

PEOPLE

artnet Asks: Alberto Biasi Fills in the Blanks

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Alberto Biasi, LEFT: *Dinamica Rettangolare* (1998). RIGHT: *Variable Round Image* (2005). Courtesy of GR Gallery.

You might not have heard of [Alberto Biasi](#), but you should. A pioneer of Kinetic and Op Art, he founded the groundbreaking avant-garde collective Gruppo N in 1960, leading the way for a generation of artistic experiments into the optical and physical possibilities of art. The good news is you have a chance to catch up, because his current exhibition "[A Dynamic Meditation](#)" at [GR Gallery](#) in New York is on view through May 22, and offers viewers the chance to experience a variety of dizzying artworks in person, ranging from the 1960s to the present.

We got a chance to ask Alberto Biasi about the history of his movement, and how much art has changed since he entered the game. The following interview is translated from Italian by Eva Zanardi, [GR Gallery](#)'s director of communications.

Tell us about the formation of Gruppo Enne, and how Kineticism became the focus of your work.

First things first, there were two Gruppo Ennes: the first was named Gruppo Ennea, from the Greek numeral nine, so-called because we were nine young artists attending the architecture school of the University of Venice. After the disbandment of Gruppo Ennea, a second group, the one founded by Massironi and I, was created: Gruppo N, so-called because N is an 'open' number. Other members of that group included Ennio Chiggio, Toni Costa, and Edoardo Landi. Gruppo N artwork attracted the attention

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of Galleria Apollinaire in Milan and, once in Milan, we came into contact with Azimuth Gallery and Gruppo T—our competition at the time. Gruppo T claimed they were the first Programmed Art and Kinetic Art group, but it wasn't true. We were the first one in Italy!

My art is not really kinetic, but rather dynamic. Kinetic art physically moves and is powered by a motor, whereas my artworks actually needed to be moved by hand, by the viewer. In 1963, the art critic Giulio Carlo Argan gave the best definition of my artwork, saying that "Biasi and Gruppo N create 'virtual art,' in the sense that dynamism is actually ingrained in the artwork; it is the viewer who actually activates it, and thus the viewer becomes the co-author of the artwork."

I am a kind musical instrument manufacturer, the viewer is the musician, and the artwork is co-created by the artist and viewer.



Alberto Biasi, LEFT: *Labili Recinti attorno al Rosso* (2002). RIGHT: *Piove con il Sereno* (1999). Courtesy of GR Gallery.

What kinds of patterns, routines, or rituals do you have? Where do you find inspiration for your work?

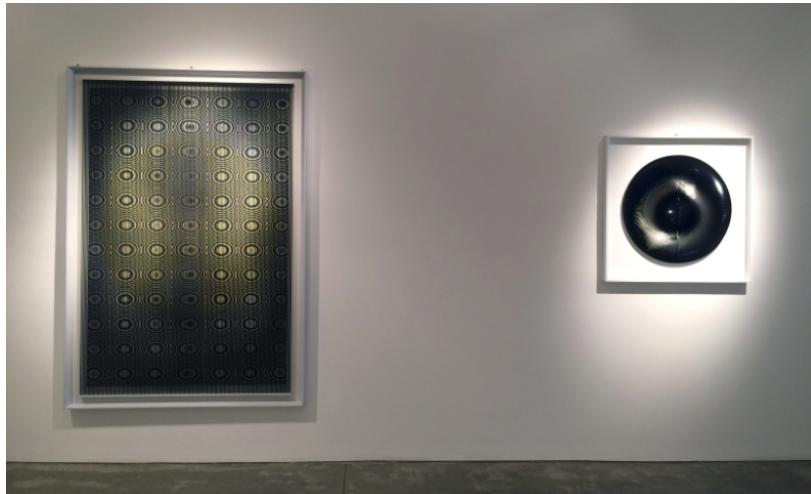
People always ask me if I study mathematics or physics, but I didn't. I often get invited to scientific conventions and asked about the math behind my art, and I reply to these eminent scientists that at first I did use algebraic calculations to create my work, but, over time, I found tricks of the trade that allow me to 'cheat' and obtain the same effects without the math.

I don't have rituals, but in a way, all of my artworks are born out of other artworks. So technically I get inspired by my own art, and each of my own pieces spawns new ones. What I try to do is unmask the invisible dynamics and the intangible: by turning the invisible ingrained movement of nature and inanimate objects into visible, tangible objects, such as with my installation currently on view, *Eco*, or my *Light Prism*.

In the course of your career, what are the biggest changes you've seen in the art world?

I have to say that it hasn't really changed at all—it has evolved, devolved, and everything in between.

New art movements have been created to group different artistic expressions that were never truly original and already existed, like how graffiti has been around since the cave paintings of our ancestors, or the gimmick of having an exhibition that nobody can see it—we did it in Padua in 1960 with Gruppo N's "Mostra Chiusa," or "Closed Exhibition." We had a shut apartment building front door with a sign reading: "Closed exhibition, nobody is invited to show, the premises will be closed for the entire duration of the show." Does it sound like any artist of late you know? Wink, wink...



Alberto Biasi, LEFT: *Rilievo Ottico Dinamico* (1964–1976). RIGHT: *Dinamica Circolare* (1965–1991). Courtesy of GR Gallery.

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