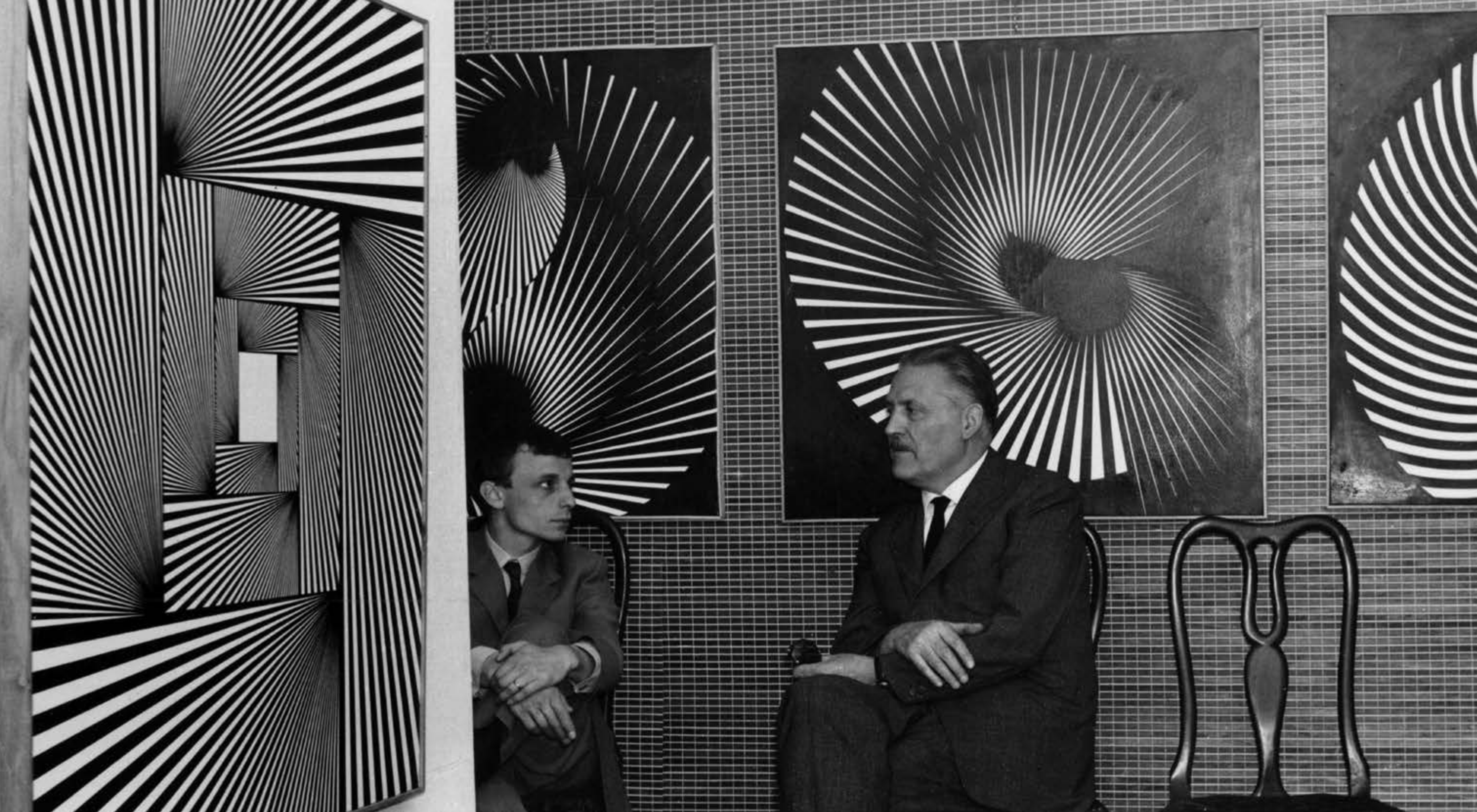


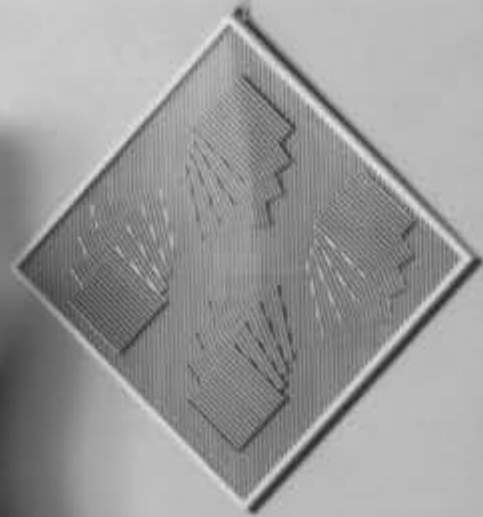
FRANCO GRIGNANI

1 JUNE – 27 JULY 2017

M&L FINE ART

15 Old Bond Street
London, W1S 4AX







This catalogue was published in the occasion of the exhibition "Franco Grignani"
M&L Fine Art, London, May-July 2017

Cover
Franco Grignani, *Dissociazione dal bordo*, 1969

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ADVENTURES IN GEOMETRY

Serge Lemoine

Franco Grignani travelled through the whole length of the Twentieth century. The Italian artist was born in 1908 and died in 1999. He experienced and participated in all those art movements that took place in his country throughout the century: the second period of Futurism followed by geometric Abstract art and, after the Second World War (where Grignani was mobilised as an Officer in the Italian army), he turned to the applied arts and typography to which he dedicated himself entirely by focusing intensely on pictorial experimentation. These two latter activities were initially complimentary to his other work yet during the 1960's Grignani became the forerunner of Kinetic art and grew close to the main players in the New Tendency movement as well as being the creator in 1964 of one of the twentieth-century's most famous logos, the one created for Woolmark.

Franco Grignani was active throughout his entire life and was consistently in search of new visual expressions. He regularly exhibited his works in the most renowned galleries in the north of Italy and became famous on an international level on account of his work as a graphic designer. Nevertheless, his fame as a painter of *paintings* never left the confines of Milan so it is time now for a reflection on this part of his œuvre.

Franco Grignani started off on an artistic path from the very beginning of his career. At the same time he was pursuing his studies in architecture in Turin, he started to draw and paint in a Futurist style that was marked, in particular, by the *machine*-oriented shapes and forms of Fortunato Depero¹ and the spasmodic style of Vorticism. In 1933, he was accepted as a participant in an exhibition organised in Rome under the aegis of Marinetti, entitled the *Grande Mostra nazionale futurista*. He soon settled down in Milan and in his paintings he began to employ – from 1935 onwards – the language of Abstraction as witnessed in his geometrical compositions and in the paintings of Mauro Reggiani, Manlio Rho and the members of the Como Group. Such an artistic evolution underlined the artist's audacity as well as his independence in a country that had only just turned towards Abstract art forms and where, it must now be remembered, Mussolini's dictatorship was holding sway.

Whilst continuing to paint during the war, Franco Grignani became interested in photography² and, in particular, interested in the possibilities of expression offered by such an artistic perspective: detail, blurredness and distortion. Towards the end of the 1940's, he turned in the direction of Paul Klee³ for a short period, as witnessed in his watercolour composition entitled *Tensioni angolate* (1948) that was realised in India ink on paper. The work was made of chevron-patterned parallel lines where the artist focused on the repetition of the pattern and the depiction of movement.

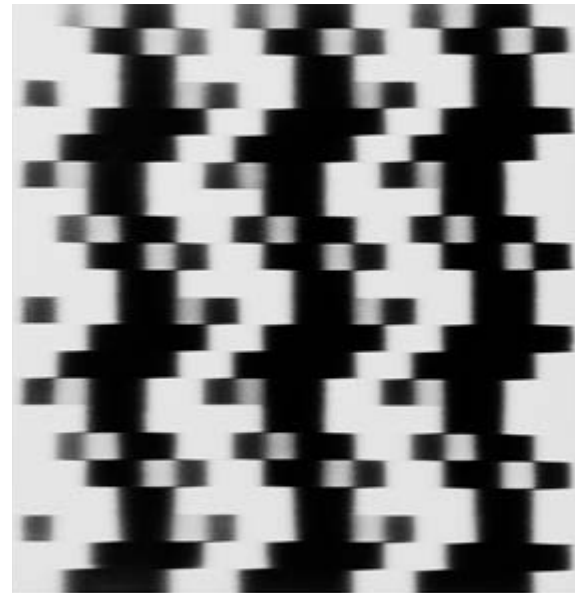
From his artistic beginnings, Grignani showed himself to be both logical and confident in his approach. He nevertheless did not take part in the foun-

dation of those various art groups that occurred after the war: for example, the *Movimento d'Arte Concreta* (MAC), *Forma 1* or *Origine*. It was in such art groups that the most famous Italian Abstract painters of the second half of the Twentieth century created their own special œuvres. His own artistic interests jolted him along a sort of parallel path upon which he gave rein to his creativity and upon which he used the experience he had accrued. He was necessarily thorough and his work in graphic design and publicity took up all his time transforming him into a *maestro* in this particular field. The period following the Second World War as well as the economic context kept him in Milan since this city was the industrial and commercial capital of Italy – a city in which the working environment was stimulating and innovation was the order of the day in all fields. The capital of Lombardy was already the centre of architecture, applied arts and industrial aesthetics as well as, of course, of the fashion sector. The exhibition at the Milan *Triennale*⁴, the publication of the magazine *Domus*⁵ and the products of Olivetti were all symbols of this artistic flourish. The art of typography had also forged its own place in all of this, since the publication of the review *Campo grafico*⁶ before the war had proven along with, of course, the work undertaken by the famed Studio Boggeri.

After the war, the situation flourished. Franco Grignani enjoyed a primary role alongside Max Huber, Bruno Munari and Giovanni Pintori who were responsible for publicity for Olivetti and he joined the Alliance graphique internationale (AGI)⁷. He created posters, advertising inserts and visual products for a variety of companies: Dompé⁸ in the pharmacy world, Alfieri & Lacroix⁹ in printing and Penguin Books and the magazine for the association *Pubblicità in Italia* in the publishing world. In this latter publication, Grignani became the chief editor¹⁰. In terms of style, his work was in line with the work of the Swiss graphic designers, Max Bill, Richard-Paul Lohse, Herbert Matter and Hans Neuburg who, towards the close of the 1940's, inherited the legacy of the constructivist typographical design that had burgeoned in the two previous decades. Grignani resorted to an orthogonal grid in order to arrange the different elements of his compositions in a more functional way. He used fonts without serifs and regrouped, simplified and ranked information. He employed geometrical forms, straight lines and flat colour tints and he favoured the technique of photoshopping as his work for Dompé revealed. His publicity work for the medicine *Artrosil B 1* in 1950 showed the same aesthetic style as his work



ill. 1. Franco Grignani in his studio, late 80's. Behind him, *Trionfale*, 1987, fixed tempera, 102 x 73 cm



ill. 2. Franco Grignani, *Progressione strutturale alternata*, 1952, tempera drawing behind an industrial glass, 50 x 50 cm

for the *Flums Grossberg* poster in 1940 that had been created for a winter sports resort by the painter and graphic artist from Zurich, Carlo Vivarelli. Grignani continued to work in this area for many decades following the war and towards the beginning of the 1960's he came to a decisive turning-point which would award him international recognition. The reason lay in the radical change that he began to undertake in his work as a painter.

It had all begun to change, however, much earlier, at the beginning of the 1950's. At that particular point Grignani decided to abandon not only his painting but also his techniques when he threw himself into a phase of total experimentation. His strictly Abstract works no longer presented any sort of composition or motif, no centre and no sort of periphery. Without any such limitations, the same form, more or less complex or developed, was repeated identically or with variations inside of a regular orthogonal grid according to the « all over »¹¹ principal. A magnificent example of this work is the painting *Campo scalare* (cat n. 18) from 1975 in which the same vertical element with the variable

width is systematically repeated along a horizontal line in an upper or lower position in order to take up in a uniform manner the whole area of the picture. Secondly, Grignani chose to abandon his craftsmanship, material and colour in favour of a more precise execution of his work that would become more anonymous and mechanical thus allowing him to achieve more distinct forms, in black or white instead of the various shades of grey accomplished by the application of series of lines. The work was presented behind a plaque of industrial glass that had been more or less finely grooved forming a screen which would thus modify the perception of the work and reinforce the neutral and impersonal character of the whole ensemble. His œuvre *Progressione strutturale alternata* from 1952 (ill. 2) has a *chiaroscuro* effect with black and white strips, alternating vertically and punctuated with square elements that are more or less in shades that run from black to white. These elements shift horizontally in a repetitive and systematic fashion with the aim to forcefully combine a structure with movement. No inspiration, no sensitivity and no improvisation in Grignani's methods that were the opposite of reflection, calculation, precision, approach and a control of technique. All this was new and he strove to achieve a more sophisticated effect that would exude a more perfect sense of accomplishment.

