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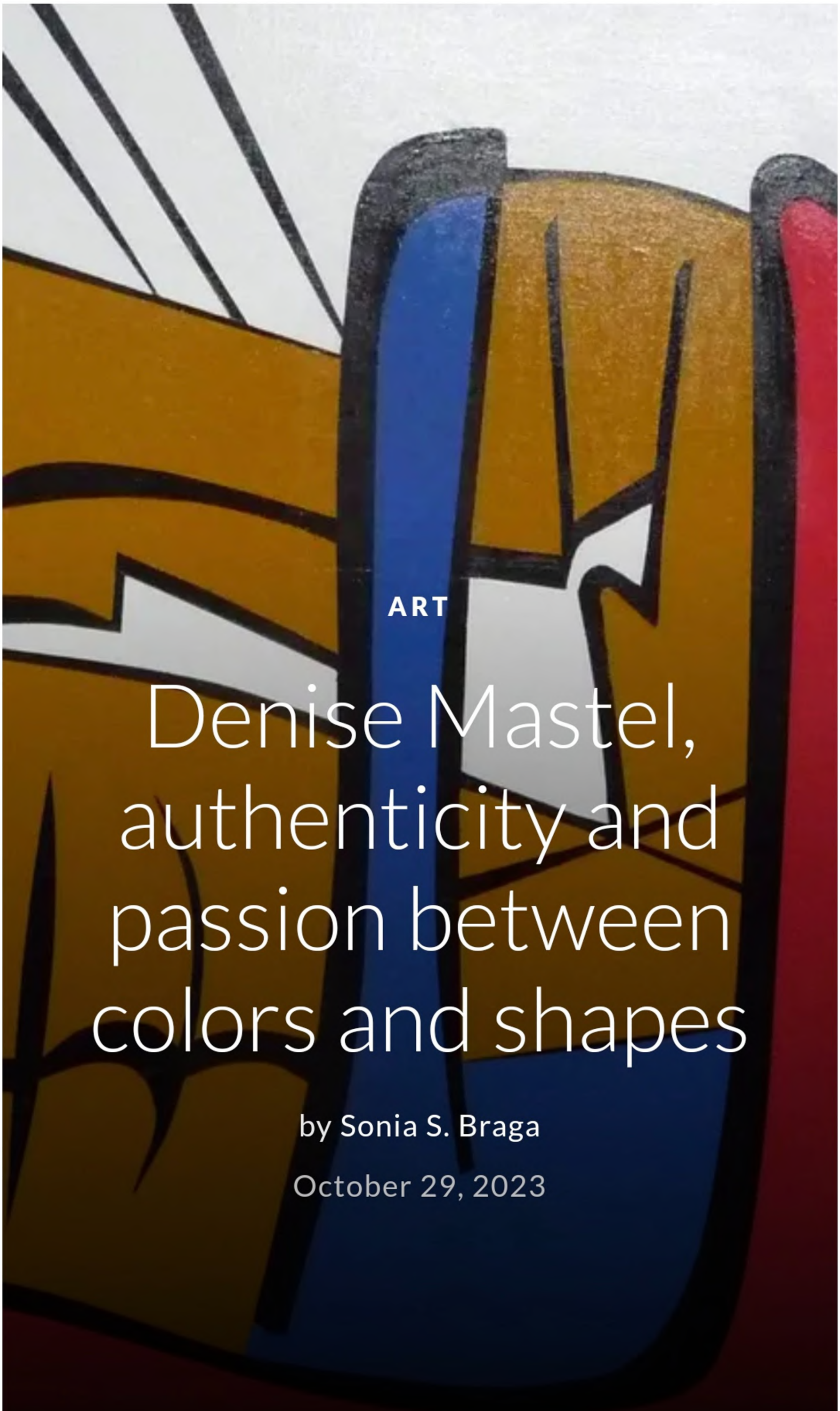


ART

Denise Mastel, authenticity and passion between colors and shapes

by Sonia S. Braga

October 29, 2023

Paintings and sculptures that look at nature and surprising design creations: meeting with Denise Mastel and her art beyond the avant-garde.

