

# PRINT QUARTERLY

SEPTEMBER 2023



VOLUME XL

NUMBER 3

# PRINT QUARTERLY

VOLUME XL

NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER 2023

---

## Contents

- A Copperplate of *The Dominican Martyrs of Japan* Reused by Murillo 251  
CLOE CAVERO DE CARONDELET
- Averkiy Kozachkovskiy and Western Sources of Kyiv Prints, 1720s–40s 265  
VITALII TKACHUK
- Thomas Rowlandson's *The Women of Muscovy* and Other Russeries 287  
After Jean-Baptiste Le Prince  
NICHOLAS J.S. KNOWLES
- Screenprinting in Postwar Italy: Nuvolo and the Invention of 'Serotipie' 302  
KATIE LARSON

## Notes 317

## Catalogue and Book Reviews

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>The Liefrinck Dynasty</i> 347<br>EDWARD H. WOUK             | Japanese Woodblock Prints from the<br>Ernst Grosse Collection in Freiburg 357<br>JEANNIE KENMOTSU |
| <i>James Gillray: A Revolution in Satire</i> 353<br>MARK BILLS | The Dalziel Archive and<br>Victorian Illustration 360<br>STEPHEN BANN                             |
-

Editor  
Rhoda Eitel-Porter

Administrators  
Elizabeth Mengoli  
Nigel Ip

Sub-Editor  
Virginia Myers

## Editorial Board

Clifford Ackley  
David Alexander  
Judith Brodie  
Paul Coldwell  
Marzia Faietti  
Richard Field  
Celina Fox  
David Freedberg  
Antony Griffiths

Martin Hopkinson  
Catherine Jenkins  
David Kiehl  
Fritz Koreny  
David Landau  
Séverine Lepape  
Giorgio Marini  
Jean Michel Massing  
Mark McDonald  
Nadine Orenstein

Peter Parshall  
Maxime Préaud  
Christian Rümelin  
Michael Snodin  
Naoko Takahatake  
Susan Tallman  
Ellis Tinios  
An Van Camp  
Henri Zerner

## Members of Print Quarterly Publications

Registered Charity No. 1007928

Chairman  
Antony Griffiths\*

David Alexander\*  
Nicolas Barker\*  
David Bindman\*  
Graham Brown  
Fabio Castelli  
Douglas Druick  
Rhoda Eitel-Porter  
David Freedberg  
George Goldner

Michael Kauffmann  
David Landau\*  
Jane Martineau\*  
Marilyn Perry  
Tom Rassieur  
Pierre Rosenberg  
Alan Stone  
Dave Williams  
Henri Zerner

\*Directors

Between November 1984 and November 1987 Print Quarterly was published in association with the J. Paul Getty Trust.

## Donors to the Print Quarterly Appeal

Anonymous Donors  
The Artemis Group  
Frank Auerbach  
David and Frances Bindman  
J. Bolten  
Fondation Custodia

Furio de Denaro  
Pat Gilmour  
Hill-Stone  
James and Clare Kirkman  
Leon Kossoff  
IFPDA

Alberto Milano  
Montreal Print Collectors' Society  
Felix Pollak  
The Arcana Foundation  
Ruth and Jacob Kainen  
Reba and Dave Williams

# Screenprinting in Postwar Italy: Nuvolo and the Invention of ‘Serotipie’

Katie Larson

In 1951 the Italian artist Giorgio Ascani (1926–2008), known by his nickname Nuvolo, invented a genre of artmaking called ‘serotipie’ (silk-type). Described by the poet and art critic Emilio Villa (1914–2003) as ‘painting with the means of serigraphy, or silkscreen, but employed within the limitations of the unique and unrepeatable example’, the technique is an early instance of screenprinting used for artistic rather than commercial ends in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Screenprinting would not gain widespread international popularity until artists associated with the Pop and Op Art movements began experimenting with the medium in the 1960s. In the early 1950s there was yet no term to describe the kind of work being done by Nuvolo – painting by means of screenprinting.

An untitled serotipia of 1954 exemplifies the physical immediacy of colour and facture found in the series (fig. 231). The print exhibits drips of bright red and pinkish cream over streaks of black, blue and yellow ink. The most visually arresting of the drips cuts through the centre of the composition, its pulsating red dividing the more subdued top third of the vertical register from the chaos of the bottom section. The gestural marks appear cropped, indicating that the composition had initially been executed on a larger surface. The final print is quite small, roughly the length of the average hand. The image thus invites intimacy through its compact scale while simultaneously suggesting a sense of immediacy through its free facture and highly keyed palette.