During the same period, Franco Grignani was continuing his quest for new artistic means in which he would be able to put into practice his experimenting in the field of photography. By using a lens applied onto an enlarger and a negative of one of his photographs, Grignani printed in a dark room an image upon an emulsified piece of canvas which he developed in the same way as

a classic photograph on paper. This particular process, closely resembling the photogramme technique used by Man Ray and László Moholy-Nagy enabled the artist to realise (as before) a work that was mechanical and which would achieve a more impersonal effect. *Ordine e inconscio* from 1950 has a motif which has been obtained from a blurred photograph of a Venetian blind. It was turned into an abstract image that evokes forms and movement in space.

Starting off from these new directions, from the middle of the 1950's and throughout the two following decades, Grignani methodically established a repertoire of forms and of combinations that he grouped according to subjects and that he realised in systematic series with no other intention apart from continually referring to structure and addressing perception. In Grignani's art, there was no place either for inspiration or for any sort of sensitivity. All that mattered was form and geometry. His vocabulary was made up of lines, parallel strips, units and black and white. His subject matter was made up of outline, depth, movement and stability as well as positive and negative elements and *chiaroscuro*. His rules were orthogonal structure and his grammar was repetition, progression, superimposition, permutation, interference, a *moiré* effect and boundlessness. His means were calculation, exactitude, mastery of technique and perfection of the final effect. His final results were rhythm, saturation, flickering, instability, deformation, ambiguity, illusion, lack of clarity, disorder and chaos.

Franco Grignani explored all the various possibilities that came his way within this artistic language. One of his themes revolved around vibration. His painting *Vibrazione crociata* (ill. 3) was painted in 1959. Its effect was startling to say the very least. Starting off with two axes that formed a central cross Grignani alternated a sequence of diagonal black and white lines which ended in points and optically vibrated, grouping the black lines in the middle and making the white lines radiate towards the exterior of the painting. The work strikes the spectator on account of the meticulousness of detail in its execution. The artist chose a rigid square support and a sheet of thick, smooth and white cardboard that was made in Germany¹². After having conceived and prepared the design of his work, Grignani prepared it in pencil with the utmost exactitude. He thence drew with a ruler the contours of each form in fluid back paint which he undertook with the aid of a ruling pen equipped with a small cartridge. Following this, he filled the form with a paintbrush. The white sections were held in reserve. This artistic approach along with its simplicity, the application of 45 ° diagonal lines, their tapering approach, their inversion, their density and their impeccable execution provoke an optical effect of vibration and radiation which made the artist a precursor of Kinetic Art and, in his later works, he thus became one of the main representatives.

From 1960 onwards, Franco Grignani exhibited his works in the most-reowned galleries in the North of Italy and a whole host of public institutions as

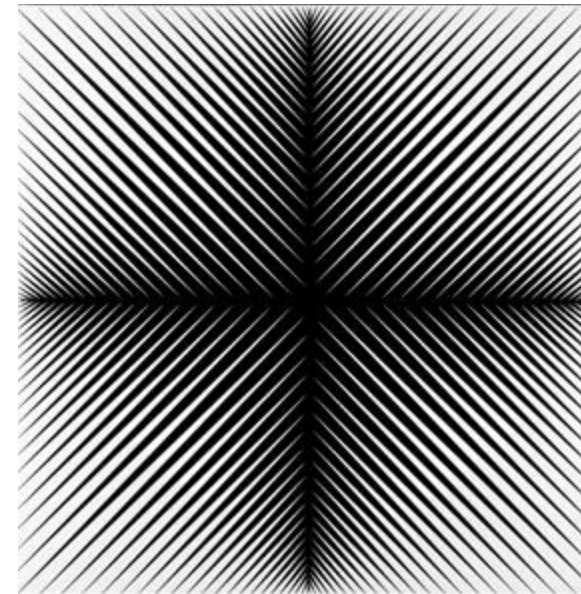
often as he could. He exhibited at the art gallery L'Elefante in Venice and, in 1966, at the Il Cenobio art gallery in Milan. He exhibited in 1970 at Bergamo's Lorenzelli gallery and during the following year he was present at the San Fedele gallery. In Reggio Emilia he exhibited at the city council in 1979 in a retrospective. A retrospective was also held for him in 1965 in Chicago, followed in 1968 by a similar one in Stuttgart. Italy's most important art critics recognised the worth of his artistic production and included the likes of Guido Ballo, Umbro Apollonio, Giulio-Carlo Argan, Germano Celant, Gillo Dorfles and Lara Vinca Masini. Despite the precedence and the multiplicity of his works and his never-ending research, he did not take part in any of the great exhibitions

that were to mark the 1960's and which put Kinetic Art into the forefront of the art movement and established the decade as one of the most effervescent decades of the latter half of the Twentieth century: The Paris Biennales in 1963 and in 1965, *Documenta* in Cassel in 1964 and in 1968, the Venice Biennales in 1964, 1966 and in 1968, the *Licht und Bewegung* exhibitions at the Kunsthalle in Berne in 1965, *The Responsive Eye* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York the same year, *Kunstlichtkunst* in Eindhoven at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in 1966 and *Lumière et mouvement* the following year at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Most of the Italian artists that were artistically close to him took part in these exhibitions. His success, however, and his recognition were obtained in his other activities – in his work as a graphic artist that he had never abandoned and that he enriched with all of the research and artistic knowledge that he had gained.

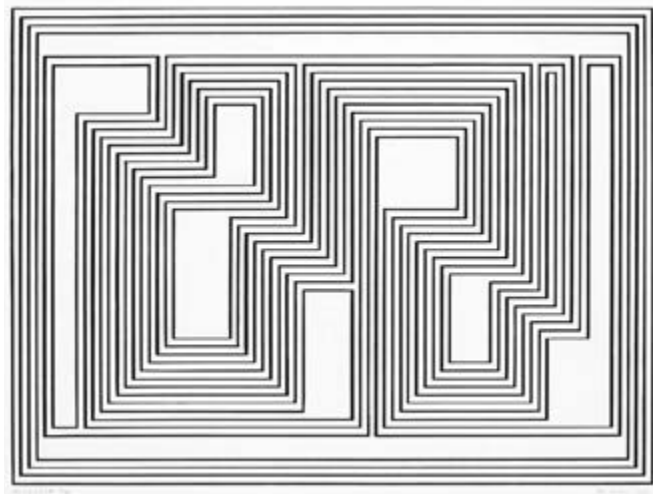
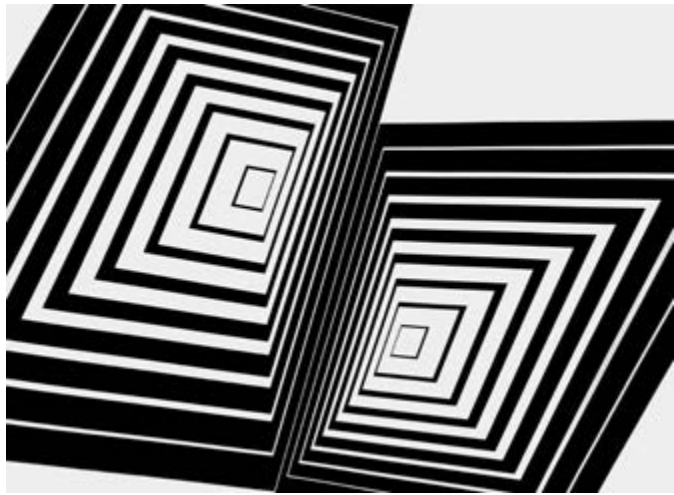
For those different companies that Grignani worked for, such as Alfieri & Lacroix, Penguin the editor, the magazine *Pubblicità in Italia*, he realised posters, illustrations, book and magazine covers

all of which became some of the graphic art world's masterpieces on account of his use of Kinetic methods and artistic effects that he had honed over the years. His work is recognised all over the world¹³ and won the highest of accolades in 1964 with the creation of the logo of the Woolmark company¹⁴ which was the transformation into a stylised ball of wool of the geometric interlacing and movements witnessed in his paintings. In its own particular artistic area, this creation soon became universal.

Franco Grignani's art, with its two components that are consubstantially connected, as we have seen, is imbued with diversity, complexity and considerable richness. This only came about on account of the creativity of the artist who produced it, his ideas and convictions, his quest for research, innovation and experimentation, his dedication to his work and, lastly, the harmony he enjoyed



ill. 3. Franco Grignani, *Vibrazione crociata*, 1959, mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 73 x 73 cm



with his own artistic period. All his creations throughout the 1950's and the following decades showed him to be at the same level as his contemporaries or his immediate predecessors. His oeuvre *Tensione nei quadrati* from 1965 (ill. 4), with its deformed concentric structures dealt with the very same problem that had been expressed by Josef Albers in his series of *Graphic Tectonic* (ill. 5) in the 1940's¹⁵.

Deformation was one of his favoured themes. He treated it in a number of ways and constantly insisted on the development of a motif, an inscription or a structure that would lose any trace of recognition. His work *Sviluppo di tensioni dal centro induttivo* from 1958 went in precisely the same direction as works by Raymond Hains and by Jacques Villeglé focusing on vision and pre-announcing experiments that were later carried out by the likes of Julio Le Parc in the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV) by means of multiple optical devices and light-Kinetic apparatus.

Grignani abandoned colour since he retained it to be too subjective and changeable and soon became more interested in the contrast between black and white and the nuances of colour without needing to resort to relief and, from that point, he also became interested in the definitions and the limitations of form. His painting, *Quattro cubi (2 cubi + 2 parallelepipedi)* from 1963 (ill. 6) shows us how he treated these particular questions by exclusively using black and white vertical lines, parallel as well as alternate, of a varying width. This graphic usage of lines and contrasts was inspired directly from the work of Victor Vasarely: his painting, *Taymyr* from 1958-1959 (ill. 7) (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans – van Beuningen) is made up of an ensemble of identical forms which would later be used by countless artists such as Jeffrey Steele and Günter Fruhtrunk.

ill. 4. Franco Grignani, *Tensione nei quadrati*, 1965, tempera on Schoeller cardboard, 75 x 103 cm

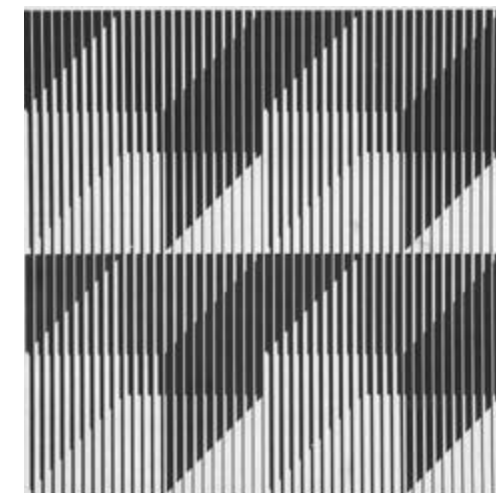
ill. 5. Josef Albers, *Prefatio [Graphic Tectonic]*, 1942, zinc plate lithograph, 48,3 x 60,9 cm
Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, © 2017 The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation/VG Bildkunst, Bonn

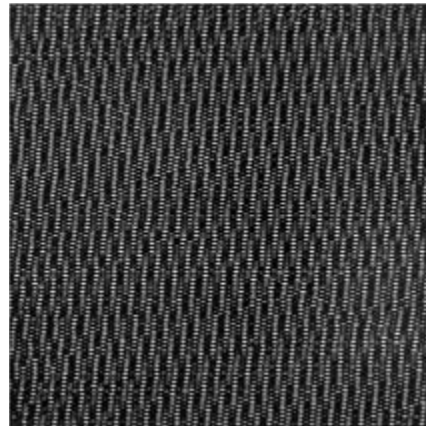
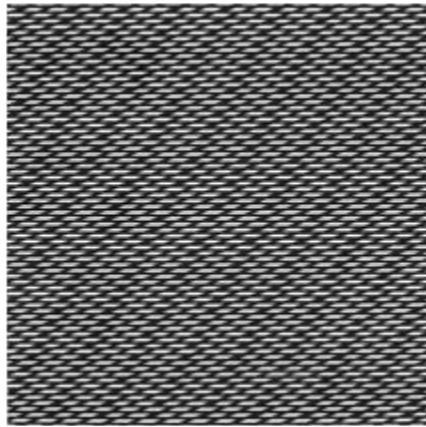
ill. 6. Franco Grignani, *Quattro cubi (2 cubi + 2 parallelepipedi)*, 1963, tempera, 70 x 70 cm

ill. 7. Victor Vasarely, *Taymyr*, 1958-1959, oil on canvas, 160 x 130 cm
Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen – courtesy Documentation Centre Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

For Grignani, who rejected both the notion of sensitivity as well as that of inspiration, the systematising of his work became fundamental. It enabled him to pass mechanically from the work's conception to its execution and offered in addition a means of explanation and comprehension of the oeuvre. His *Alternanza progressiva* from 1961 is therefore a representation of nuances of colour passing from the blacks on the outside – the periphery - of the work to the whites that progressively filled the centre. This phenomenon of sliding gradation of colour is also seen in the work of Vasarely, as his painting, *Novae B* from 1959 (formerly Paris, the Galerie Pascal Lansberg), demonstrates.