Denise Mastel, authenticity and passion between colors and shapes

A bright and at times material texture, a geometric tangle that goes beyond the creative need to abstract , as if the path were difficult to delimit and the artist's eye had already gone further, beyond. Beyond the support, beyond the device, in search of space, of elsewhere. **Denise Mastel** , from Ampezzo by birth and from Como by love, is an artist difficult to define.

Denise Mastel, *Cyclist* , 2022. Photo courtesy The artist.

Calder, Miró and futurism

Classical and contemporary references are very clear in his canvases and sculptures, such as his love for futurism **,** the lessons of **Calder** and **Miró , and an almost *Fauvist*** chromatic impetus .

But his speech goes beyond the simple pictorial and sculptural dimension to cross over into design, into the representation of space, almost in search of an interior double. The synthesis of his work is undoubtedly the ***Tempo primo*** chair-sculpture , an "ironic" object in which decoration and function seem, at least in appearance, to go together.

Denise Mastel, *First Time* . Photo courtesy The artist.

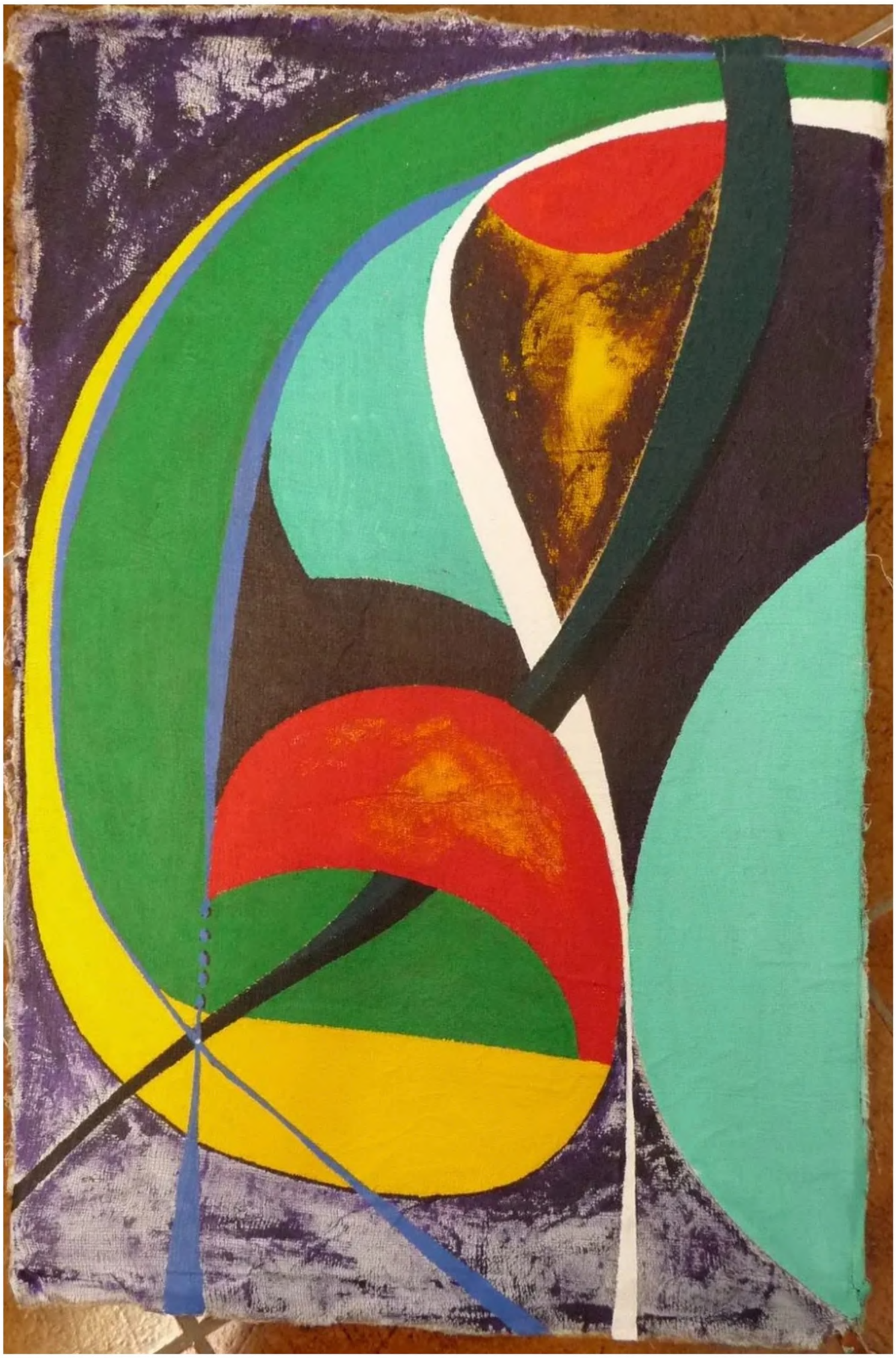
Truly enlightening, in this sense, are the words of **Vittorio Sgarbi in the Artisti '23** brochure , which as usual hit the mark: «The sculpture of the interesting artist and designer fits into the space between solids and voids in a natural, broken harmony only by stylized phyto-zoomorphic elements that mark the variations in volume. The work seems to be the root of a tree that returns to the surface to welcome the user."