Nuvolo never disclosed how he made the serotipie, although certain facts about his process and the materials he employed are known. In the early 1950s there were few inks available for screenprinting, requiring him to create his own. The process necessitates

special paints that will filter through the open area of the stencil on the fine mesh of the screen yet not be so thin as to run beyond the edges of the artist’s design. Nuvolo produced inks with specific viscosities and pigment intensities to create the unique effects found in his images. He ground minerals and metal oxides, mixing them with resins and nitrocellulose and adding oil paint or tempera as a base to produce an exuberant array of colours (fig. 232).<sup>2</sup>

To begin the series, the artist likely dripped paint across an open screen. The initial pull of colours resulted in a split fountain blend, which it seems the artist reused. While keeping the excess ink as a reservoir, he dripped additional paint across the window. Nuvolo then ran the reserve colours over the new spontaneous facture. He claimed to create his polychromatic images in a single pull, rather than having each colour correspond to a passage under the screen, as is typical.<sup>3</sup> It is thus likely that he produced the series in succession: he would run a print, then, while reserving the ink, drip more paint across the screen, subsequently pulling the excess over the top to create a new image.

Evidence of this process can be seen in print after print, although charting the exact sequence of images is difficult given the large quantity of serotipie made by the artist and the significant compositional changes that occur from one to the next. A speculative example of a series progression shows an initial serotipia with red, black and white drips; the paper support is visible at bottom right (fig. 233). A second serotipia displays white, red and yellow ink with directional marbling of red and black in the background, possibly the reserve from the first image (figs. 234 and 235). A third exhibits much more clearly defined and colourful drips over a

I would like to thank Kyle Chaput, Benjamin Levy, and Marica Antonucci for their thoughtful comments on early drafts of this article. I would also like to thank Giada Tofanelli, Chiara Lorenzetti, and Paolo Ascanio at the Archivio Nuvolo for their generous support of my research.

1. E. Villa, *Mostra di serotipie di Lorri e Nuvolo*, Rome, 1958, unpaginated, ‘per serotipia è da intendere pittura con i mezzi della serigrafia, o silkscreen, ma condotta nei limiti

dell’esemplare unico e irripetibile’. G. Celant, ‘Nuvolo A Story of Materials’, in *Nuvolo and Postwar Materiality 1950–1965*, Milan, 2017, p. 17. Also R. Williams and D. Williams, ‘The Later History of the Screenprint’, *Print Quarterly*, iv, December 1987, no. 4, pp. 379–403.

2. Celant, op. cit., p. 20.

3. Author in conversation with Giada Tofanelli, Archivio Nuvolo, Città di Castello, 16 June 2021.



streaked background of red, white, black and yellow, possibly the combination of colours from the first two runs (fig. 236). These images had been mounted in various copies of an artist's book, published by Nuvolo in 1954 and so perhaps had been produced together.

In other examples, the ghost print of a previous composition can be seen within a new image. In one with a pink, blue, black and white background, saturated drips of magenta and teal lie prominently in the foreground (fig. 237). Transparent drizzles of white and black, which are likely transfers from an earlier print, are perceptible in the background. The effect is most often exhibited in serotipie that have lighter colours as their base. As the artist further

refined the technique, he began to produce more complex compositions in an astonishing array of colours. An example from 1955 shows a vortex of silver, pink and green whose swirling paint application seems to suggest a multi-directional pull (fig. 238). The layered, overlapping paints create a psychedelic all-over intensity.

Ultimately, each print is unique and unrepeatable, meaning that the serotipie are monoprints. They thus begat a certain type of serial production, one in which a new variation on the image was constantly being produced. Nuvolo employed screenprinting in a way that ran counter to its core function, namely the production of nearly identical multiples. Instead



231. Nuvolo, *Untitled*, 1954, from *Cinque invenzioni di Nuvolo e un poema di Emilio Villa*, screenprint, nitrocellulose on paper, image 194 x 125 mm, book 316 x 239 x 10 mm (Private collection. Image Paolo Ascani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).



232. Screenprinting materials from Nuvolo's studio (Image Paolo Ascani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).

of using the screen as a stencil to produce the same image repeatedly, he used it as a mediating element between the spontaneous dripping of his hand and the technical action of the printer's pull. Traces of both are left on the support, depending on the effect the artist wished to achieve. If desired, the chance appearance of the artist's drip could be maintained and kept well defined. On the other hand, as the squeegee pulled ink through the screen, it could be manipulated to leave directional marbling and streaks.

Nuvolo transformed the mechanical aspect of the technique into an expressive function that operated in dialogue with, rather than in the service of, creative production. He engaged with the material capacities of screenprinting to produce a new model of image making – one not bound to a matrix of reproduction or replication – but instead open to spontaneity, chance and experimentation.

Specific personal, technical and historical circumstances led Nuvolo to invent this new method of making. He grew up in the Umbrian town of Città di Castello in central Italy, which had historically been a centre for printmaking. Beginning in the eighteenth century, multiple book printing studios set up workshops in the city, including Giulio Manescalchi from 1716 to 1743, Ortensio Bersiani from 1765 to 1775, Fedele Toppi from 1778 to 1789, and Francesco Donati and Bartolomeo Carlucci 1799 to the present.<sup>4</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, Scipione Lapi

(1847–1903) founded the Tipo-Litografico Lapi, where both of Nuvolo's parents were employed until his father died in 1943 and the city was bombed by the Germans in 1944. After the war, Nuvolo became associated with the Scuola Tecnica Industriale per le Arti Grafiche (Industrial technical school for the graphic arts), where his close friend Angelo Baldelli (1907–84) was the director.<sup>5</sup>