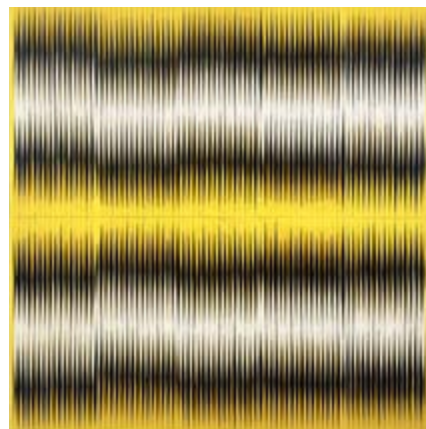
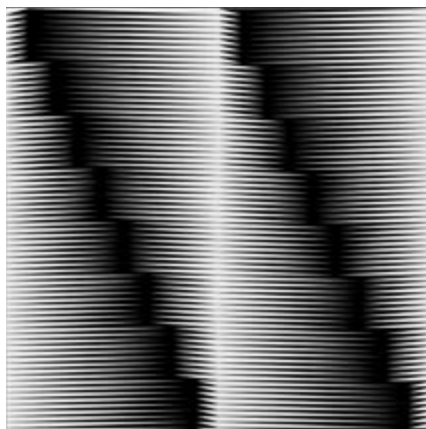
Structure formed the foundation of Franco Grignani's oeuvre. From the middle of the 1950's, he positioned each of his paintings inside regular orthogonal grids, often strengthening and reinforcing his approach or disrupting the grids by introducing variations. With his uniform grid which takes up the whole painting and which carries on in a virtual fashion beyond the painting, Grignani started using, from 1955 onwards, regular outlines which were able to translate the principle of the abandonment of the composition as well as the disappearance of the centre and any sort of pattern. His painting, *Interferenze lineari del campo* from 1974 (ill. 8) is an illustration of this concept of painting which he shared with many other young abstract artists of the period who were associated, to various degrees, with the German Zero Group and the Dutch Nul Group (that were exhibited at Milan's Azimuth gallery or in the exhibition *Antipeinture* in Ghent¹⁶). These artists played a role in the beginnings of Kinetic Art and, by 1961, were all brought together in the exhibition entitled, *Nouvelles Tendances*, in Zagreb¹⁷. François Morellet was the most illustrious representative of this family that included Franco Grignani who would





ill. 8. Franco Grignani, *Interferenze lineari del campo*, 1974, mixed media on Schoeller cardboard, 73 x 73 cm

ill. 9. François Morellet, *3 simples trames 0°-22°5-65°*, 1960, oil on wood, 80 x 80 cm
© Studio Morellet, Cholet



ill. 10. Franco Grignani, *Vibrazione scalare*, 1963, mixed media on Schoeller cardboard on masonite, 73 x 73 cm

ill. 11. Walter Leblanc, *Torsions Mobilo-Static*, 1963, polyvinyl and painted panel, 129.5 x 127 cm
Province of Hainaut, Belgium – courtesy Fondation Walter & Nicole Leblanc – © Walter Leblanc SABAM 2017



ill. 12. Hans Hinterreiter, *Study for Opus 38*, 1951
Courtesy Galerie Schlegl, Zürich

ill. 13. Franco Grignani, *Rettangolo quadrato?*, 1987, fixed tempera on Schoeller cardboard, 73 x 102 cm

ters into a state of vibration in the eye of the spectator observing the work. This phenomenon would become one of the leitmotifs of all Kinetic Art since it would also be found in the works of artists who were both varied in style and from differing origins such as Ludwig Wilding, Alberto Biasi, Toni Costa and, furthermore, Julian Stanczak, Richard Anuskiewicz, Francis Celentano as well as Jesús-Rafael Soto and Carlos Cruz-Diez. Walter Leblanc took part in the Zero Group and pursued an identical artistic approach by acting upon the support that he twists and slashes. His painting, *Torsions Mobilo-Static* from 1963 (ill. 11) (Belgium, Province of Hainaut), with different means being employed, led however to an identical sensation.

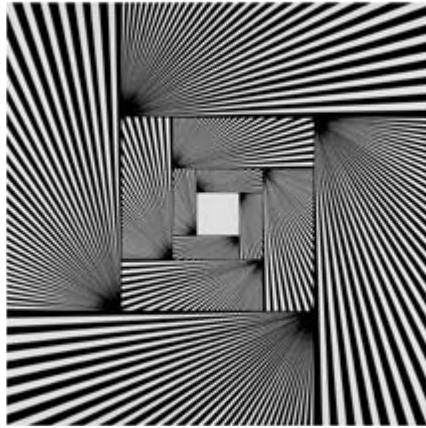
Structure combined with the mechanisms of perspective offered a great variety of prospects in which ambiguity, the sensation of dizziness and the loss of references came into play. This is what the deformations reveal in his painting, *Rettangolo quadrato?* from 1987 (ill. 13) with its sequence of forms passing from the background to the foreground and contracting or augmenting in an illusionistic manner. This method was found in the work of Hans Hinterreiter *Study for Opus 38* from 1951 (ill. 12). Vasarely would resort to it constantly throughout the 1960's as does Hans-Jörg Glatfelder nowadays.

Franco Grignani played with depth by still managing to stay in within the work. He strove to create deformations in his work that would result in undulations. By bringing together curved and counter-curved lines and by



have felt in time the full weight of such a firm artistic commitment¹⁸, as shown in the unity and the neutrality of his painting, *3 simples trames 0°-22°5-65°* from 1960 (ill. 9) (Cholet, the artist's studio).

The systematic usage of structure would open up the path to multiple and new circumstances. The most important of these would be the phenomenon of vibration – already witnessed in the work of Vasarely who had been the first to employ this new effect. Nevertheless, his work still preserved an idea of composition whereas Grignani, in his work, *Vibrazione scalare* from 1963 (ill. 10) in which he used an outline, treated the question in a more radical way and extended it throughout the whole pictorial area. The whole ensemble - without flaw, without interruptions and without empty spaces - en-



ill. 14. Franco Grignani, *Illusorio spaziale*, 1965, oil on canvas, 96 x 96 cm

ill. 15. Giulio Romano, *The Giants fall*, 1530 ca., Mantua, Palazzo Te (detail)
Courtesy Comune di Mantova - Servizio Patrimonio e Tutela Beni Culturali

accelerating their movements, the artist created virtual pleats that awarded the work an impression of movement. His painting, *Trauma fluttuante* from 1965 is characteristic of his search for the disruptive effects that were manifest in Kinetic Art; a further example of this is Bridget Riley's painting, *Fall* from 1963 (London, the Tate Gallery). Nowadays, it is Philippe Decrauzat who is pursuing this path with his figures in loops and pleats.

Gyrating forms also interested Grignani. Starting from one or two centres, he spread out lines directed towards the inner part of the work or towards the periphery, thus creating a whirlwind effect. This is a phenomenon that is present in his painting, *Strutturazione centrifuga – centripeta* from 1965. Angel Duarte also researched the effects of rotation in his works, as seen in his work *V 32* from 1963 (Milan, Getulio Alviani Collection).

By using structure, series and repetition, Grignani often shifted the stress on the transformation of form and pushed it as far as its actual alteration. In his painting, *Permutazioni rombolineari orizzontali su 40 rettangoli a reticolazione matematica* from 1962, he used horizontal dashes spread out in lines and systematically deformed which provoked an impression of total disorder. This was the very same spirit which animated Vera Molnar in her work that was entitled *Horizontales 5* from 1972-1973 (Rennes, Musée des beaux-arts, the storerooms of the FRAC Brittany).

During the course of more than two decades starting from the end of the 1950's, Franco Grignani showed himself to be a highly fertile creator as well as a coherent contributor to Kinetic Art in its purely optical sense. Interested in form and perception, as well as being particularly cognizant of the theories concerning the « Gestalt » (as had also been, simultaneously in Milan, Mario Ballocco) Franco Grignani had envisaged everything, ex-

perimented with everything and achieved everything - with a high dose of method, by pursuing all processes to their very extremities and by accepting all the consequences. Consequences that encompassed and included visual aggression, the loss of references, sensorial discomfort, the chaos of forms – all elements that created incomprehension as well as bewilderment (even confusion!) before some of his works. There was *terribilità* – « terribleness » – in his art. His painting, *Illusorio spaziale* from 1965 (ill. 14) is not so very distant from the effect provoked by the gigantomachy in the works of Giulio Romano (ill. 15) at the Palazzo Te in Mantua which made the ceilings and the walls appear to crumble down over those present at the beginning of the Sixteenth century. And, five hundred years later, the very same sudden shock has happened all over again.

¹ See his painting *Umanità d'acciaio* (1928) that also owes much to the Fernand Léger of the *Partie de cartes*.

² He used a Rolleiflex machine.

³ After 1945, many young artists discovered the work of Paul Klee and were inspired by the artist's periods. Zao Wou Ki, Antoni Tàpies and Kenneth Noland are worthy of mention here. Grignani, for example, used Klee's imagery of *sequence* as depicted in the latter's *Herbstlicher Klang* (1920, Lucerne, the Rosengart Collection).

⁴ Grignani was designated as the director of the graphics section in the 1957 Milan Triennale.

⁵ Magazine founded in 1928 by the architect Gio Ponti.

⁶ A magazine created in 1933. It would be followed in 1945 by the magazine *Linea grafica*, whose cover for the 5th and 6th issues of 1962 would be made by Grignani.

⁷ Franco Grignani was the president for Italy of the AGI from 1969 to 1981.

⁸ He worked for the company from 1947 to 1960.

⁹ From 1952 and for whom he would create more than 150 posters and would receive a whole host of international accolades.

¹⁰ From the beginning of the 1950's to 1985.

¹¹ We are reminded that this principal had been practised by Piet Mondrian from 1919 onwards and had been particularly employed by Władysław Strzemiński at the end of the 1920's.

¹² Measuring 73cm on its side, it was a standard format of cardboard sheet produced by the firm Schoeller that the artist used frequently.

¹³ Upon its creation in London by Herbert Spencer, the magazine *Typographica* published, in its first issue in June 1960, an article on Grignani. In 1963, it was the turn of the magazine, *Graphis* (n° 108) in Zürich that dedicated an article and a cover to him.

¹⁴ Grignani created this logo on account of an international competition launched by the International Wool Secretariat in Australia in order to represent wool and the quality of wool.

¹⁵ A series which preceded the famed *Constellations*.

¹⁶ The Azimuth Gallery was directed by Piero Manzoni and Enrico Castellani. The exhibition, *Antipeinture* in 1961 in Ghent at the Hessenhuis was notably organised by Walter Leblanc.

¹⁷ The exhibition, *Nouvelles Tendances* in Zagreb at the Contemporary Art Gallery was organised by the painter, Almir Mavignier, the critic, Matko Meštrović and the Museum director, Božo Bek. Its direction was further reinforced by the second exhibition in 1963.

¹⁸ Hoping to take part in the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles in 1958, François Morellet was refused any participation on account of the fact his works did not possess any composition.

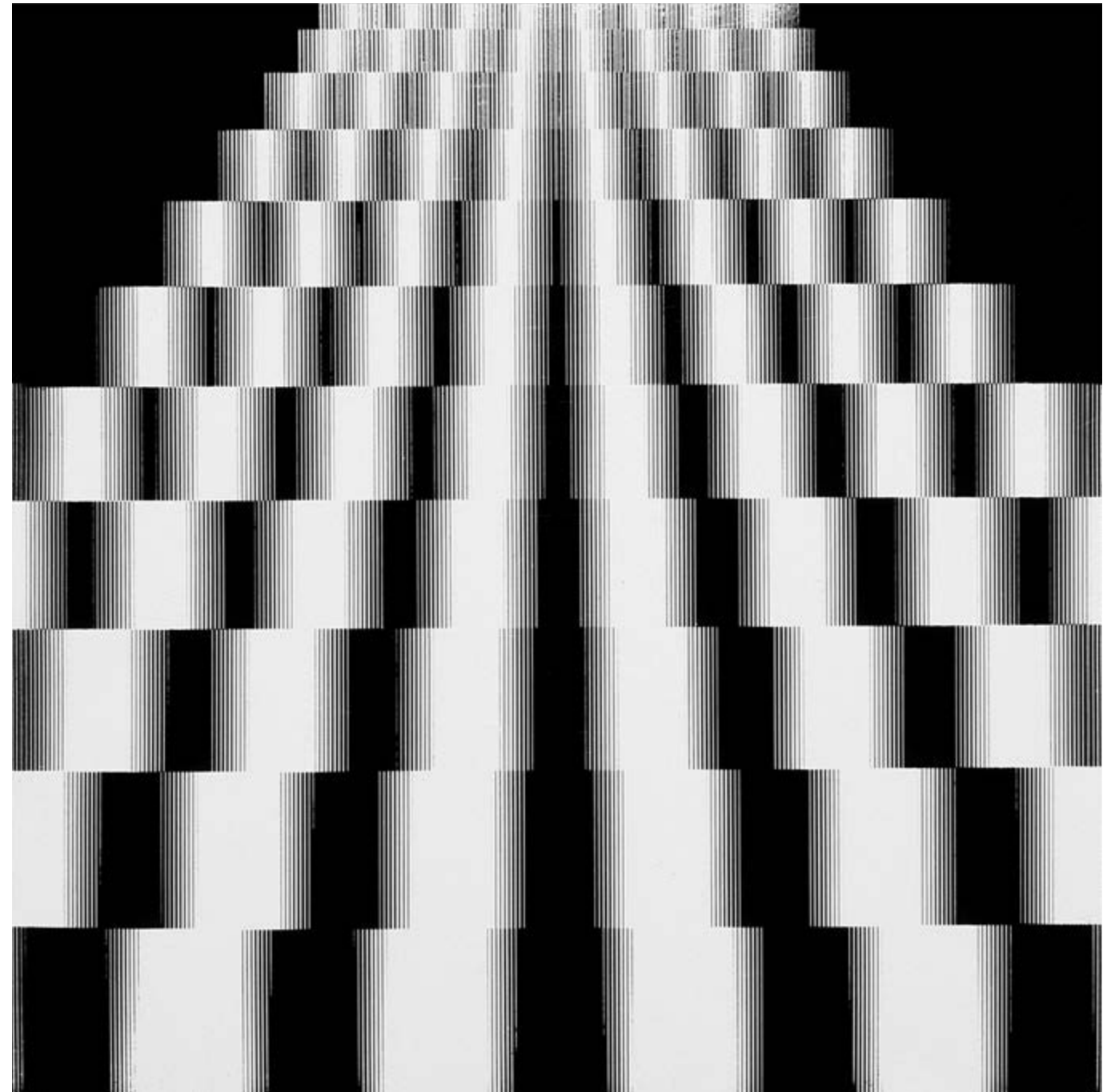
CATALOGUE

1. ORDINE ASCENSIONALE, 1952

Tempera drawing behind an industrial glass, 50 x 50 cm

LITERATURE

M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*,
exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery,
3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 39, ill.