Denise Mastel, *Red*, 2022. Photo courtesy The artist.

First time or the imitation of nature

Tempo primo models space as a natural element, almost as if it were not a work of art created by the hand of an artist. His appearance overturns the environment in which it is placed, plays perfectly with the absences-presences of the volumes, is itself a reflection on the origins of gaze and perception. And, after all, to fully know and appreciate the work of Denise Mastel, it is useful to see her at work, in her atelier home in **Carimate** , in **Lombardy** , home to the splendid **Castle** (1345), renovated in 1874 in neo-Gothic style by the architect **Ercole Balossi Merlo.**

The large hexagonal-plan residence tells of colors and shapes, of refined decorations that embellish the walls and run from inside to outside creating an unmistakable atmosphere. A chromatic mixture, as the artist states, which «gives brightness and a lot of reflection even during the winter period», a love for color - the same as the canvases - which pushes the visitor to get lost in this pleasant labyrinth of light.



Denise Mastel, *First shoot of the blade of grass* , 2017.
Photo courtesy The artist.

An artist's house a few kilometers from Milan

An artist's house that evokes other similar experiences, not least the extraordinary futurist house of **Giacomo Balla** , an experimental laboratory created by the artist with his daughters **Luce and Elica** . In both, aesthetics and functionality coexist, almost as if **FuturBalla** 's "futurist reconstruction of the universe" has found an unexpected epigone a few kilometers from **Milan** . This expressive need is also found in his activity as a designer, capable of ranging from furnishings to design objects.

Denise Mastel, *Harmonious Mind* , 2017. Photo courtesy The artist.

Milena Milani's intuition

The person who was best able to outline Denise's character and inspiration is certainly **Milena Milani** (1917-2013), Ligurian artist, journalist and writer, author of the famous novel (and literary case) ***The Girl Named Giulio.*** «I have asked myself many times why Denise Mastel envelops herself, and us who watch, in those heavy and corroded chains, motifs that repeat themselves in a dramatic and anguished obsession. Her paintings do not leave us indifferent, there is a problem in there that affects us all »writes Milani. «With her painting she tells us that she too, like everyone else, is involved in restlessness».