Nuvolo grew up under Mussolini's dictatorship. In June 1940 Italy joined the war on Germany's side. At just fourteen, he was not old enough to be drafted, although a number of young men from Città di Castello were, including the future artist Alberto Burri (1915–95). Mussolini was removed from office in July 1943, and the new Italian government signed an armistice with the American and British Allies. The Germans subsequent horrific treatment of civilians, partisans and soldiers between 1943 and the end of the war in 1945 led Nuvolo, still a young teenager, to join local resistance efforts, becoming part of the Brigata Proletaria d'Urto 'San Faustino' in the Upper Tiber Valley.<sup>6</sup> It was during this time that he adopted his *nom de guerre* Nuvolo, meaning cloudy, which described his uncanny ability to appear and disappear silently into the landscape.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike their American and British peers, at the end of the war Italian artists faced particular philosophical challenges. Italy had been not only an Axis power but also an occupied territory, making Italians both the aggressors and the aggrieved. The memory of Mussolini's dictatorship evoked fraught feelings in citizens, who came to view the past twenty years of the dictatorship as a 'parenthesis' in national history – a historic aside to be skimmed over and, it was hoped, eventually forgotten altogether.<sup>8</sup> In the postwar period, artists promoted the idea of a *tabula rasa*, calling for historical amnesia and cultural rebirth. They sought to move away from traditions established under the fascist regime and reimagine the role of art in their new postwar world.

During and after the war Nuvolo produced decorative and ornamental artworks to help support his family. As Germano Celant relates, 'He [made] clay statuettes for Nativity scenes with his youngest brother Elvio, paint[ed] banners for the town's annual processions, create[d] scenery for provincial theaters

4. See A. Tacchini, 'La stampa a Città di Castello prima di Scipione Lapi (1538–1872)', *La stampa a Città di Castello: tipografie e tipografi dal 1538 ad oggi*, Città di Castello, 1987, pp. 1–22.

5. Author in conversation with Giada Tofanelli, Archivio Nuvolo, Città di Castello, 3 March 2022. See also Celant, op. cit., p. 19.

6. Ibid., p. 19.

7. L. Pratesi, 'I dimenticati dell'arte. Nuvolo, il rivoluzionario della serigrafia', *Artribune.com*, last modified 25 July 2021.

8. See C. Fogu, 'Italiani Brava Gente: The Legacy of Fascist Historical Culture on Italian Politics of Memory', in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, edited by R. Lebow, W. Kansteiner and C. Fogu, Durham and London, 2006, p. 149.



233. Nuvolo, *Untitled*, 1954, from *Cinque invenzioni di Nuvolo e un poema di Emilio Villa*, screenprint, nitrocellulose on paper, image 192 x 126 mm, book 316 x 239 x 10 mm (Private collection. Image Paolo Ascani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).

and perform[ed] small jobs decorating and restoring the churches of Santa Maria delle Grazie and San Domenico [...].<sup>9</sup> In 1949 he met Burri at an opening of the elder artist's one-man exhibition at Baldelli's Galleria dell'Angelo in Città di Castello. They became close friends and in 1950 Burri invited Nuvolo to move to Rome to work as his studio assistant.

Burri introduced Nuvolo to his circle, which included painters Roberto Matta Echaurren (1911–2002), Ettore Colla (1896–1968), Corrado Cagli (1910–76), Giuseppe Capogrossi (1900–72) and the poet Villa. Under the encouragement of Matta, a

Surrealist who had emigrated from New York to Rome at the end of 1948, the colleagues began to experiment with automatistic painting, drawing and writing. Automatism had initially been defined by Surrealist André Breton as writing without conscious thought or intention.<sup>10</sup> Matta and his colleagues adapted this idea to the visual arts, using the procedure as a way to relinquish authorial control, access the subconscious self and produce new, highly inventive imagery. Burri, Nuvolo and Villa began collaborating together, with Villa creating automatistic poetry, Burri producing spontaneous drawings and Nuvolo inventing his

9. Celant, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

10. A. Breton, *Surrealist Manifesto*, 1924, translated by R. Seaver

and H. Lane, in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, Ann Arbor, MI, 1969, p. 26.





234. Nuvolo, *Untitled*, 1954, from *Cinque invenzioni di Nuvolo e un poema di Emilio Villa*, screenprint, nitrocellulose on paper, image 227 x 145 mm, book 316 x 239 x 10 mm (Private collection. Image Paolo Ascani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).



235. Detail of fig. 234.



serotipie. The results of these experimentations are documented in two book projects, one by Villa and Burri entitled *17 variazioni su temi proposti per una ideologia fonetica* (17 variations on themes proposed for a phonetic ideology) (1955) and the other by Villa and Nuvolo, *Cinque invenzioni di Nuvolo e un poema di Emilio Villa* (Five inventions by Nuvolo and a poem by Emilio Villa) (1954).<sup>11</sup>

Villa ultimately became one of the earliest and most important interlocutors concerning Nuvolo's new technique.<sup>12</sup> The book offers a crucial key

for understanding the significance of painting by means of screenprinting for the artist. As the title indicates, the book publishes a single, long poem by Villa entitled *Sì, ma lentamente* (Yes, but slowly). It also includes a cover and five serotipie by Nuvolo. These are monoprints that have been made individually and then mounted into each book. The colophon indicates a print run of 60. This means that Nuvolo created 360 unique images, amounting to a substantial series of related works.