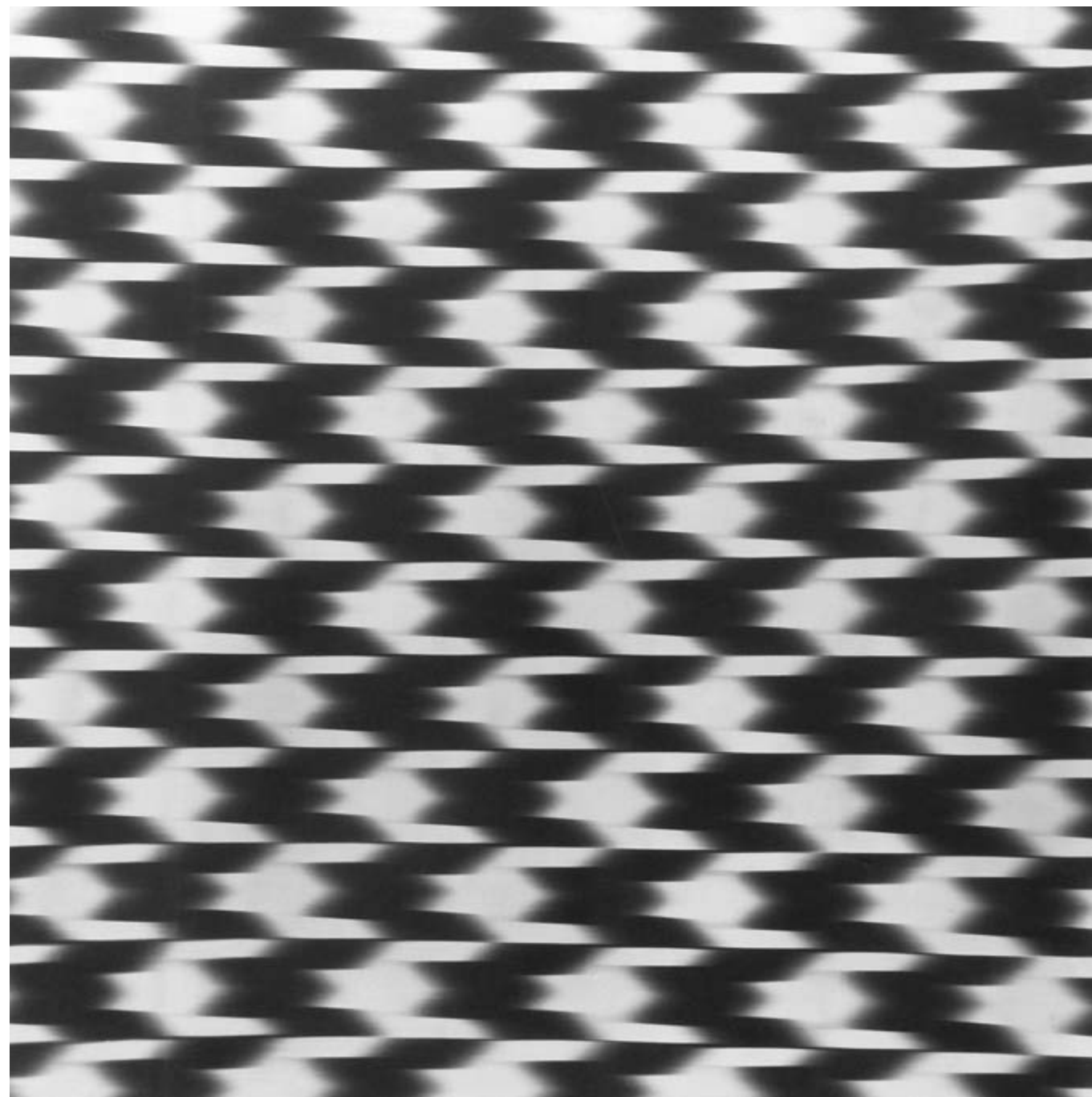


2. FLOU, 1955

Optical experimental work, subperception, on emulsified canvas, 115 x 114 cm

LITERATURE

M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*,
exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery,
3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 39, ill.



3. COMBINATORIA DI STRUTTURE
ONDULATE INTERFERENTI, 1956

Optical experimental work, moiré, on emulsified canvas, 116 x 150 cm

EXHIBITIONS

– Rome, Galleria d'Arte Marcon IV, *Arte come sperimentazione e metodo. Antologica di Franco Grignani*, 22 May - 22 June 1974, p. 37, ill.

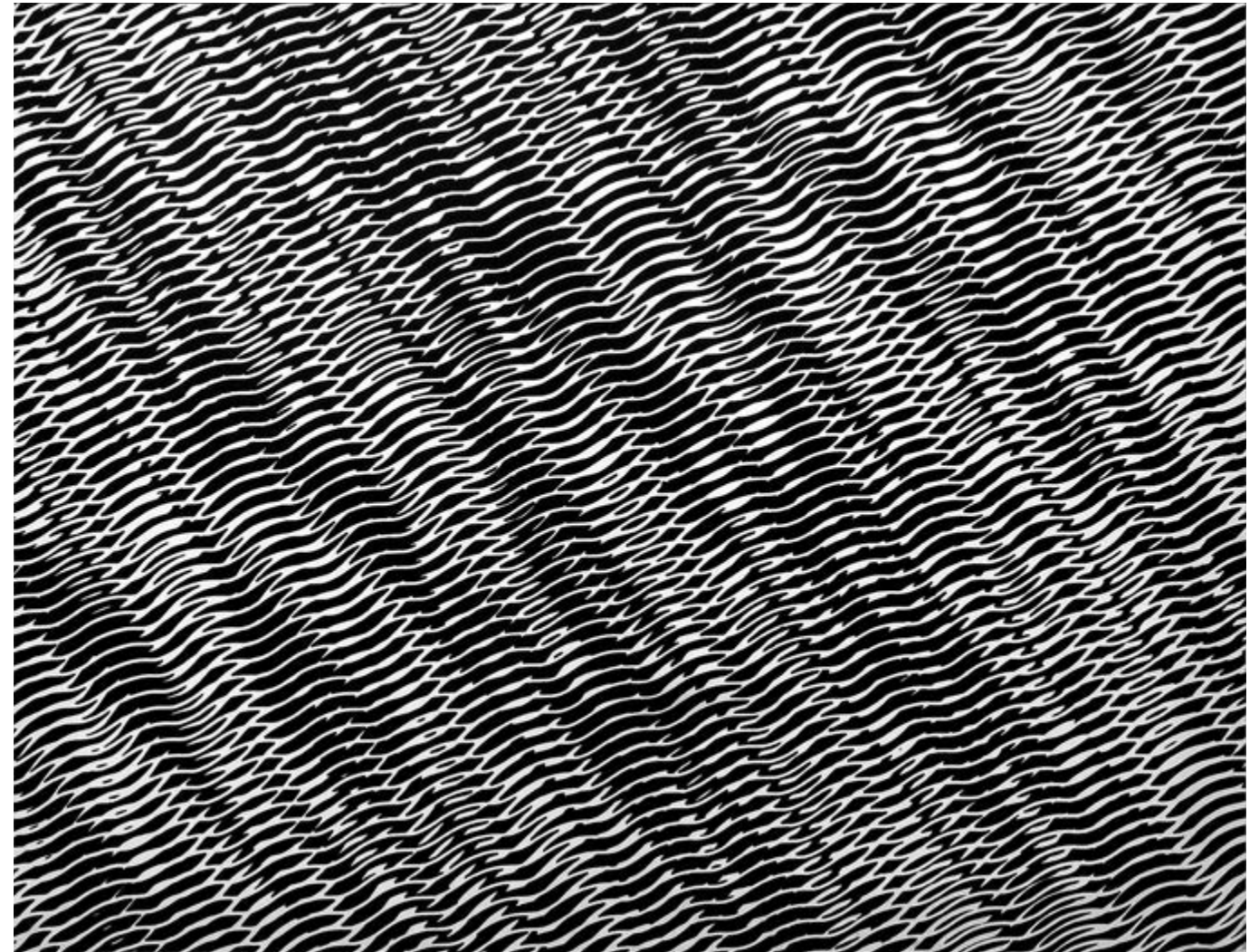
– Milan, Arte Struktura, *La realtà ambigua. Franco Grignani*, 15 December 1988 - 31 January 1989, p. 15, ill.

LITERATURE

– Franco Grignani, *Una metodologia della visione*, exhibition catalogue, Milan, Rotonda della Besana, 18 January - 2 February 1975, p. 112, ill.

– D. Ferrari, *VAF Stiftung. La collezione, Catalogo generale*, Milan 2012, p. 578.

– M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*, exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery, 3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 59, ill.



4. CAMPO FENOMENICO CON ACCOPPIAMENTO DI DUE TRAME MATEMATICHE, 1962

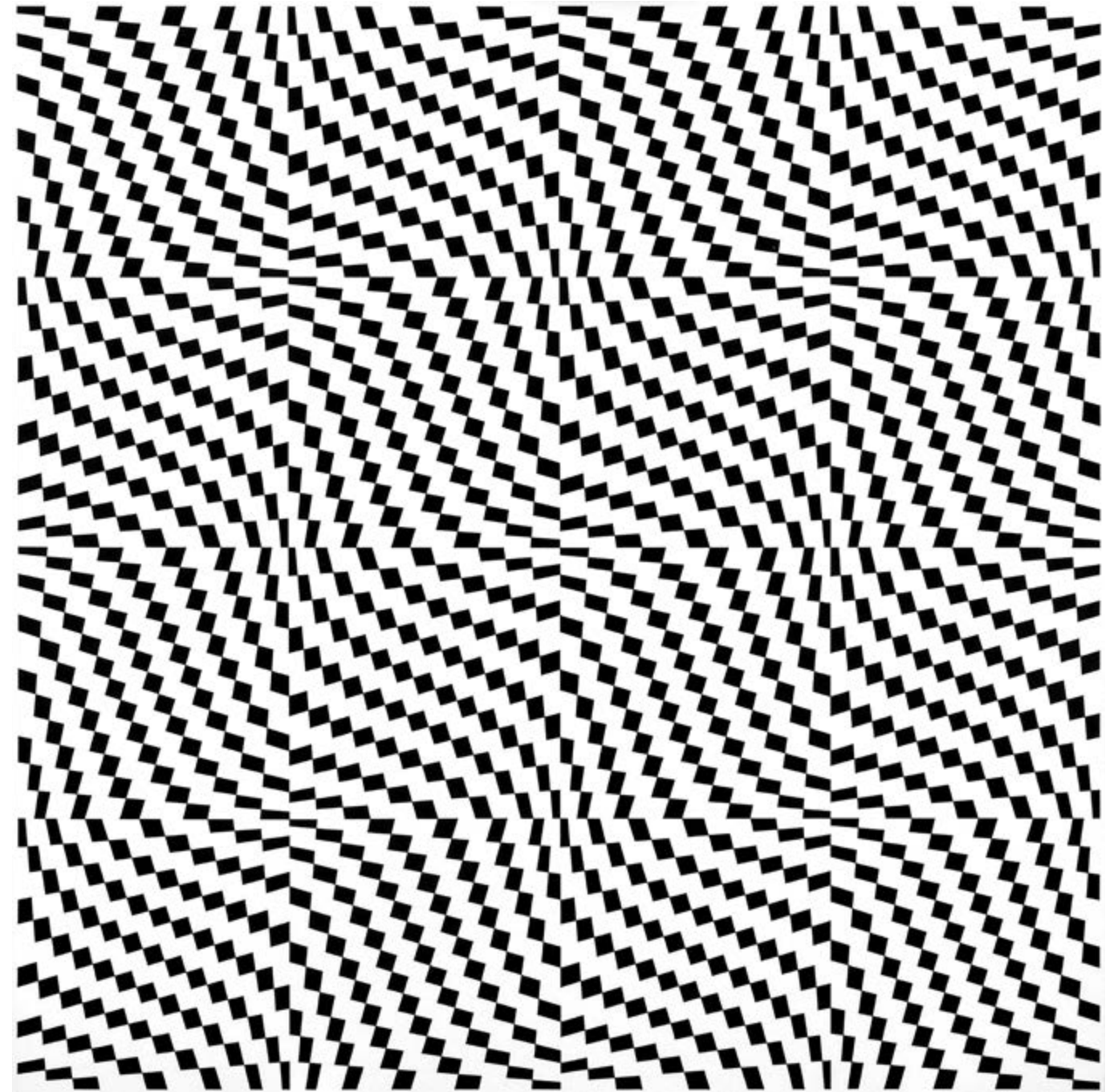
Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 73 x 73 cm

EXHIBITIONS

- Rome, Galleria d'Arte Marcon IV, *Arte come sperimentazione e metodo. Antologica di Franco Grignani*, 22 May - 22 June 1974, p. 44, ill.
- Milan, Rotonda della Besana, *Franco Grignani. Una metodologia della visione*, 18 January - 2 February 1975, p. 133, ill.
- Reggio Emilia, Sala comunale delle esposizioni, *Franco Grignani*, 31 March - 21 April 1979, n. 91, ill.
- Sesto San Giovanni, Rodottanta, Centro culturale, *Franco Grignani. Ricerca come arte*, 11 - 31 January 1980, n. 91, ill.
- Milan, Palazzo delle Stelline, Galleria Gruppo Credito Valtellinese, *Alterazioni ottico mentali. 1929-1999*, 23 January - 15 March 2014, p. 113, ill.

