

ARTFORUM

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“Pittura Analitica: 1970s”

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Emerging from the combative tribalism of 1970s Italian art, a time of pitched street battles between radical activist movements in Milan and Rome, the term *Pittura Analitica* (Analytical Painting) classified a new rigor with which a loose grouping of artists overcame enervated and repetitive modes of abstraction. In this show, it's clear that choices about actions and materials should be understood as painting concepts rather than evidence of self-expression.

Enzo Cacciola's *11-05-1975*, 1975, is made up of cement dragged across canvas. Paolo Cotani's *Benda* (Bandage), 1975, features the titular material soaked in dun paint and wrapped around a stretcher. Paolo Masi's *Tessitura* (Weaving), 1974, is a grid of red and gray thread sewn into a khaki ground. Carmengloria Morales's *Dittico* (Diptych) *R 75-11-1*, 1975, is an unpainted canvas alongside one of diagonal pewter-colored brushstrokes, with the feel of torrential rain. Vincenzo Cecchini's stack of washed-out gray squares, *Untitled*, 1972, looks like a skyscraper lost in fog. Is such doleful color coincidental, given that this era of convulsive political turmoil in Italy came to be known as *Anni di Piombo* (Years of Lead)?

Even where Giorgio Griffa's *Linee orizzontali* (Horizontal Lines), 1975, introduces stronger hues, the pink bands have been systematically drawn across a piece of unstretched, creased linen to much the same severe effect. This collection of straightforward, unsentimental painting suggests *Pittura Analitica* had an indirectly critical relationship to the murky politics of the period, as if artists committed to making irrevocable decisions about working processes might exemplify a clarity and probity absent from the public sphere.

— [Mark Harris](#)



Paolo Cotani, *Benda* (Bandage), 1975, bandages and acrylic on canvas, 39 x 39".