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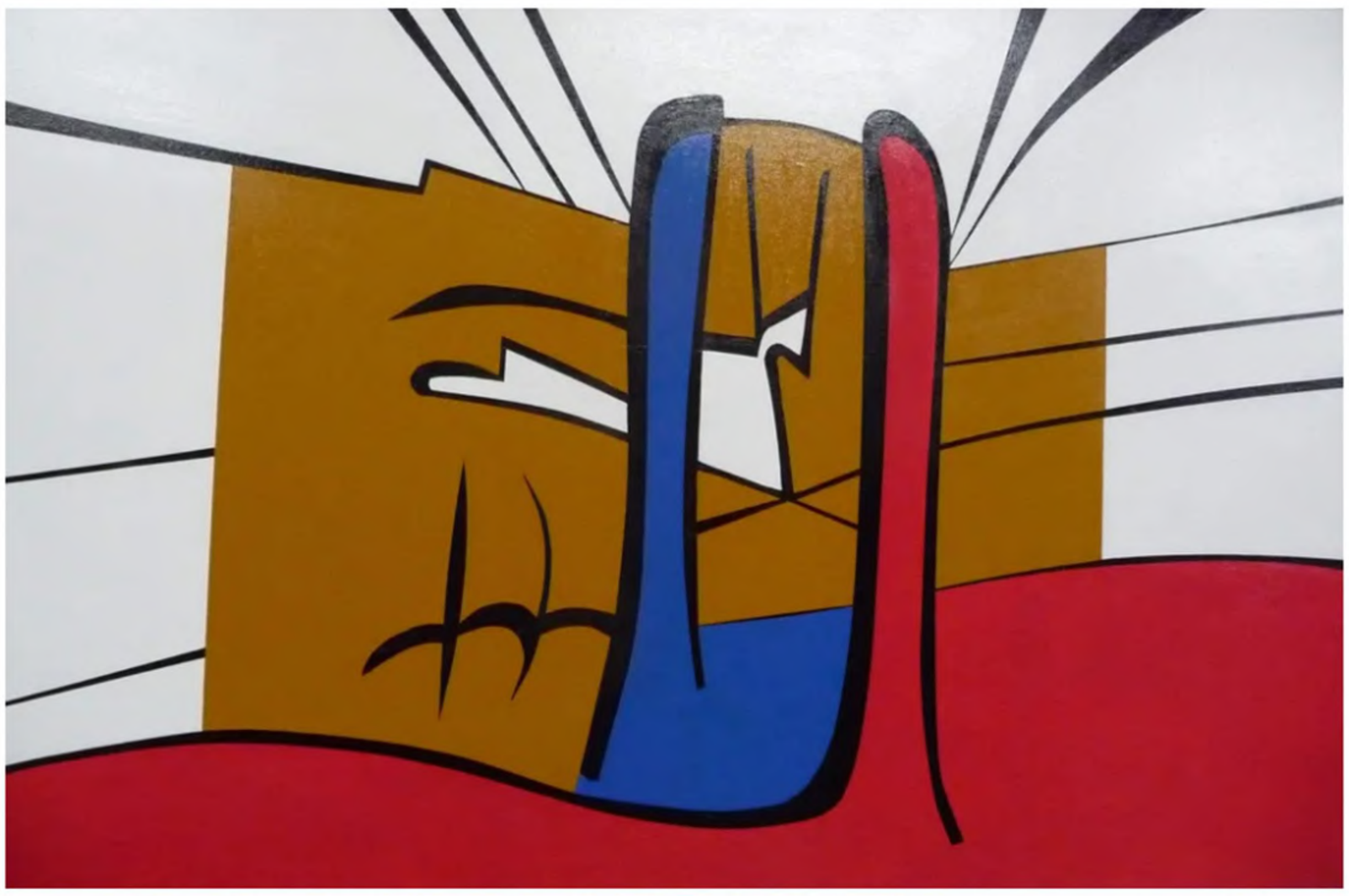
Photo courtesy The artist.

It is one of the keystones of Denise Mastel's art, the ability to conceal restlessness, to transfigure it thanks to the masses and palettes she masters. «I paint» she stated, «because I need to break the fear, I have to try to understand what evil is, without losing sight of the reality of everyday life. I have the presumption of being able to denounce the risks, the selfishness, the pitfalls: if I succeed it may bring me closer to salvation." Her artistic journey, counterpointed by authentic passion, still has many dark sides to reveal to us.



Denise Mastel, *Scent of Rain* , 2022. Photo courtesy The artist.

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