LITERATURE

- M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*, exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery, 3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 86, ill.

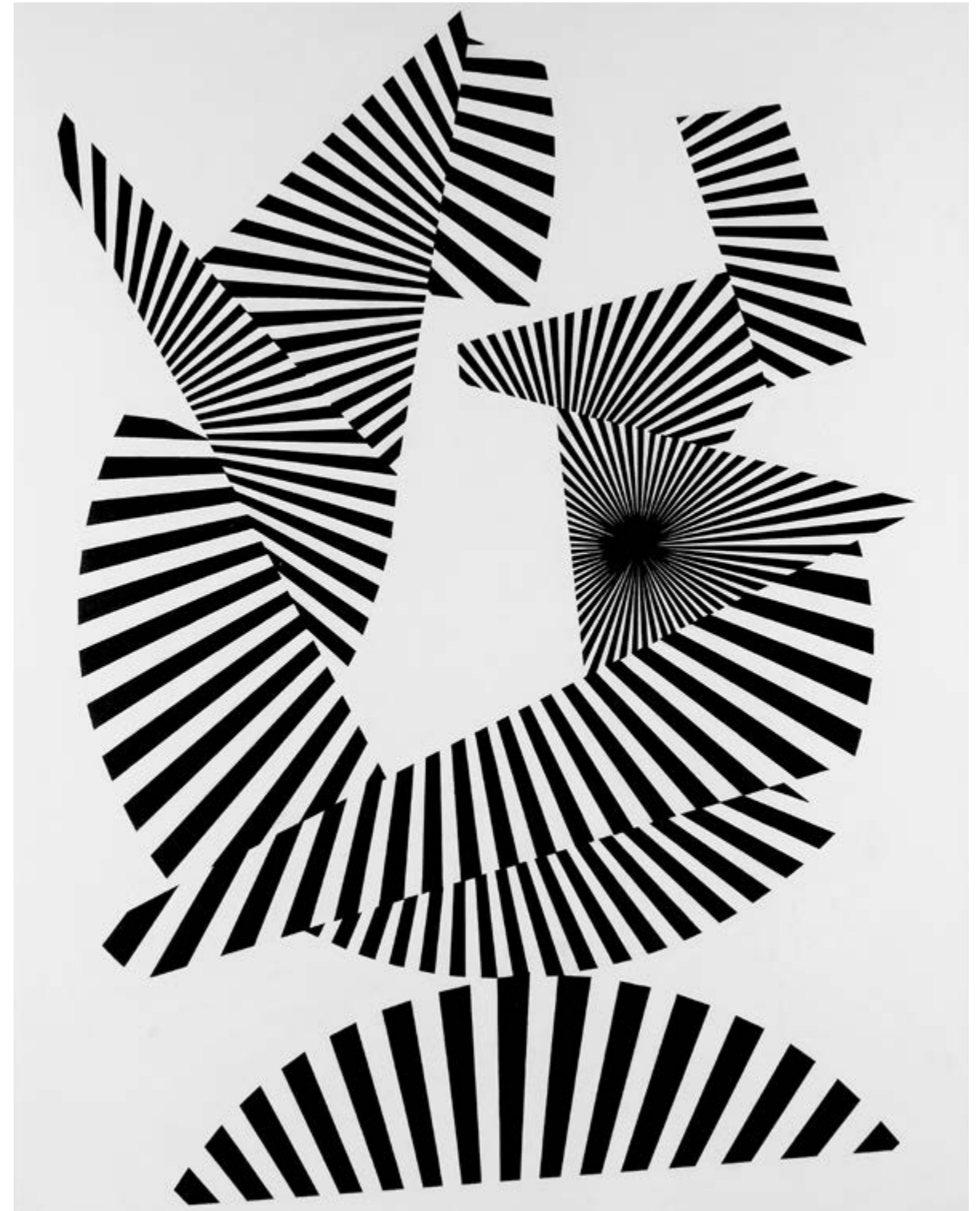


5. FRAMMENTAZIONE RADIALE, 1964

Oil on canvas, 96 x 76 cm

LITERATURE

– M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*,
exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery,
3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 110, ill.



6. DERIVA, 1967

Oil on canvas, 96 x 96 cm

LITERATURE

– M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*,
exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery,
3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 171, ill.



7. DISSOCIAZIONE DAL BORDO, 1967

Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard, 70 x 70 cm

EXHIBITIONS

– Turin, Galleria Il punto, *Franco Grignani*,
from 12 October 1967, p. 7, ill.

LITERATURE

– M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*,
exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery,
3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 139, ill.



8. DISSOCIAZIONE DAL BORDO, 1967

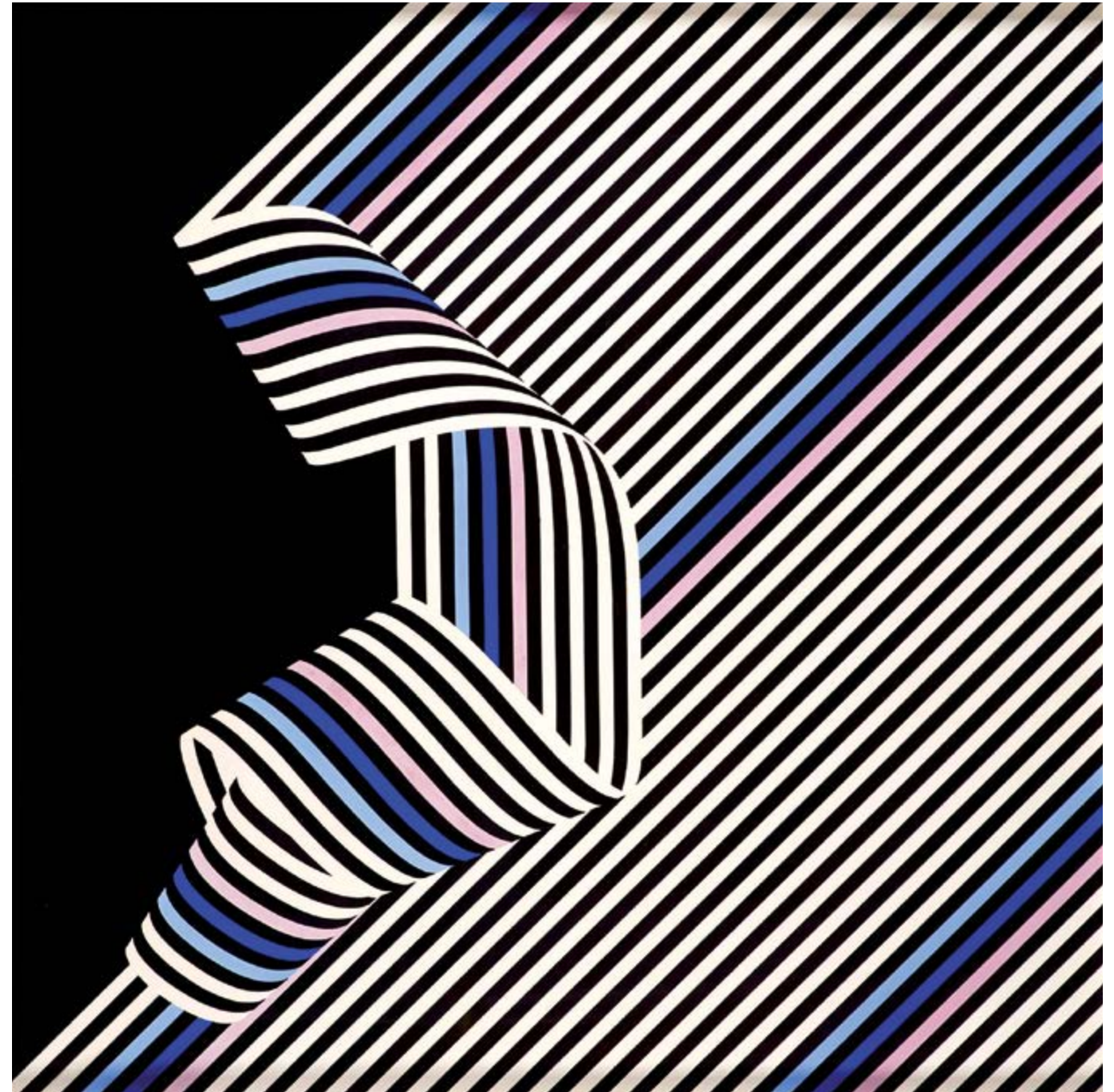
Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard, 70 x 70 cm

EXHIBITIONS

– Turin, Galleria Il punto, *Franco Grignani*, from 12 October 1967, catalogue cover.

LITERATURE

– M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*, exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery, 3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 138, ill.



9. DISSOCIAZIONE DAL BORDO, 1969

Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 51 x 51 cm



10. DISSOCIAZIONE DAL BORDO, 1969

Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 73 x 51 cm

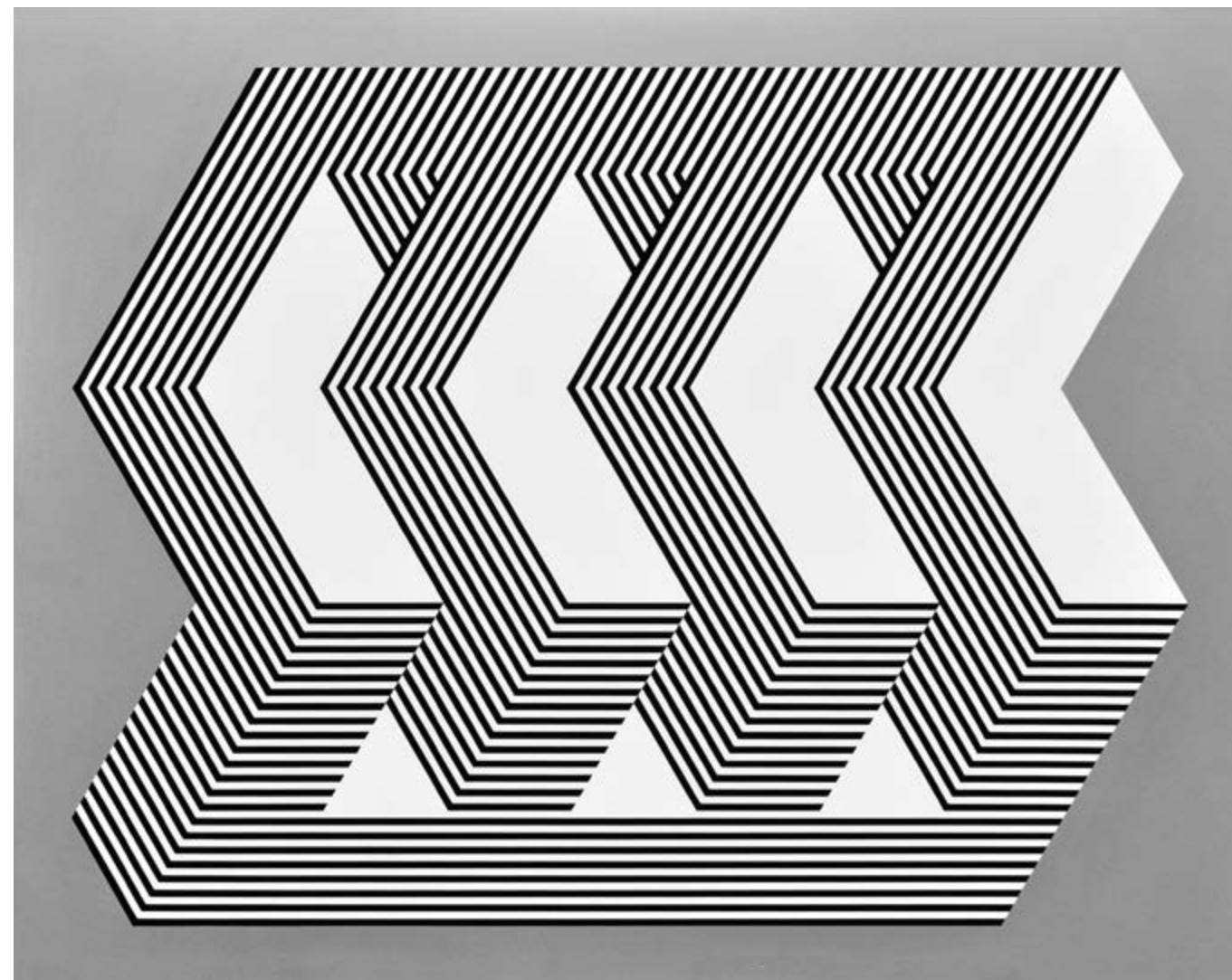
EXHIBITIONS

– Bologna, Galleria Spazia, *Franco Grignani, Opere 60-70*,
October - November 2014, pp. 32-33, ill.