In the book, the authors actively seek to break

11. For more information on Villa and Burri's collaboration see K. Larson, 'Automatism and Autonomy in Postwar Rome: Alberto Burri and his Circle', *Oxford Art Journal*, XLV, December 2022, no. 3, pp. 383–403.

12. See E. Villa, 'Indicazioni', in *Arti Visive*, second series, November 1954, no. 1, unpaginated. Also, A. Tagliaferri, 'Nuvolo: Positivamente, non negativamente', in *Il Clandestino: Vita e opera di Emilio Villa*, Milan, 2016, p. 142.



236. Nuvolo, *Untitled*, 1954, from *Cinque invenzioni di Nuvolo e un poema di Emilio Villa*, screenprint, nitrocellulose on paper, image 162 x 87 mm, book 316 x 239 x 10 mm (Private collection. Image Paolo Ascani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).



237. Nuvolo, *Untitled*, 1954, from *Cinque invenzioni di Nuvolo e un poema di Emilio Villa*, screenprint, nitrocellulose on paper, image 245 x 134 mm, book 316 x 239 x 10 mm (Private collection. Image Paolo Ascani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).

down established hierarchies of form through the production of new linguistic and visual inventions. The poem published by Villa is long and dense, exhibiting a stream-of-consciousness voice, a fact reinforced by the poem's run-on sentences and unusual use of punctuation. An example of lines from the poem includes:

together we'll say the creations, the things essential  
and pressing. and what and how and under what  
rare foliage  
will be the new, the other, original sin. dominus

sit in corde, my love,  
meu bem. or the rest of you who know what rose  
what rose but what rose you're waiting for?  
(diremo insieme le creazioni, le cose scarnite  
e scottanti. e che e come e sotto che fogliame raro  
sarà il nuovo, l'altro, peccato originale. dominus  
sit in corde, amore mio,  
meu bem. o voialtri che sapete che rosa  
che rosa ma che rosa che state aspettando?)<sup>13</sup>

There are multiple language variations found in the text. As scholar and translator Dominic Siracusa has

13. E. Villa, 'Si, ma lentamente', in *Cinque invenzioni di Nuvolo e un poema di Emilio Villa*, Rome, 1954, translated by D. Siracusa, in

'Emilio Villa: Poet of Biblical Proportions', PhD thesis, UCLA, 2014, pp. 161–62.

identified, 'Dominus sit in corde' is Latin, translating to 'may the lord be in my heart' and is part of a text found in traditional Catholic mass. 'Meu bem' is Portuguese for 'my honey'. One of the most interesting features of the poem is the intentional mixing of high and low forms. In *Yes, but slowly* there exists an abundance of both vernacular and foreign terms. In addition, Villa includes references to scholarly (high) and everyday (low) undertakings, weaving together Latin sayings, selections from the Catholic liturgy, references to poems by T.S. Elliot, as

well as phrases from popular songs, nursery rhymes and crude sexual allusions.

The art historian Ara Merjian has identified a similar strategy in the work of postwar poet, film director and writer Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–75), describing it as 'positive contamination' or a dynamic interpenetration of high and low.<sup>14</sup> Merjian suggests that this was a technique employed by Pasolini in the 1960s to resist neo-capitalist monoculture. For Pasolini, the mixing of high and low defied uniformity by preserving social and semantic difference.

14. 'Pop: A Mimesis of the Future', in A. Merjian, *Against the Avant-Garde: Pier Paolo Pasolini, Contemporary Art, and Neocapitalism*,

Chicago and London, 2020, p. 94.



238. Nuvolo, *Untitled*, 1955, screenprint, nitrocellulose on paper, 130 x 130 mm (Private collection. Image Paolo Ascani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).





239. Nuvolo, *Untitled*, 1953, screenprint, nitrocellulose on paper on canvas, 370 x 560 mm (Private collection. Image Paolo Ascani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).

Working a decade earlier, Villa and Nuvolo's use of 'positive contamination' can be seen as part of a reconstruction effort to enact a *tabula rasa*: to move away from established traditions and reimagine what art might be by conflating the high claims of poetry and painting with the popular traditions of free association and printmaking.

For Nuvolo, the screen itself becomes a *tabula rasa* or a clean slate. This is literally enacted through his technique, by which the open matrix produces a new variation of a unique and unrepeatable image. It is also metaphorically presented through Nuvolo's aesthetic of the drip. In avant-garde practices from the 1950s with which he would have been familiar, the drip represented a type of automatic mark that emerged from the free, unregulated action of the artist's mind and body, a visual manifestation of subconscious impulses.<sup>15</sup> In theory, each of Nuvolo's drip screenprints

originates from a *tabula rasa*, or clearing of the mind. Both his serotipie and Villa's stream of consciousness writing represent new ways of seeing and approaching the world, creating a book that is suggestive of the nascent aesthetics of a new postwar reality.

