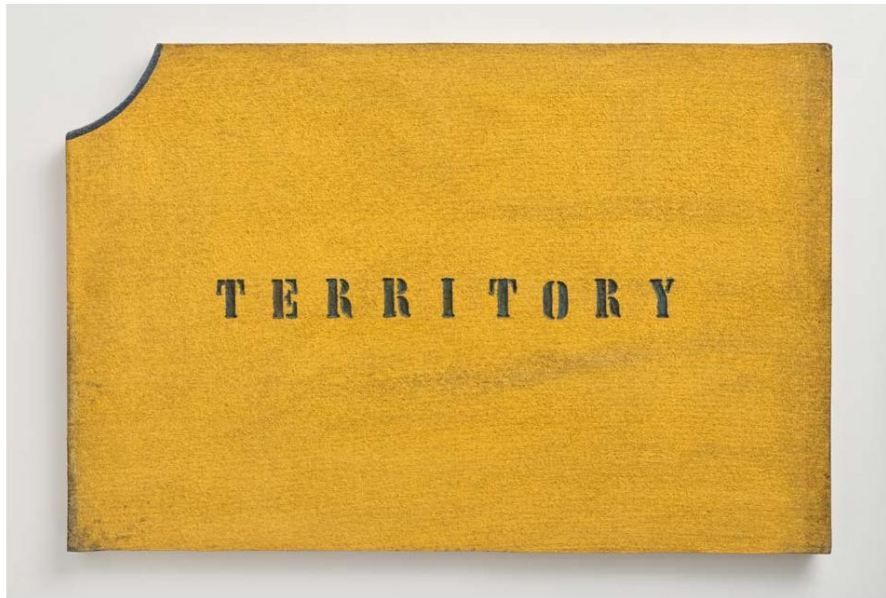


Lévy Gorvy present first London exhibition of Italian artist Vincenzo Agnetti



Vincenzo Agnetti, Paesaggio, 1971. Engraved and painted felt, 31 1/2 x 47 1/4 inches. (80 x 120 cm). Courtesy Lévy Gorvy. Photo: Stephen White.

LONDON.- Lévy Gorvy presents the first exhibition in London of Vincenzo Agnetti, one of the most significant and influential Italian conceptualists of the twentieth century.

The exhibition focuses on three bodies of work from the artist's diverse oeuvre—Axioms, Feltri (Felts), and Macchina Drogata (Drugged Machine)— which are key nodes of a sprawling practice that engaged the supple pliability of language with intensity and humor. Agnetti approached language as both content and material, depicting linguistic propositions and language-based abstractions with a signature esoteric streak. Seen as a whole, the artist's work shed light on new possibilities for art's engagement with philosophy and knowledge production: rather than illustrating theories and ideas, Agnetti sought to fully integrate idea and form.

As an artist and writer, Agnetti was an active participant in various Italian scenes from the 1950s through the 1970s. A friend and collaborator of Enrico Castellani and Piero Manzoni, Agnetti contributed criticism to the avant-garde journal *Azimuth*, which was dedicated to conceptual and formal developments of advanced artistic production. Agnetti's own work traversed a wide formal range, but always with a rigor matched only by his curiosity. For Agnetti, the artist's subjectivity was inextricably bound up with the artist's output. Thus, in examining the depth and progression of Agnetti's movement through various styles, this exhibition begins to map the intellectual progression of his artistic consciousness.

A student of poetry and art from a young age, the intellectual details of Agnetti's early life remain opaque. In the artist's words: "What I did, thought and heard, I've now forgotten by heart." This deliberate occlusion of biographic information is characteristic of Agnetti's use of language: shifting away from the personal toward a more remote philosophical terrain, Agnetti cultivated a mythic voice. Yet, definitive as these words appear, the epistemological framework is decidedly open: notions of "forgetting" suggest a break with inherited knowledge, experience, and trauma, and the evocative description of forgetting "by heart" (a phrase more commonly attached to the opposite of forgetting) invests Agnetti's declarations with a sense of strenuous effort.

Vincenzo Agnetti: Territories will be on view in London until 13 May.