

by Domenico Russo and Andrea Tinterrì

The adoption of a pseudonym corresponds to a deviation, to a slit that you want to highlight to summarize a different trajectory.

*"I was raised in the classic graffiti writing; later only I started to call myself **108**. In '97 I moved to Milan to study at the Polytechnic, it was a period in which all over Europe there were graffiti writers doing other things, abandoning the letters; at the same time I was beginning to feel the distance from the kids in the Bronx, theirs was an important experience but it didn't belong to my culture. I wanted to destroy the egotism of the tag, I wanted to fight my ego. I wanted to free myself up from the wall".*

The choice of a number urges the erosion of an identity, a voluntary departure from one's history in order to be finally able to metabolize it, as if it were a therapeutic process of matter transformation. Guido Bisagni chooses to be **108** (a number with strong spiritual / philosophical connotations) to observe himself as an exile, a necessary detachment which corresponds to constant self-analysis. And in this process the form becomes a possible answer, **108** works on rounded lines that seem to adapt to one's memory, a sort of informal self-portrait where black is not censorship but rather a possible expression of the profound. Color helps the eye to identify ever-boiling boundaries.

Because form must change to become slippery and contradictory matter as it is our identity made up of iconographic reminiscences, of design legacies: the monochrome and black that often characterize the artist's production are a memory that is re-processed, they are the years of self-printed fanzine, the aesthetics of photocopies, posters, stickers left on the walls.

It is a hidden culture that re-emerges as a legacy of identity. Because **108**'s research does not include detachments, it is a constant self-portrait, a slow observation that highlights differences, new discoveries, new tensions; the form records the time returning a grammar that is difficult to code because it is still magmatic, necessarily liquid.

And the form will never be able to calm down, it would correspond to the loss of matter, to the exhaustion of research. The language decoding, therefore, is not even desirable, its fluctuation is the evidence of a trace of life that is constantly monitored. And even when, as in the *Incompiuto terrestre* exhibition, black is surrounded and pierced by red, orange, gray or blue and orthogonal signs break the sinuosity of the form, the research remains true to itself; it is only the testimony of an emotional variation. The testimony of a form at first sight tending towards the search for perfection and which instead reveals something unfinished. Something to complete.

Complete how? Where is it? one might wonder. Perhaps in another life and in the mind or soul of the observer, to whom **108** always leaves spaces for interpretation so that nothing is contained in a static scheme, a product with a label that is all too clear to take and take away with superficiality.



# INCOMPIUTO TERRESTRE 108



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*Incompiuto terrestre* recalls the peculiarly stupendous imperfection of man, because Guido Bisagni leaves visible second thoughts, errors, parts of black that is actually more dark gray than black, and is blurred with irregular backgrounds next to precise sections of color. To chaos he combines elements that bring order: lines, for example, and orthogonal parts too. Approaching these works involves a disbandment beyond life towards the aspects that make us all unfinished terrestrial, the most elusive, not obvious, even dangerous as sometimes the black color highlights. And the canvas or paper on which the forms are recorded are a limit, they are a compressed space in which to channel and drain the moods of one's unconscious. The canvas is containment, it is a grid within which the pigment must find its right location, in the utopian projection of a perfect shape that can exclude all the others, in the hope of an end, of a deafening stillness that can suspend research and decree an unlikely victory.

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*The artist **108**, born Guido Bisagni (Alessandria, 1978), is a pioneer of writing, an established abstract artist and one of the greatest exponents of post-graffiti in Italy. His poetics effectively combines the practice of writing and a long experience of mural painting with a synthesis of shapes, colors and spatiality that **108** has refined with a degree in Industrial Design at the Politecnico di Milano. Highly identifying - in its aesthetics - are the dominant use of the color black, the references to primitive art and the relationship with nature; the black of **108** is both form and concept; minimal but at the same time full of meaning and energy; abstract, but also figurative and sonorous. In short, an unmistakable trait. In his work are simultaneously present the influence of the artistic avant-garde and an explicit reference to the European underground scene in which he grew up. Its walls are visible all over the world; his works have been acquired by numerous private collections both in Italy and abroad as well as exhibited in important international shows including the Venice Biennale in 2007, the large group show Mapping the City curated by Rafael Schacter at Somerset House in London in 2015 and the Moscow Biennale of Urban Art in 2014 and 2018. He lives and works between Alessandria and Milan.*

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