11. PSICOPLASTICA, 1970

Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 68 x 87 cm



12. PSICOPLASTICA, 1971

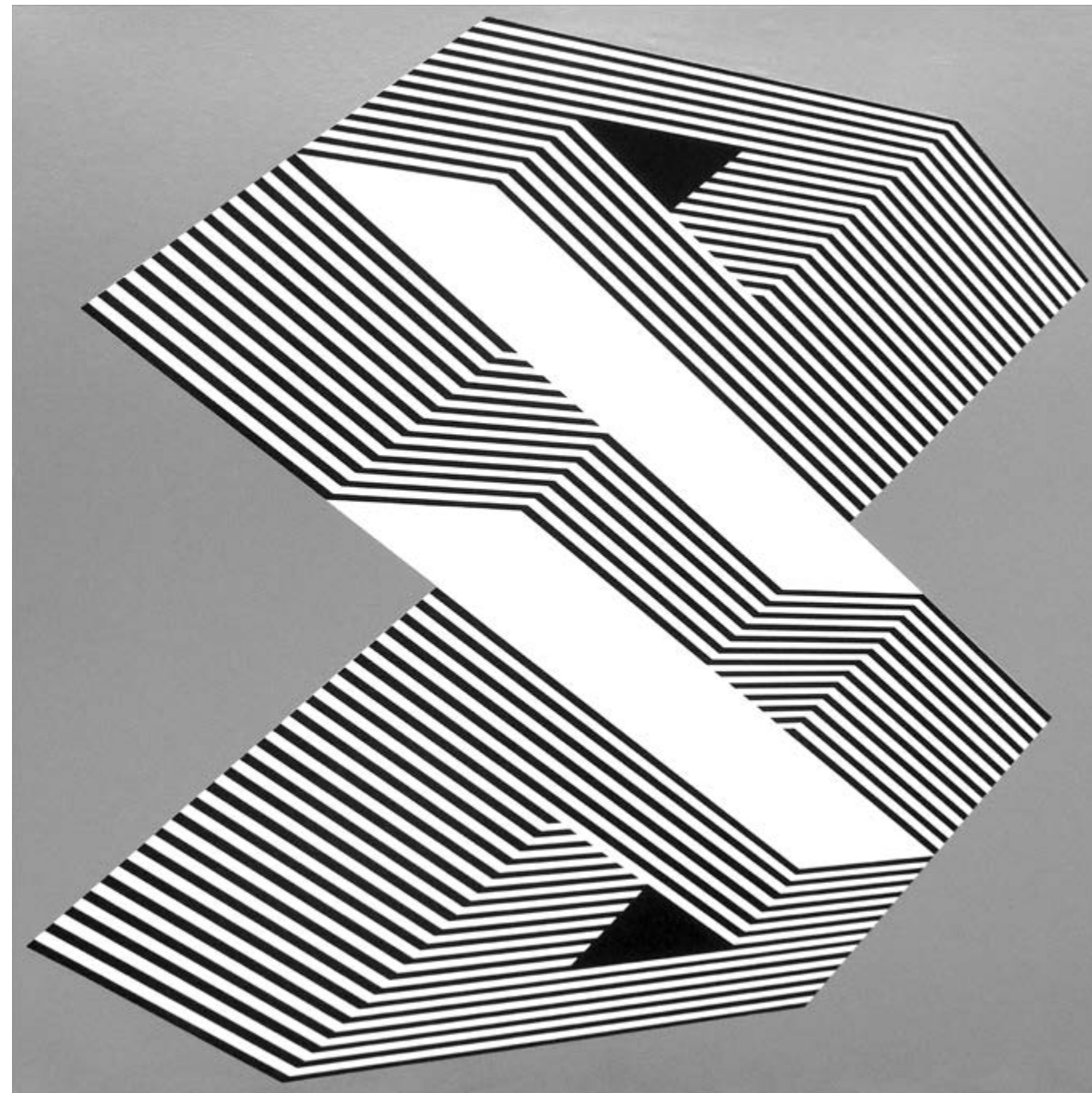
Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 102 x 55 cm



controllare
fondo in alto

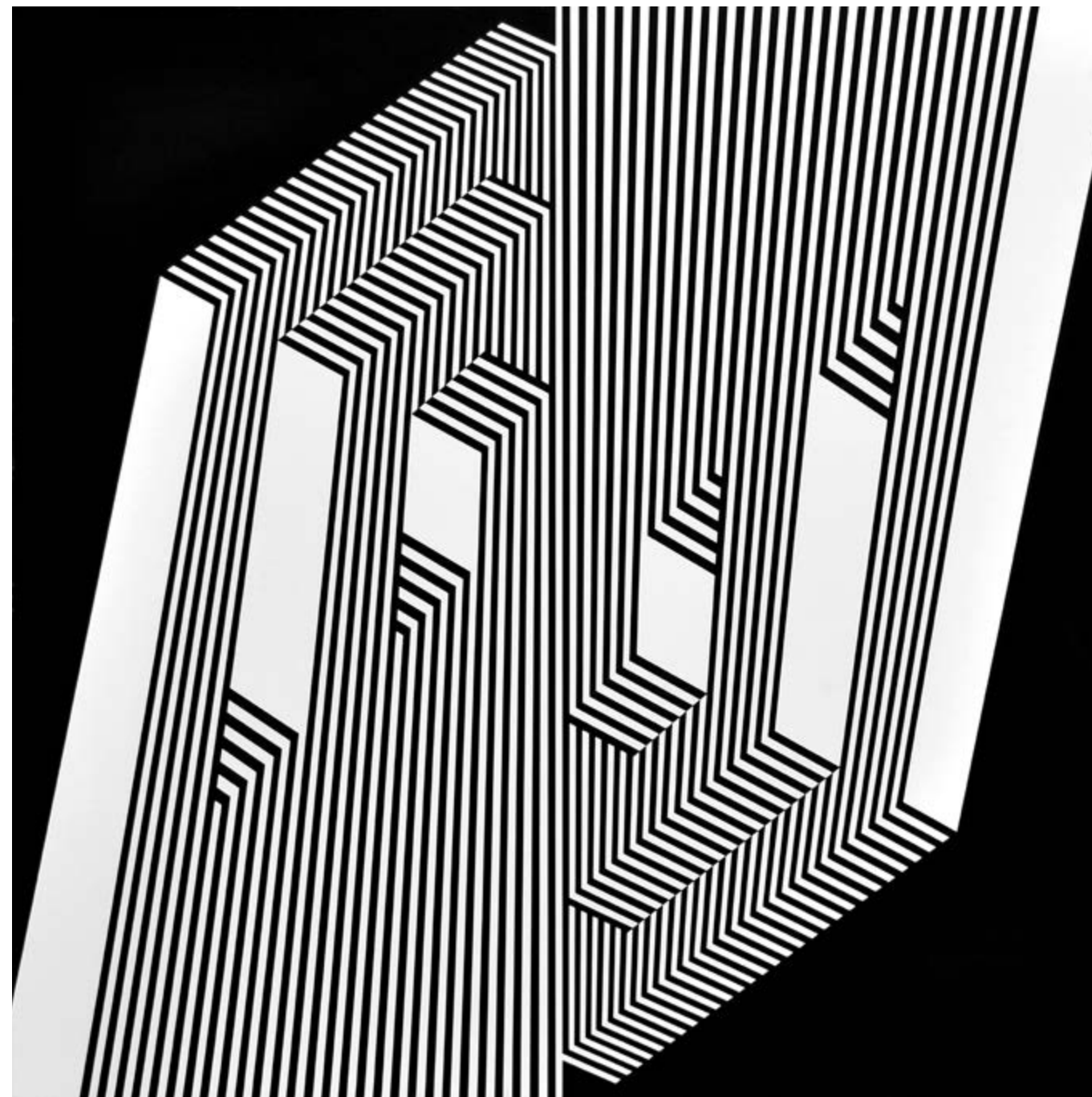
13. PSICOPLASTICA, 1971

Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 70 x 70 cm



14. PSICOPLASTICA, 1972

Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 70 x 70 cm

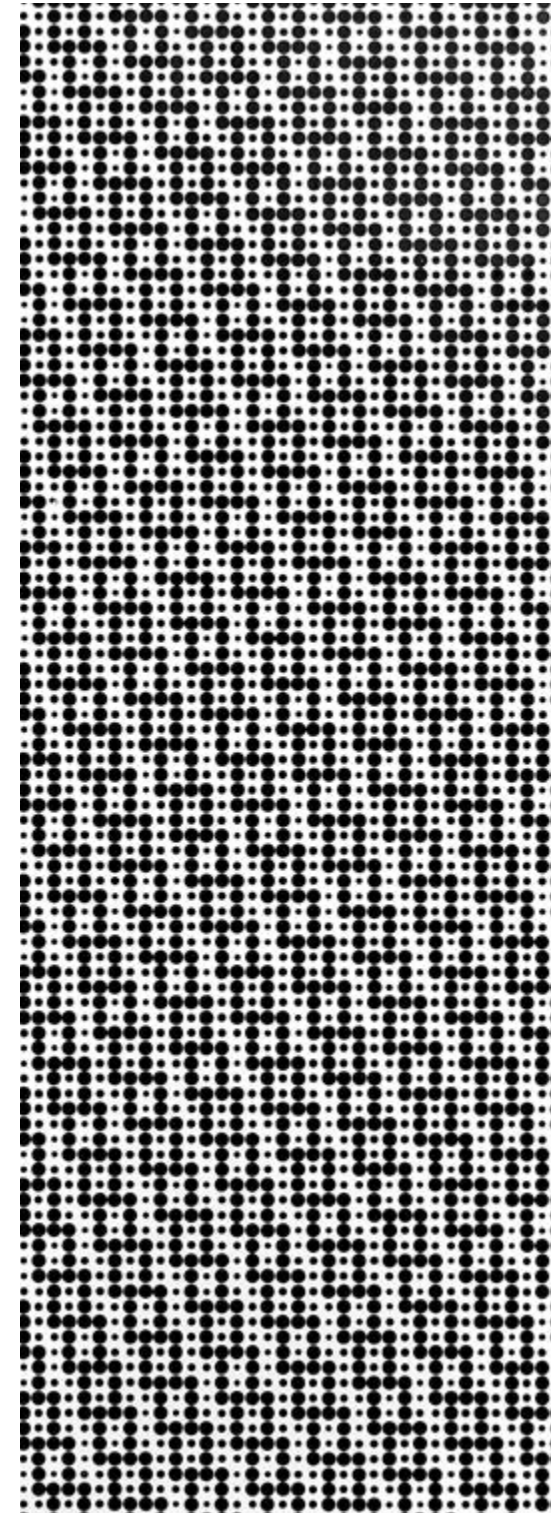


15. CAMPO RETICOLARE, 1975

Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 102 x 36.5 cm

EXHIBITIONS

– Milan, Galleria Lorenzelli, *Le diagonali nascoste di Franco Grignani*, March 1976, no. 10.