The relation of Nuvolo's technique to automatic practices can be seen in two larger serotipie from 1953. Both consist of paper mounted on canvas, suggesting that he viewed them as screenprinted paintings. In the first image long, vertical marks in red and black are spaced intermittently across the support (fig. 239). Their arrangement creates a syncopated rhythm reminiscent of the musicality of jazz – a major point of reference for artists interested in automatism due to its emphasis on intuition and spontaneity.<sup>16</sup> In a second image drips and swirls of black, red and blue suggest looming figures that never fully resolve (fig. 240). The dark scene evokes a dream or nightmare

15. See A. Duran, 'Abstract Expressionism's Italian Reception: Questions of Influence', in *Abstract Expressionism: The International Context*, edited by J. Marter, New Brunswick, NJ, 2007, pp. 138–51.

16. For the influence of jazz on the avant-garde in postwar Rome, R. Golan, 'Renato Guttuso's *Boogie Woogie in Rome* (1953): A Geopolitical Tableau', *Art History*, XLIII, November 2020, no. 5, pp. 1,008–37.



pulled deep from one's subconscious.

Nuvolo may have seen drip paintings by Jackson Pollock at the American Pavilion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale or at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection at the Museo Correr in Venice in 1950, the year he began working as Burri's studio assistant. Alfred Barr had organized 'Gorky, Pollock, De Kooning' in the American pavilion, which showcased the drip paintings *Number 1A, 1948*, *Number 12, 1949* and *Number 23, 1949*. Guggenheim produced a blockbuster exhibition that featured Pollock's paintings from 1942 to 1949, including important early works *Full Fathom Five*, *Reflections of the Big Dipper* and *Sea Change*. Pollock and Hans Hoffmann are known to have made

screenprints by painting their designs directly on the screen to produce the stencil.<sup>17</sup> Both often applied paint or ink by hand after printing.<sup>18</sup> It is improbable that Nuvolo would have seen these prior to inventing his serotipie, which do not rely on a stencil but instead use an open screen to create unique monotypes.

It seems more likely that he developed the technique based on conversations taking place in his artistic circle in Rome. Experimentation with non-traditional processes and media had become a cornerstone of his colleagues' practices. Most tellingly, Burri's collaboration with Villa in *17 variazioni* exhibited a similar expansive approach to automatistic making – the book marked the first time the artist used

17. Pollock is known to have made three silkscreens, adding ink and gouache later to the prints. All are untitled, c. 1938–41. According to the 1978 Pollock catalogue raisonné, one was in the collection of Charles Cecil Pollock (no. 941). A second was listed as on loan to the National Collection of Fine Arts, DC now known as the Smithsonian American Art Museum (no. 942). It no longer appears to be in the collection and

I have not been able to trace its whereabouts. The third was listed as lost, last known to be in a private collection in Brazil (no. 943); F. O'Connor, 'Water Based and Mixed Media 1938–1941', in *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works, IV*, New York, NY, 1978, pp. 24–26.

18. See Williams and Williams, op. cit., pp. 381–82.



240. Nuvolo, *Untitled*, 1953, screenprint, oil and nitrocellulose on paper on canvas, 372 x 560 mm (Private collection. Image Paolo Asciani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).



241. Ettore Colla, *Cover*, from *Arti Visive* (January 1954), screenprint, 247 x 345 mm (Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art).

burning as a form of creative expression. The burned marks become an elaboration on and extension of his automatic drawings, exhibiting the same quickness in execution and relinquishment of conscious control.<sup>19</sup>

Since the late 1940s, Burri had incorporated unusual materials like tar, pumice, burlap, thread and plastic into his paintings. Burri, Matta and Villa helped to establish an artistic milieu in which radical

19. See Larson, *op. cit.*, pp. 398–99.



242. Ettore Colla, *Cover*, from *Arti Visive* (November 1954), screenprint, 247 x 345 mm (Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art).

approaches to artmaking were encouraged. Within this context, Mimmo Rotella invented his *décollages*, or commercial posters torn down and reconstituted by the artist as compositions. He first began making

them in 1953 in Rome and soon thereafter Villa curated a show that featured the work at the Zattere del Ciriola, helping to launch Rotella's career.<sup>20</sup> Rotella and Nuvolo showed together in 1956 in

20. *Mimmo Rotella, catalogo ragionato. Volume primo, 1944–1961*, edited

by G. Celant and A. Soldaini, Milan, 2016, p. 286.



an exhibition entitled 'Le correnti orfiche' (The Orphic currents) in Palermo, organized by Roman gallerist Topiassa Alliata. Nuvolo's progressive approach to screenprinting can be tied directly to the experimentalism fostered in his avant-garde circle during the first half of the 1950s.

