

Q. Can you tell us a bit about how you started Numero Cromatico? And what do you focus most on running the space?

Numero Cromatico was founded in 2011, in a cultural context that did not take into account – at least in Europe – some topics that were crucial to us, namely the relationship between art and science, the theme of the avant-garde in the modern world, the artwork to be intended not as an object to be looked at but rather as a device that creates an interaction with the public (see: AA.VV., *Nodes* 0, 2012; AA.VV. *Nodes* 1, 2013). The dynamics towing the art world at that time did not constitute a role model to us.

We thus decided to form a research group by trying to define, at first, some aesthetic categories, strongly believing that art research had to confront itself with history, and not with temporary trends, and tackle aesthetic issues, rather than pleasing the public and collectors.

And so Numero Cromatico was born. The name comes from combinatorial geometry and it was a clear reference to an aesthetic approach based on calculus, a rigorous methodology as well as scientific experimentation lying at the root of art production.

Soon after, *Nodes* was also created – an art journal apt at disseminating our research projects and our approach – namely the relationship between art and neuroscience – spreading across the scientific world, yet still ignored in the art field.

A few years later we decided to rent a space that could function not only as a studio, or *Nodes* editorial headquarters, but also as a gathering place and exhibition space, thus open to the public.

Over the years we produced exhibitions as well as host other artists' works, performances, events and masterclasses, in order to spark off debate locally, nationally and internationally (Casicci, 2019; Ronchi, 2019; Piselli, 2019; Seganfreddo, 2019).

Today, Numero Cromatico is a group that works on different levels: as an art collective, a scientific research centre, a publishing house, an exhibition space, a graphic design studio, and a project having educational purposes. It is a hexahedron – to put it in geometric terms – a unique, multidimensional, multifaceted solid.

Q. As an artist, researcher and director of space, why do you think Artist-Led Spaces are important in the contemporary art world?

I don't think artist-run spaces are important. What I think is important is to spark off an international debate on the importance of art today. Artist-run spaces, however, are by their very nature, places where a lot of people come together and discuss, and for this reason they can be rather interesting.

Q. Compared to 2011, when it was first established, is there a specific way that the pandemic has changed your approach to putting on exhibitions or even in maintaining the studio?

A lot has changed since 2011 - the year in which we founded our group. We used to produce many activities, very often without having the opportunity to let the results of what we did settle in. In the planning of our public programme, we decided to reduce the number of events and focus on a smaller selection of activities, for example HOBIT, a festival on the relationship between art and neuroscience in which scholars and academics from all over the world participate - approaching its third edition in March 2023.

Q. Being based in Rome, the capital of Italy, how do you see the Italian art scene and the creative development currently taking form in the region? And why do you think there are many spaces run by artists in Rome?

20th century Italian art initiated several lines of research that are re-emerging today, somehow updated by contemporary artists. The last century saw Futurism, *Arte Programmata*, *Arte Concreta*, *Scuola di Piazza del Popolo*, *Arte Povera*, and Eventualism, among its major movements. These currents and their artists have left a great legacy for us younger generations. Art never sprouts from nothing, it can only be born in the wake of its masters. It is no coincidence that I have mentioned these Italian movements - they all have a deep relationship with Rome, a city with an extraordinary archaeological history, where artists have lived and passed by, something that is still happening today. Rome has always been populated by artists' studios and experimental and shared spaces, even before the artist-run space phenomenon, but it seems like journalists and the art world in general have only just noticed that.

Q. What is your vision or plan for the future? Also, if you can give advice to artists who would like to start an artist-led space.

We have never been an artist-run space, but rather a group of artists who opened their space to the public. Our intention was never to rent a space and share a studio, but instead to open our studio to the public with a specific programme of events. Today we are focusing on new artworks and art productions that we will present in our space but also in national and international museums. We are first and foremost an art collective and our activity today is mainly devoted to art production. Being better known today as compared to our status 10 years ago, we have many more projects designed beyond the limits of our exhibition space, which we now open to the public less often than we used to. To all those who want to establish such a space, I would suggest finding people with whom you can share ideals, research, and the exploration of uncharted territories. The artist-run space is only a transient tool, not the final goal.