16. CAMPO RETICOLARE, 1975

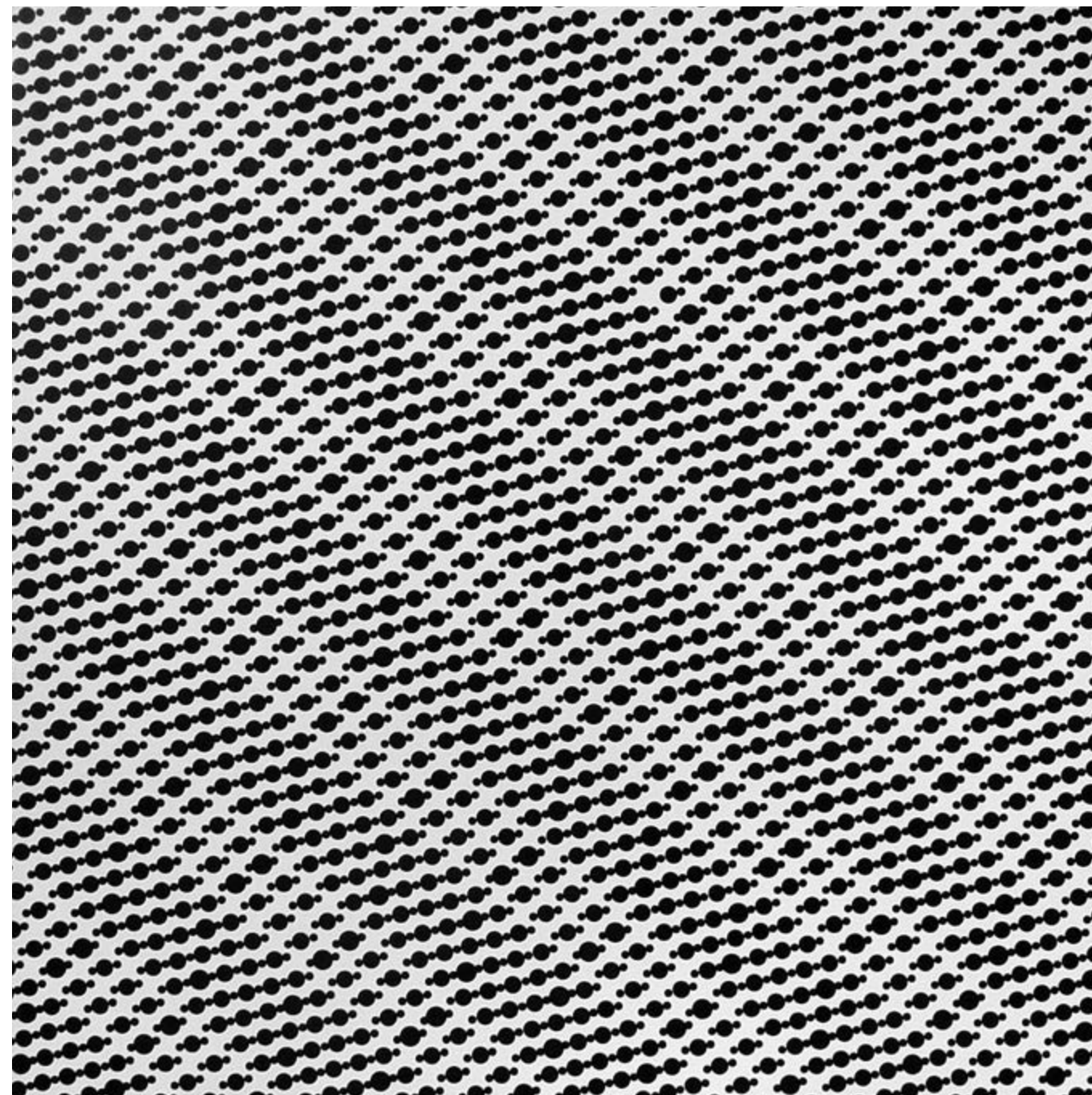
Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 73 x 73 cm

EXHIBITIONS

– Milan, Galleria Lorenzelli, *Le diagonali nascoste di Franco Grignani*,
March 1976, no. 6.

LITERATURE

– M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*,
exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery,
3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 235, ill.



17. CAMPO RETICOLARE, 1975

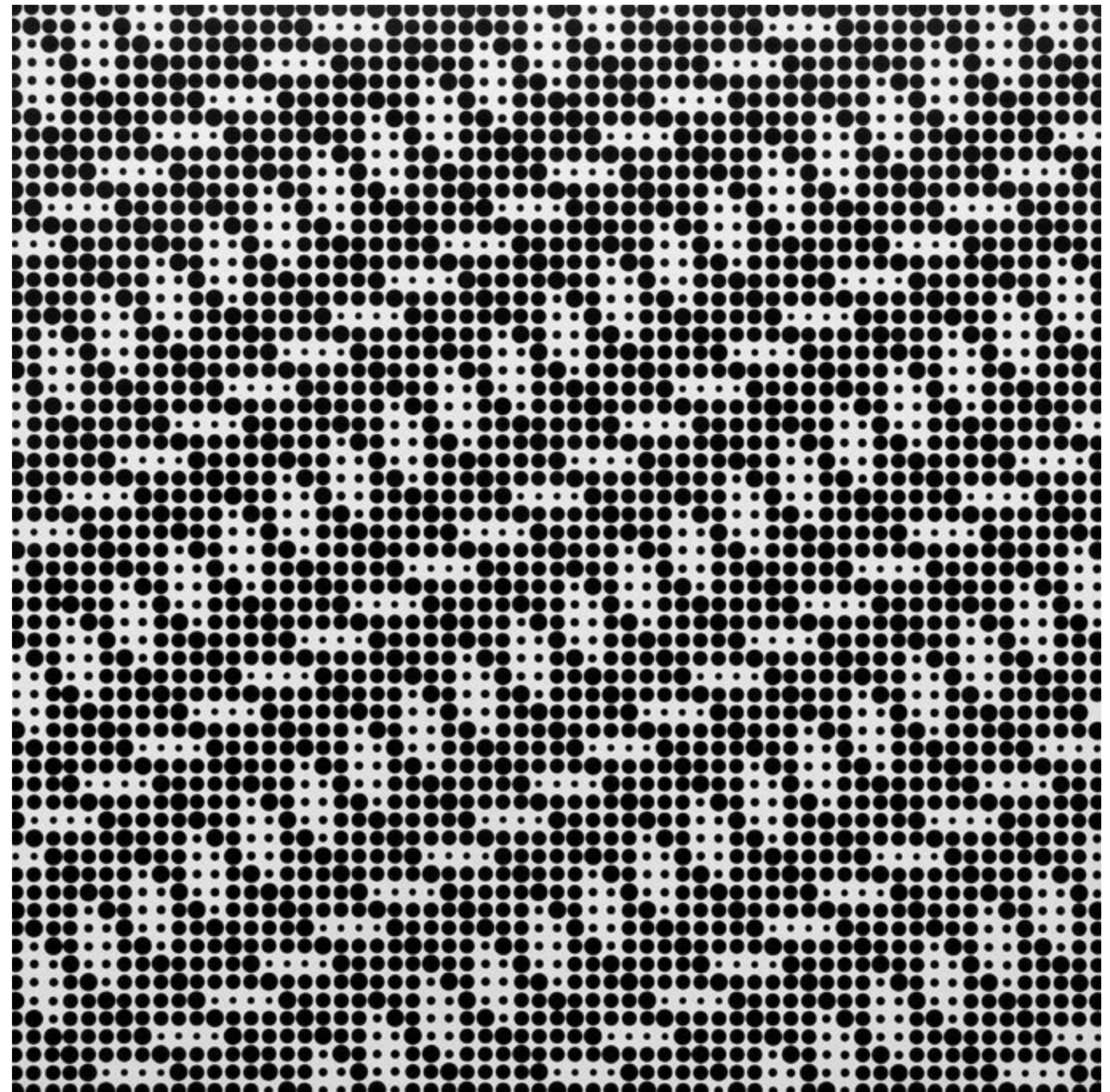
Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 73 x 73 cm

EXHIBITIONS

- Milan, Galleria Lorenzelli, *Le diagonali nascoste di Franco Grignani*, March 1976, no. 5.
- Reggio Emilia, Sala comunale delle esposizioni, *Franco Grignani*, 31 March - 21 April 1979, no. 91.

LITERATURE

- M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*, exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery, 3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 235, ill.



18. CAMPO SCALARE, 1975

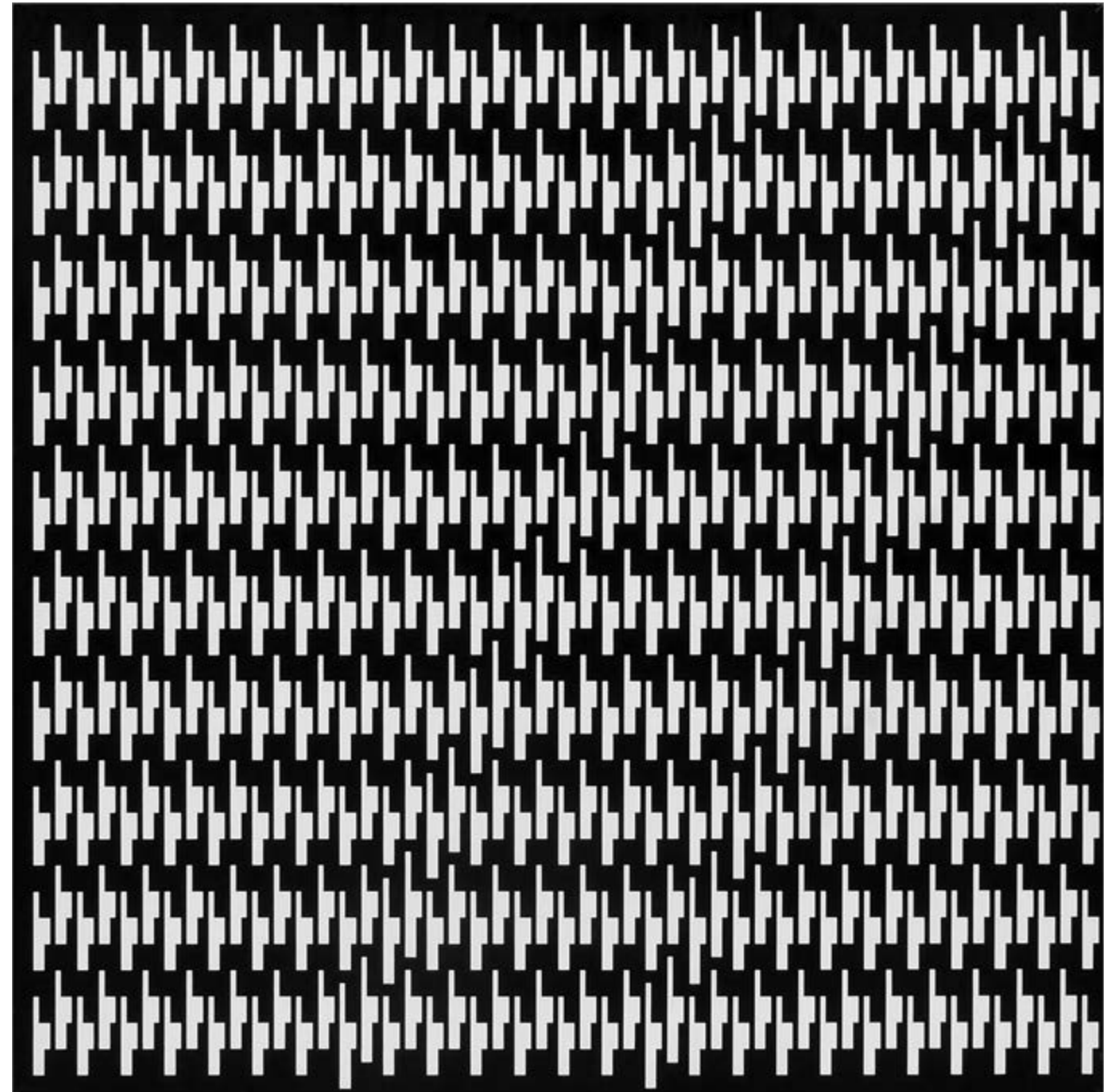
Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard on panel, 100 x 100 cm

EXHIBITIONS

- Milan, Galleria Lorenzelli, *Le diagonali nascoste di Franco Grignani*, 12 March 1976, no. 20.
- Caracas, Museo de Bellas Artes, *Franco Grignani. El sentido de una larga busqueda*, February 1977, no. 77.
- Reggio Emilia, Sala comunale delle esposizioni, *Franco Grignani*, 31 March - 21 April 1979, no. 220, ill.
- Sesto San Giovanni, Rondottanta, Centro culturale, *Franco Grignani. Ricerca come arte*, 11 - 31 January 1980, no. 119.
- Milan, Palazzo delle Stelline, Galleria Gruppo Credito Valtellinese, *Alterazioni ottico mentali. 1929-1999*, 23 January - 15 March 2014, p. 102, ill.

LITERATURE

- M. Meneguzzo, *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*, exhibition catalogue, Milan, 10 A.M. ART Gallery, 3 January - 2 April 2016, p. 227, ill.