For Nuvolo printmaking represented a unique artistic sphere that was not widely explored by his contemporaries in the first half of the decade. He earned his living in Rome as both a studio assistant and commercial screenprinter, supplementing his income by working as a photographic engraver for a small advertising firm.<sup>21</sup> In 1951 he began assisting in the studio of Burri's close friend Colla. Colla decided to launch an arts journal entitled *Arti Visive* (Visual Arts) in 1952. Nuvolo became actively involved in its production from 1954 until the publication folded in 1958.<sup>22</sup> He screenprinted all of the covers, in some instances working with the company Cocchi e Papi who were tasked with making the photographic clichés that Nuvolo transferred and printed. Colla generally designed or chose the imagery reproduced on the cover of each issue, while Nuvolo was responsible for the layout (figs. 241 and 242).<sup>23</sup> Based on his recommendation, the journal was printed in Città di Castello, often with Baldelli and the Scuola Tecnica Industriale per le Arti Grafiche, rather than in Rome.

Colla and Nuvolo's design for the journal seems to take inspiration from the Swiss rationalist aesthetic introduced in Italy by Milan-based Studio Boggeri and *Campo Grafico* (The graphic field), a magazine for graphics, aesthetics and technique. It is also likely that *Arti Visive* followed the example set by the French architect and artist André Bloc (1896–1966) in his journal *Art d'Aujourd'hui* (Art of today), which was published from 1949 to 1954. Beginning in 1950, the journal's covers featured similar abstract imagery executed in screenprint. Bloc often requested an artist to supply an image that was then reproduced by a workshop, typically Atelier Arcay (Paris), Ateliers Renson (Paris), or Edition Domberger (Stuttgart). Bloc's interest in design is apparent in the journal, the aesthetic of which evolved over the course of its

five years in publication. He dedicated two issues to printmaking and the graphic arts, neither of which, however, address the contemporary use of screenprinting in any meaningful way.<sup>24</sup> It is clear, nonetheless, that Bloc had become interested in the medium for both its reproductive and artistic capacities. In 1953 he commissioned Wilfredo Arcay (1925–97) to produce a portfolio entitled *Maîtres d'Aujourd'hui* (Masters of today), which included sixteen reproductive screenprints after paintings by established European artists.<sup>25</sup> As a result of the financial success of the venture, in 1954 he commissioned a second portfolio, which was shown at the Gallerie Denise René and featured in an article in *Art d'Aujourd'hui*.<sup>26</sup> Working with younger, emerging artists, Bloc invited the group to exhibit various states, the final editions, and the paintings or sculptures from which they had been reproduced. Artists included Bloc, Bozzolini, Breuil, Dewasne, Deyrolle, Dias, Dumitresco, Istrati, Jacobsen, Lacasse, Leppien, Marie Raymond, Mortensen, Pillet, Poliakov and Vasarely. Victor Vasarely (1906–97) had participated in the Hungarian Bauhaus, where screenprinting was taught and became an important advocate of the medium in Paris alongside Arcay and Bloc.

In the 1954 issue of *Art d'Aujourd'hui*, two articles discuss the show; both consider the works largely in terms of their formal qualities and whether or not the various styles lend themselves to graphic translation. The authors reveal that the only artist to have personally experimented with screenprinting was Marie Raymond (1908–88), who chose to radically change her print from one state to the next.<sup>27</sup> Photos included in the article show Raymond, Natalia Dumitresco (1915–97), Alexandre Istrati (1915–91), and Richard Mortensen (1910–93) in the Arcay print workshop.

In emulation of *Art d'Aujourd'hui*, the Rome-based Art Club Edition published *Arte Astratta Italia 1955* (Italian abstract art 1955), which included screenprints by fourteen Italian artists: Afro, Balla, Conte, Dorazio, Perilli, Prampolini, Munari, Radice, Soldati, Moretti, Nativi, Magnelli, Severini, Jarema. These were Nuvolo's colleagues, many of whom had worked

21. C. Sarateanesi, 'Intervista a Giorgio Ascani ('Nuvolo')', in *Burri grafica. Opera completa*, Città di Castello, 2003, p. 322. Also, G. Celant and E. Bottinelli, 'Chronology', in Celant, op. cit., p. 45.

22. See 'Editor's Note', in *Arti Visive*, second series, January 1954, no. 6–7, unpaginated.

23. S. Pinto, 'Catalogo', in *Colla*, edited by G. de Marchis and S. Pinto, Rome, 1972, p. 53.

24. 'Cinquante ans de gravure', *Art d'Aujourd'hui*, series 1, April 1950, no. 9, unpaginated; 'Arts Graphiques', *Art d'Aujourd'hui*

series 3, February–March 1952, no. 3, unpaginated.

25. Artists included Arp, Balla, Robert Delaunay, Sonia Delaunay, Gleizes, Herbin, Kandinsky, Klee, Kupka, Leger, Magnelli, Mondrian, Picabia, Tauber-Arp, Van Doesburg and Villon.

26. M.S. and H.W., 'Deuxième album de sérigraphies éditions art d'aujourd'hui exposition Gallerie Denise René', *Art d'Aujourd'hui*, series 5, November 1954, no. 7, pp. 28–29. For more on this project see Williams and Williams, op. cit., p. 389.

