

CONCETTO SPAZIALE NO. 8 (1961)

SPATIAL CONCEPT NO. 8 (1961)

BY

LUCIO FONTANA (ANGETINA, 1899 - 1968)

OIL ON CANVAS, SIGNED DIAGONALLY ON THE BACK: FONTANA



Painting before restoration

About the artist

Lucio Fontana is famous for his monochrome paintings with boldly made holes in the canvas. His perforated artworks are created under the heading 'Concetto Spaziale' or 'Spacial Concept'. His theories and concepts for performing the punctures are written in his first and second «Spazialismo» manifestos in 1947 and 1948. As an artist he is fascinated by the inventions of his time as radio and television, and also the possibilities of space travel, through which the third dimension becomes more tangible. He searches for possibilities to connect the two-dimensional framed painting with the (infinite) space surrounding it, the third dimension. In 1948 Lucio Fontana incorporates the third dimension in his canvases by puncturing them with holes. Ten years later, in 1958, he first performs his most famous gesture, known as 'the cut'.

Acquisition

May and Max Henriquez purchase this painting at the Galerie Anderson-Mayer in Paris in 1964. They bring it back with them to their home on Curaçao.

Condition Report

The canvas, wood and frame all appear to be in good condition. Dust has gathered on the painting as well as insect secretions. All over the painting cracks can be observed and the paint is brittle, due to the local climate. Over the years the condition of the paintings deteriorates rapidly. Cracks appear in the layer of paint and even more serious damages when small flakes start falling off. At certain locations the paint has flaked off or is curling up. The diagonal cracks appear to be caused by the swelling and shrinking of the canvas which is due to the climate.



Conservation

Cracks and dryness. First all cracks in the paint are treated with a special solution in order to attach the paint back to the canvas. At the same time the dryness is treated by carefully adding the same liquid in small amounts with an extremely fine brush, as can be seen to the left.

Cleaning the surface. Over the years a lot of dust has gathered on the surface, but also in the cracks and on the raised edges of the painting. The dark spots are marks left behind by insects.



After removal of the dust, dirt and insect secretion the gloss of the paint can surface once again. (Pictures above: right is dirty, left is clean)

On the image to the right, the dust has been partly removed. The cleaned part is clearly recognizable in the right hand corner.



Repositioning flakes. Like a puzzle, loose paint-flakes are fitted where they used to be as can be seen below. Then missing pieces have to be replaced. First the hole is filled up with priming material. The priming is applied in several layers. After each application the priming is allowed to dry and set.



Mixing Paints. The images above show the search for the right shade of red. Once the exact color has been found, the color can be applied, as can be seen in the picture to the right.



Backside. The back of the painting is also treated by the restorer. For instance the wedges are carefully repaired. And the damaged inventory sticker from the Martha Jackson Gallery, is conserved as well. The above images show the sticker before and after it has been cleaned and adhered to Japanese paper.



The wedges are part of the wooden frame on which the canvas is stretched. They are placed in the corners to regulate the tension of the canvas. These wooden pieces are originals and are carefully filled up, glued and placed back.

Finally the back is protected with cotton fabric.

