

For Immediate Release

## ***Gianfranco Zappettini. The Golden Age***

Mazzoleni, Turin  
15 February – 7 April 2022  
**Preview: Tuesday 15 February, 4-8pm**

Mazzoleni Torino is pleased to present ***Gianfranco Zappettini. The Golden Age***, a solo exhibition by Gianfranco Zappettini, which follows and complements the show of the same title, curated by Martin Holman, that was on display at Mazzoleni London from February to April 2020. Whilst the London show focussed solely on the artist's most recent body of works, the Turin exhibition will also present previous works.

Gianfranco Zappettini is one of the most renowned living Italian abstract painters. In the 1970s, he was amongst the co-founders of "Analytical Painting", an international movement which spread between Italy, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. The term "Analytical Painting" was conceived in 1974 by German art critic and historian Klaus Honnef. Zappettini's works have been exhibited in major public museums across Europe, such as: Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster, 1971; Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin, 1977; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, 1978; Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 1981, as well as at documenta 6, Kassel, 1977.

Zappettini's artistic development is linked to his spiritual research. The exhibition will be a survey of works from the 1990s, 2000s, and early 2010s, up to the recent gold-coloured paintings, which are representative of the artist's diverse types of research but connected to each other by an unchanged spirit of exploration.

The title of the show refers to Zappettini's exploration on the colour gold as a symbol of physical and metaphysical perfection. In this context, the "golden age" refers to a longed-for era of spiritual wealth, which - according to the artist - will follow the current era of decline. Zappettini's profound research on Taoism, Zen, and Sufism is intrinsic to this body of works. From these traditional doctrines, the artist recognises the role of art as the upholder of superior and ancestral knowledge that will be passed on to a future of newfound harmony between humankind and its surroundings.

Painting is a spiritual exercise for Zappettini; it is a ritual undertaken with technical mastery and alchemical rigour, which involves a methodical distribution of colour on the canvas and the use of common or industrial materials.

The Turin exhibition will bring together works representing three decades of artistic activity, highlighting aesthetic and conceptual aspects: for the first time, the recent series *Il petalo d'oro* ("The Golden Petal") will be displayed along with the series *Al fine che traspare* ("To the End Shining") from the mid 1990s, in which the petal was already the symbol of the evolutionary journey of the soul; a journey that has been completed through the use of gold in the late 2010s.

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In the same way, the “overlapping glasses” of the series *Sullo sfogliar del fato* (“Leafing through Fate”) – in which petals are again protagonists of a phase where nature stimulates meditation – will be exhibited alongside the series *La trama e l’ordito* (“The Weft and the Warp”) from the late 2000s, where the vibrance of the material-colour duality is juxtaposed with the order imposed by the Wallnet’s texture.

The 2010s “overlapping nets” predict the perfect balance of the *Con-Centro* (“Con-Centre”) series, alluding to that *golden mean* which is the inner centre of the human being.

A limited series from the year 2000 will also be exhibited. In this body of works Zappettini combines his distinctive white paintings from the 1970s with the series *Al fine che trapasare* (“To the End Shining”) from the 1990s. Works from the series *Lacrima divina* (“Divine Tear”) and *Luce Prima* (“The First Light”) will also be included, as well as some others from *Il codice degli dei* (“The Code of the Gods”), which represent cryptic and elegant “texts” in a superhuman language whose medium is the artist.

The illustrated catalogue *The Golden Age* published by Skira includes essays by Dr. Martin Holman, British curator and art critic; Prof. Klaus Honnef, German, museum director, art historian and critic; Prof. Paola Valenti, professor of contemporary art history at the University of Genoa.

On the occasion of the exhibition, the Catalogue Raisonné of Gianfranco Zappettini, curated by Marco Meneguzzo and published by Skira, will be presented.