27. M.S. and H.W., op. cit., p. 29.





243. Nuvolo, *Scacco matto*, 1953, printed paper collage on canvas, 1,600 x 1,160 mm (Nuvolo estate. Image Paolo Ascani, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, 2022).

with him on the publication of *Arti Visive*. A letter from the president of Art Club, dated 1955, asks members to submit images to be reproduced by a print studio (Santurri e Lopizzo) for the purpose of a forthcoming exhibition.<sup>28</sup> Both the French and Italian portfolios were exhibited in May 1955 at the Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna in Rome in an exhibition entitled 'Le arti plastiche e la civiltà meccanica' (Plastic arts and the mechanic civilization).<sup>29</sup> The use of screenprinting appears to have been a unique exception for most artists in the show, who did not return to the technique outside of the realm of publication. The screenprints directly reproduced paintings, sculptures, or gouaches made by those artists or, in the case of Raymond, replicated her signature style. In both portfolios, there was never an effort to explore or expand the technical capacities of the medium, as demonstrated by Nuvolo.

In Italy screenprinting was practiced primarily within commercial contexts during the 1940s and early 1950s when most official instruction was aimed at technicians. Nuvolo owned one such manual by Argon Service Ltd, published in 1951 and reissued in four editions over the course of the decade.<sup>30</sup> Entitled *Elementi di serigrafia*, the book provided directions on how to create screenprints and care for the presses that Argon Service Ltd. sold. Instead, the use of lithography, off-set lithography, and letterpress were far more established, with artists like Fortunato Depero (1892–1960) creating highly celebrated posters and graphic design projects in these media.<sup>31</sup>

While the history of screenprinting in the United States has been carefully studied by art historians, research on its use in Europe before 1960 remains in its infancy.<sup>32</sup> As Francis Carey and Antony Griffiths relate, 'the story was largely one of isolated experimentation by a small body of curious artists, which from the mid-fifties onwards became more concerted'.<sup>33</sup> Screenprinting was taught at the Hungarian Bauhaus, and possibly the German Bauhaus. A workshop was established by Cesar

Domela (1900–92) in Paris in 1934. As American artists relocated to Europe in the postwar period, they helped spread awareness of and interest in serigraphy as an artistic medium.<sup>34</sup> This view was assisted by exhibitions organized by the Office of War Information and the Department of State as well as the circulation of the journal *Serigraph Quarterly* (1946–50).<sup>35</sup> As Carey and Griffiths note, American Dorr Bothwell (1902–2000) moved to Paris in 1949 and taught the technique to a number of European artists. Soon thereafter, Edgar Pillet (1912–96) and Arcay began experimenting with the medium. In England, Francis Carr (1919–2013) became a major advocate, publishing a number of articles on the technique and running the screen process printing department at the London School of Printing from 1954 to 1963.<sup>36</sup> Nuvolo, like his English counterpart, became a major advocate of the medium, teaching those who were interested and promoting its instruction in art schools across Italy.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, he created hundreds of serotipie, which reveal in what art historian Germano Celant characterizes as 'the transposition of fluid paint onto canvas'.<sup>38</sup> Painting by means of screenprinting, however, somewhat limited the scale of the works. As a result, Nuvolo began to collage various pieces together to create a more physically imposing series known as the *Scacchi* (checkerboards; fig. 243), begun in 1953. The scacchi combine elements of printmaking, collage, painting and graphic design, the latter of which Nuvolo drew on to organize the individual serotipie into a larger gestalt. The geometric scaffolding resembles the layout of many of Burri's *Sacchi* (burlaps), or collage-paintings made from burlap, plastic and thread. By organizing their compositions in this regulated manner, both artists were able to focus instead on material experimentation. For Nuvolo, the serotipie and scacchi ultimately represent the beginning of a printmaking career marked by radical invention.

28. G. Simongini, 'Image Appendix', *Art Club 1945–1964*, Pietrasanta, 2014, p. 130.

29. G. Simongini, 'The New Italy for the Art Club 1945–1964', *Art Club 1945–1964*, Pietrasanta, 2014, p. 26.

30. E. Colapinto, *Elementi di serigrafia*, Milano, 1953.

31. I have not been able to find evidence that Fortunato Depero created any of his posters using screenprinting. See *Depero Pubblicitario: dall'auto-réclame all'architettura pubblicitaria*, edited by G. Belli and B. Avanzi, Milan, 2007.

32. R. Williams and D. Williams, 'The Early History of the Screenprint', *Print Quarterly*, III, December 1986, no. 4, pp. 287–321.

33. E. Carey and A. Griffiths, '1950s Lithographs and

Screenprinting', in *Avant-Garde British Printmaking, 1914–1960*, London, 1990, p. 221.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 220–21 and 226.

35. Williams and Williams, 1987, op. cit., p. 387.

36. Carey and Griffiths, op. cit., p. 221.

37. 'La serigrafia nelle scuole', Nuvolo to Soprintendenza di Roma, 1961, Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, unpaginated. Italian Eugenio Carmi did not begin producing screenprints with printer Brano Horvat until 1959. His opening of the Galleria del deposito in Genoa in 1963 helped spread the popularity of screenprinting in northern Italy.