19. CAMPO LINEARE OSCILLANTE, 1975

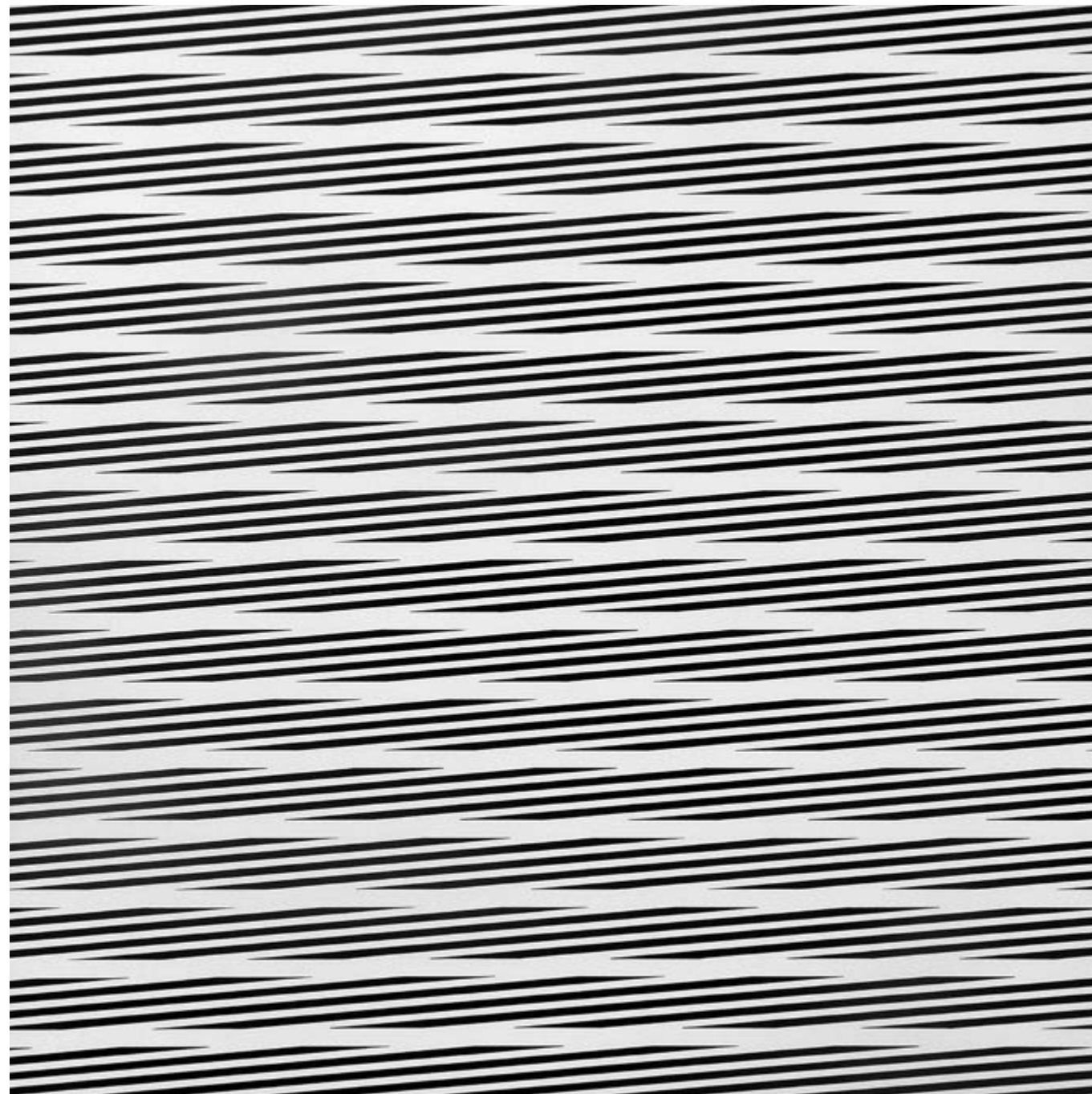
Mixed media on Schoeller cardboard and masonite, 73 x 73 cm

EXHIBITIONS

- Milan, Galleria Lorenzelli, *Le diagonali nascoste di Franco Grignani*, March 1976, no. 8.
- Reggio Emilia, Sala comunale delle esposizioni, *Franco Grignani*, 31 March - 21 April 1979, no. 225, ill.
- Sesto San Giovanni, Rondottanta, Centro culturale, *Franco Grignani. Ricerca come arte*, 11 - 31 January 1980, no. 225.

LITERATURE

- D. Ferrari, *VAF Stiftung. La collezione, Catalogo generale*, Milan 2012, p. 580.





APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHY

Franco Grignani was born on 4 February 1908 at Piece Porto Morone (Pavia). Grignani's initial artistic experiences were rooted in the second, or later, Futurism (Secondo Futurismo). However, the most significant peculiarity to note is his adoption of a method of research, which functions as the matrix for all his aesthetic experiences, with the specific intention, through formulation of precise concepts and methods, of enriching not only creative potential but also the evolutive medium. After his architectural studies, he chose to dedicate himself to the nascent, new profession of graphic-designer and to research the phenomena of sign-based mediation which surround modern man. Grignani looked into the alterations of reality, modified by the arrival of technological conditioning and higher-tier structural components in which there is a coming together of design work, constructive methodology and guiding thought. He analyses man within his physical limits and his emotional spaces, gathering together a truly enormous quantity of documentation. Through his publications in sectoral journals, books, exhibitions and didactic material used in foreign universities, this documentation influences the currents of visual research while setting forth a new formal morphology which meets the needs, and conforms to the rules of sign-based communication. His rejection of the means and practices represented by painting and graphic art in their traditional forms led him towards systematic, analytic, consistent research into "Gestaltpsychologie" theories. He focused on distortion as reproduction of a second, mirror-like, hyperbolic world antiithetic to human sight. With his sub-perception experimental works of 1949, Grignani started out on the task of re-elaboration for recovery of lateral space beyond the field of vision, uncovering birth of a latent image. The range of his experiments extend from technique to adulterated mathematics, all conducted in accordance with a constructive freedom open to intuition, with a convergence of rationalising calculations and appeals to the imaginary. After this "optical" period, his works investigated the structures of moiré, linear vibrations, permutations, mortise joints,

projective periodics, diachronics, ribbon dissociations, psychoplastics, isoplastics, hidden diagonals, and hyperbolic and symbiotic structures. In 1963, he designed the woolmark, recognised world-wide (it was submitted in 1964). In 1965, for the purposes of elaboration of these theories and of application of his research in painting, Grignani was invited to speak at "Vision '65", the first international congress on communication among humans, which took place in the United States at Carbondale University, Illinois. He was a member of the international jury for Typomundus XX/2 for selecting graphic art for communication in the 20th century. He was a member of AGI, Alliance Graphic Internationale, since its very first days, and an honorary member of the Society of Typographic Art, STA (Chicago). For his contribution to aesthetic research, he received the gold symbol (simbolo d'oro) award of the body, Centro di Cultura Giancarlo Puecher, Milan. After the award received from the Graphics Section of the 36th Venice Biennale, he received the Palma d'oro della Pubblicità (golden palm for advertising) and the Medaglia d'Oro (gold medal) of the Triennale of Milan. One-man shows opened in London, Chicago, Kassel and Stutthart, and also in Milan and other Italian cities. The anthological exhibitions at the Rotonda della Besana in Milan in 1975, at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Caracas in 1977, and at the Galleria di Arte Moderna in Bologna in 1983, were particularly significant. He took part in collective exhibitions both in Italy and abroad (New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Melbourne, Helsinki, Barcelona, Madrid, Hamburg, Warsaw, Zurich, Copenhagen, Muenster). Apollonio, Argan, Ballo, Besemer, Buzzati, Caldarelli, Caramel, Carluccio, Carraher, Celant, D'Amore, Dierner, Dorfles, Dragone, Emmer, Fezzi, Gyllan, Goldwater, Guevara, Hart, Kenedy, Lambertini, Masini, Montana, Passoni, Pontiggia, Solmi, Tomassoni, Trini, Valsecchi, Vargas, Vianello, Wuster, Zannier and many other major critics have written on Grignani. He died on 20 February 1999 in Milan, where he had always lived and worked.

In 2000, a retrospective was organised at the Galleria Carla Sozzani, with photographic works dating from 1928 to the 1972. His works were exhibited within the ambit of the "OP ART" exhibition at the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt (2007), at "Fotografia astratta. Dalle Avanguardie al digitale" (Abstract photography. From the Vanguardists to digital) at the Museo della Fotografia contemporanea in Cinisello Balsamo (2010), "Grafica Italiana" (Italian graphic art) at the Milan Triennale, "Arte cinetica e programmata" (kinetic and programmed art) at GNAM (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna) in 2012, and the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Lissone (2013). MoMA (New York), Stedelijck Museum (Amsterdam), the Museum of Modern Art (Warsaw), the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), Museo di Villa Croce (Genoa), Museo del'900 (Milan), the Vaf-Stiftung collection at MART (Rovereto) and MACBA (Buenos Aires) exhibit Grignani's works in their permanent collections.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1958

- *Franco Grignani*, Crawford Gallery, London
- *Esperimenti in Dissolvenza*, Libreria Salto, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Biblioteca Comunale di Milano, Milan

1960

- *Tensione Visuale*, Galleria Salto, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Normandy House, Chicago

1965

- *Franco Grignani*, Conservatorio Musicale Cherubini, Florence
- *Franco Grignani*, Container Corporation of America Gallery, Chicago
- *Franco Grignani*, Centro Proposte, Florence

1966

- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Il Cenobio, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Centro Proposte, Palazzo Capponi, Florence
- *Franco Grignani*, 500D Gallery, Chicago
- *Franco Grignani*, Studio di informazione estetica, Turin
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria l'Elefante, Venice
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Flaviana, Locarno

1967

- *Franco Grignani*, Staatliche Verkkunstschule Kassel, Kassel
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria il Paladino, Palermo
- *Franco Grignani*, Mostra documentaria di 18 anni di ricerche al Grattacielo Pirelli, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Il Punto, Turin

1968

- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Behr, Stuttgart
- *La geometria trovata di Franco Grignani*, Studio 2B, Bergamo
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria l'Elefante, Venice

1969

- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria San Fedele, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria La Colonna, Como
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria L'Arco, Macerata
- *Le due reità*, Galleria Il Brandale, Savona
- *Franco Grignani*, Collegi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya I Balears, Barcelona

1970

- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Lorenzelli, Bergamo
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Rizzoli, Rome
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria L'Arco, Rome
- *Franco Grignani*, 500D Gallery, Chicago

1971

- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Peccolo, Livorno
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria San Fedele, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Segnapassi, Pesaro
- *Franco Grignani*, Istituto di Cultura en Uruguay, Montevideo

1972

- *Franco Grignani*, Sala personale alla 1° Rassegna Nazionale d'Arte Contemporanea di Saint Vincent, Saint Vincent
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Marini, Verona

1973

- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Lorenzelli, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Trinità, Rome

1974

- *Franco Grignani*, *Arte come sperimentazione e metodo*, Galleria Marcon IV, Rome
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Andromedia, Bologna
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Lorenzelli, Bergamo

1975

- *Una Metodologia della Visione*, Rotonda della Besana, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Novelli, Verona

1976

- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Lorenzelli, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Cesarea, Genova
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Marcon IV, Rome
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Ravagan, Venice

1977

- *Franco Grignani*, Studio d'Arte Il Moro, Florence
- *Franco Grignani*, Museo di Bellas Artes, Caracas

1979

- *Franco Grignani*, *Pitture, Sperimentali e Graphic Design*, Sala Comunale delle Esposizioni, Reggio Emilia
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Il Cortile, Bologna

1980

- *Ricerca come arte – Franco Grignani*, *pitture sperimentali, grafica*, Rondottanta, Centro Culturale, Sesto San Giovanni

1981

- *I Segni e la Struttura*, Galleria Spazia, Bologna
- *Le Strutture Iperboliche*, Galleria Lorenzelli, Milan

1983

- *Sperimentazione Fotografica negli anni '30 e '70*, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna
- *Photo Grafica di Franco Grignani*, *50 anni di ricerca come arte. Creatività e metodologia*, Palestra Comunale di Pieve Porto Morone, Pavia

1984

- *Franco Grignani*, Centro Verifica 8+1, Venice-Mestre
- *Comunicazione Sperimentale TYPE*, Galleria Quanta, Milan

1985

- *Franco Grignani*, Maison Gerbollier, La Salle, Aosta
- *Dal Moiré alle Strutture Iperboliche*, Galleria Il Salotto, Como

1986

- *Opere Storiche*, Galleria Vismara, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Centro Culturale immagini Koh-I-Noor, Milan

1988

- *Strutture Simbiotiche*, Galleria Lorenzelli Arte, Milan
- *La Ricerca come Professione, la Grafica come Ricerca*, Galleria Mara Coccia, Rome
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Arte Struttura, Milan
- *La Realtà Ambigua*, Opere Documentarie dal 1928 al 1988, Galleria Arte Struttura, Milan

1990

- *Franco Grignani*, 30 Jahre Galerie, Loehr, Frankfurt
- 1991
- *Franco Grignani – Quasi una Ripetizione Differente*, Galleria Arte Struttura, Milan

1997

- *Franco Grignani – Il Segno dell'Occhio*, Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, Milan

2000

- *Foto documentate dal 1928 agli anni '70*, Galleria Carla Sozzani, Milan

2013

- *L'Arte del Progetto*, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Lissone

2014

- *Alterazioni Ottico-Mentali, 1929-1999*, Galleria Gruppo Credito Valtellinese, Milan
- *Franco Grignani*, Galleria Bergamo Arte, Bergamo
- *Franco Grignani. Opera '60-'70*, Galleria Spazia, Bologna

2016

- *Franco Grignani. Il rigore dell'ambiguità*, 10 A.M. Art, Milan