#### **GIANFRANCO ZAPPETTINI**

Gianfranco Zappettini was born in Genoa in 1939. In 1962 Zappettini held his first personal exhibition in Palazzetto Rosso in his hometown and began working in the offices of architect Konrad Wachsmann and, together with German painter Winfried Gaul, he began to experience the artistic environment in Germany and Holland. In 1971 he was invited to the *Arte Concreta* (“Concrete Art”) exhibition at the Westfälischer Kunstverein in Münster, curated by Klaus Honnef. In those years, he participated in the main exhibitions of Analytical Painting: *Tempi di percezione* (“Times of perception”, Livorno, 1973), *Un futuro possibile - nuova pittura* (“A Possible Future – New Painting”, Ferrara, 1973), *Geplante Malerei* (Münster and Milan, 1974), *Analytische Malerei* (Düsseldorf, 1975), *Concerning Painting...* (a travelling exhibition in various Dutch museums, 1975-1976). In 1977 he was invited to “documenta 6” in Kassel and in 1978 he attended the collective exhibition *Abstraction Analytique* at the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. In the last fifteen years, his work has focused on the symbolism of weft and warp. In 2007, the VAF Foundation (Frankfurt, Germany) dedicated an impressive monographic show to his work.

The artist’s personal exhibitions during the last fifty years include the following international institutions: Westfälischer Kunstverein (Münster, 1975), Internationaal Cultureel Centrum (Antwerp, 1978), Museo d’Arte Contemporanea di Villa Croce (Genoa, 1997), CAMeC - Centro d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (La Spezia, 2007), Forum Kunst (Rottweil, 2007, with Paolo Icaro), LuCCA - Lucca Center of Contemporary Arts (Lucca, 2012), Janus Pannonius - Vasarely Museum (Pécs, 2015). The latest collective exhibitions in public spaces encompass: *Pittura analitica. I percorsi italiani. 1970-1980* (“Analytical Painting. The Italian Paths. 1970-1980”, at Museo della Permanente, Milan, 2007), *Pittura aniconica*, (“Aniconic Painting,” at Casa del Mantegna, Mantua 2008), *Pensare pittura* (“Thinking Painting”, at Museo d’Arte Contemporanea di Villa Croce, Genoa, 2009), *Analytische Malerei* (“Analytic Painting,” at Forum Kunst, Rottweil, 2011), *Gli anni della pittura analitica* (“The Years of Analytical Painting,” at Palazzo della Gran Guardia, Verona, 2016).

Gianfranco Zappettini first exhibited at Mazzoleni with a solo show in 2016 in the Turin gallery, followed by his participation in collective shows such as *Pittura Analitica. Anni '70* (“Analytical Painting, 1970s”, London, 2016), *Mazzoleni 1986-2016. 30 Years of Art, 30 Italian Artists* (Turin, 2016 and London, 2017), *Pittura Analitica. Then and Now* (Turin, 2017), *Light in Motion – Balla, Dorazio, Zappettini* (London, 2017), and *Gianfranco Zappettini: The Golden Age* (London, 2020).

He lives and works in Chiavari, Genoa, where he founded the Zappettini Foundation for Contemporary Art in 2003.

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**MAZZOLENI**

Mazzoleni was founded in Turin in 1986 by Giovanni and Anna Pia Mazzoleni, as a natural evolution of their private collection started in the 1950s. The historic Turin space, which occupies three floors of Palazzo Panizza, overlooking the city-centre Piazza Solferino, has since 2014 been flanked by the London gallery in Mayfair. Over the past three decades Mazzoleni has organised solo and group exhibitions of more than 200 prominent Italian and international artists from across the 20th century with an exhibition programme focused on museum-calibre Italian art from the post-war period and recently the contemporary panorama, working in close collaboration with artists' estates and foundations. All exhibitions are accompanied by fully illustrated monographs, with authoritative critical texts.

Under the leadership of Davide and Luigi Mazzoleni, in recent years Mazzoleni has intensified its international activities, participating in numerous art fairs, including Art Basel (Basel, Miami and Hong Kong), Artissima (Turin), FIAC (Paris), Frieze Masters (London), miart (Milan), and TEFAF (Maastricht and New York).

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

*Gianfranco Zappettini. The Golden Age*

Mazzoleni, Turin

Dates: 15 February – 7 April 2022 | Private view: Tuesday 15 February 2022, 4-8pm

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