain, Saint-Etienne Métropole, France (2017); “Marco Tirelli”, Palazzi Comunali di Todi (2017). In 2018, Tirelli exhibited mainly abroad, with solo exhibitions in Switzerland, Hong Kong and Antwerp. This year also marked the realisation of his work “Proteo”, commissioned by the MAXXI and exhibited in their collection since 2019.

In 2020, Tirelli was honored with a solo exhibition at the House of Art in Ceske Budejovice in the Czech Republic. He is a member of the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, of which he will be president in 2023, and of the Academy of Virtuosi of the Pantheon.

Tirelli’s works are part of the collections of some of the most important national and international museums and institutions: MAXXI Museo Nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome; La Galleria Nazionale, Rome; MARCO Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Rome; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Farnesia Art Collection, Rome; European Parliament, Art Collection, Brussels; MART, Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Rovereto; Il Centro per l’Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato; Palazzo Fortuny, Venice; The Albertina Museum, Vienna; Mumok, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna; Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan.



*Marco Tirelli, Untitled, 2021; mixed media on canvas; 121 x 125,5 cm.  
Photo: Ottavio Celestino*

## Cardi Gallery

The Cardi Gallery was founded in Milan, Italy in April 1972 by Renato Cardi with a focus on fostering the work of contemporary Italian artists. In the late 1960's Renato Cardi started to collect works by artists like Cy Twombly, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni and Michelangelo Pistoletto, who were all relatively unknown at the time. Over the subsequent years Renato built a distinguished collection that spanned from Arte Povera to Spatialism. Through both his inextinguishable passion for art and the subsequent success of the Galleria Cardi, Renato earned the reputation as a critically engaged champion of developing artists, one who made major contributions to launching many of their careers. Now led by Renato's son Nicolo, the Cardi Gallery continues to shape the cultural landscape in Milan and abroad.



*Marco Tirelli, Untitled; mixed media on paper; 45 x 30 cm.*

*Photo: Martino Tirelli*

In 2015, the Cardi Gallery opened its first overseas venue, expanding its presence to London's Mayfair district where it is housed in a magnificent 17th century Georgian townhouse on Grafton Street boasting six storeys and over 10,000 sq feet of exhibition space. Both Cardi London and Cardi Milan host regular museum-quality exhibitions that are accompanied by a scholarly catalogue or an artist monograph often featuring texts by eminent critics such as Germano Celant, Francesco Bonami and Achille Bonito Oliva.

The Cardi Gallery's unique specialist expertise in Italian Modern, Post-War and Contemporary art - specifically in Arte Povera, Minimalism and Zero Group - has contributed to building some of the finest and most historically important private collections across Europe, the Americas and the Far East. The Gallery also regularly lends works for museum exhibitions internationally.

The 2021 programme of Cardi Gallery London is entirely dedicated to mid-career Italian artists, Paolo Canevari, Marco Tirelli and Francesco Vezzoli.

"For the second exhibition of our 2021 programme dedicated to celebrating outstanding mid-career Italian artists, I am especially proud to introduce Marco Tirelli, being the first to bring his practice to the attention of the British public. At a time of awakening, with the season of lockdowns and grief hopefully behind us, I believe Tirelli's work can help us process the world around us, and make us see it truly, in its most essential form." (Nicolo Cardi)

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### Upcoming Events:

25 June 5 - 8pm, 26 June 11am - 6pm, 27 June 12am - 5pm: The Marco Tirelli show will be open with extended hours for **MAW 2021**, the Mayfair Art Weekend Gallery HOP! For more information visit [mayfairartweekend.com](http://mayfairartweekend.com)

### CARDI GALLERY

22 Grafton Street, W1S 4EX London | Tel +44 (0)203 409 9633

**PRESS IMAGES** - a whole selection of high res. images is available. Please get in touch and we will send a link via WeTransfer. Installation views will be available ahead of the Press Preview.

**EXHIBITION WALK-THROUGH** - A guided tour of MARCO TIRELLI by Cardi Gallery London's Senior Director, Joe La Placa, will be available ahead of the Press Preview.

**BOOK** - In the Fall, the exhibition will be followed by the release of "Marco Tirelli", a volume curated by Antonella Soldaini with Veronica Locatelli, published by Silvana Editoriale. The book will explore Marco Tirelli's broader practice, while celebrating the recent exhibition at Cardi Gallery in London.

### LINKS:

[cardigallery.com](http://cardigallery.com)

[instagram.com/cardigallery/](https://www.instagram.com/cardigallery/)

[facebook.com/cardigallery](https://www.facebook.com/cardigallery)

[twitter.com/cardigallery?lang=en](https://twitter.com/cardigallery?lang=en)

Weibo and Wechat: cardigallery

@cardigallery

#MARCOTIRELLI

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@cardigallery #MARCOTIRELLI

### Covid-19 Pandemic

All regulations relating to Covid-19 will be strictly adhered to at Cardi Gallery, please see the website for the latest details.



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PRESS PREVIEW | 23 JUNE 10am-1pm

CARDI GALLERY | LONDON

22 GRAFTON STREET  
LONDON W1S 4EX

#MARCOTIRELLI

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