38. Celant, op. cit., p. 21.



# NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Alexander Adams is a British graphic artist, art critic and art historian. He is a specialist in Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism and School of London prints and has published numerous articles as well as books on *Degas* and *Magritte* (both Munich, 2022) and *Women & Art* (Washington, DC, 2022).

Ilaria Andreoli is scientific coordinator at the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA), Paris. A specialist of early modern book illustration especially in Italy and France, she is the editor-in-chief of the journal *L'Illustrazione* and co-editor of *The Art of Renaissance Book* (2023).

Stephen Bann is Emeritus Professor of History of Art and Senior Research Fellow at Bristol University. He has published two studies of French nineteenth-century visual culture with a focus on reproductive engraving, *Parallel Lines* (2001) and *Distinguished Images* (2013).

Alessandra Baroni Vannucci is Professor of Art History at the Scuola dell'Arte della Medaglia, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca di Stato, Rome. Previously, she was curator of the Bartolini collection of drawings and prints in Arezzo. She has published on early prints in Florence, Stradanus and Medicean print collecting.

Mark Bills is Director of Gainsborough's House, Sudbury, UK, and author of *The Art of Satire: London in Caricature* (2006) and *Samuel William Fores* (2014). His research interests include satire and the development of illustration of seventeenth literature.

David Bindman is Emeritus Professor of the History of Art, University College London and co-editor with H. L. Gates, Jr. of *The Image of the Black in Western Art* series. His research interests include eighteenth-century British art and caricature, especially William Blake.

Judith Brodie is retired Curator of American and Modern Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, and a member of this journal's Editorial Board. She is co-editor of *Three Centuries of American Prints* (2016) and co-author of *Yes, No, Maybe: Artists Working at Crown Point Press* (2013).

Cloe Cavero de Carondelet is a Research Fellow at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. She is an art historian focusing on the early modern Iberian world, with particular interest in the intersections between images, religion and conflictual encounters.

Sung Moon Cho, an independent researcher, holds a PhD in art history from Sorbonne University. Her dissertation explores French tableware (ceramics and glass) from 1910 to 1960 (Paris, forthcoming) and her current research extends to contemporary Murano household glass.

Marie Gispert is an associate professor at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. A specialist in Franco-German artistic relations and German printmaking in the early twentieth century, she has published essays and books on Max Klinger, Max Beckmann, Otto Dix and Käthe Kollwitz.

Daniel Godfrey specializes in Italian Renaissance and German Romantic prints and drawings, having worked on these subjects in the British Museum. At Paragon Press he has co-edited two catalogues of Charles Booth-Clibborn's collection of German Romantic prints and drawings.

Jeannie Kenmotsu is Curator of Asian Art at the Portland Art Museum, in Portland, Oregon, and Senior Fellow, Mellon Society of Fellows at Rare Book School. Her exhibitions and research have covered Japanese prints and illustrated books from the Edo period to the present.

Nicholas J.S. Knowles is an independent scholar and collector, currently working on a catalogue raisonné of all Thomas Rowlandson's prints. He contributed to the cataloguing of Rowlandson's prints in the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum.

Katie Larson is an Assistant Professor of Art History at Baylor University and served as the 2021–22 Scholar-in-Residence at Magazzino Italian Art. She has published articles on post-war Italian art in *Art Journal* (2020) and *Oxford Art Journal* (2022).

Patricia Mainardi is Professor Emeritus of Art History at the Graduate School of the City University of New York. She has published widely in nineteenth-century art, most recently *Another World: Nineteenth-Century Illustrated Print Culture* (2017).

Louis Marchesano is Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He has published widely on French printmaking from 1650 to 1820, seventeenth-century Italian prints and more recently on Käthe Kollwitz.

David Maskill was a senior lecturer in art history at Victoria University of Wellington, NZ, from 1993 until 2019. In 2021 he founded Mariette Prints [www.marietteprints.co.nz](http://www.marietteprints.co.nz) specializing in New Zealand and Pacific prints.

Mark McDonald is the curator responsible for Italian, Spanish, Mexican and early French prints and illustrated books at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and a member of the Editorial Board of this journal. He is the author of a six-volume publication of the print collection of Cassiano dal Pozzo.

Constance McPhee is a Curator in the Department of Drawings and Prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. For more than a decade she has been creating website entries for the museum's holdings of over 1,000 lithographs by Nathaniel Currier and Currier & Ives, assisted since 2017 by Marilyn Symmes.

Véronique Meyer is Professor of History of Art at the University of Poitiers. Her research focuses on interpretative engraving and the relationship between image and text in prints. She is the author of *Pour la plus grande gloire du roi: Louis XIV en thèses* (2017).

Vitalii Tkachuk is a visiting researcher at Goethe University Frankfurt examining the adaptation of western graphics in the Kyiv Caves Monastery printing house. His doctoral thesis was on Orthodox printed antimemorial in the Kyiv Metropolis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Edward H. Wouk is Reader and Head of the Department of Art History and Cultural Practices at the University of Manchester. Recent publications include *Albrecht Dürer's Material World* (2023) and a critical edition of Lampsonius's *Life of Lambert Lombard* (2021).

