

GIORGIO DI GENOVA

# STELMAN



*Photo:*

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Cover image: *Slanted edge*, 1986, oil on canvas, 60×120 (private collection Padova)

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## SUMMARY

9     STELMAN'S PERSONAL VEDUTISMO  
      *by Giorgio Di Genova*

17    WORKS 1972-1995

### CRITICAL ANTHOLOGY

131   STELMAN ART  
      *by Sandra Giannattasio*

132   STELMAN: COSMOGONIES  
      *by Giuliano Serafini*

133   THE DRIPPING TAPESTRY  
      *by Mariano Apa*

135   STELMAN'S PERSONAL COSMOGONIES  
      *by Giorgio di Genova*

138   STELMAN, MEMORIA UNIVERSE  
      *by Mario Rotta*

139   BIOGRAPHY

142   WORKS



STELMAN '83



# Works

1972-1995







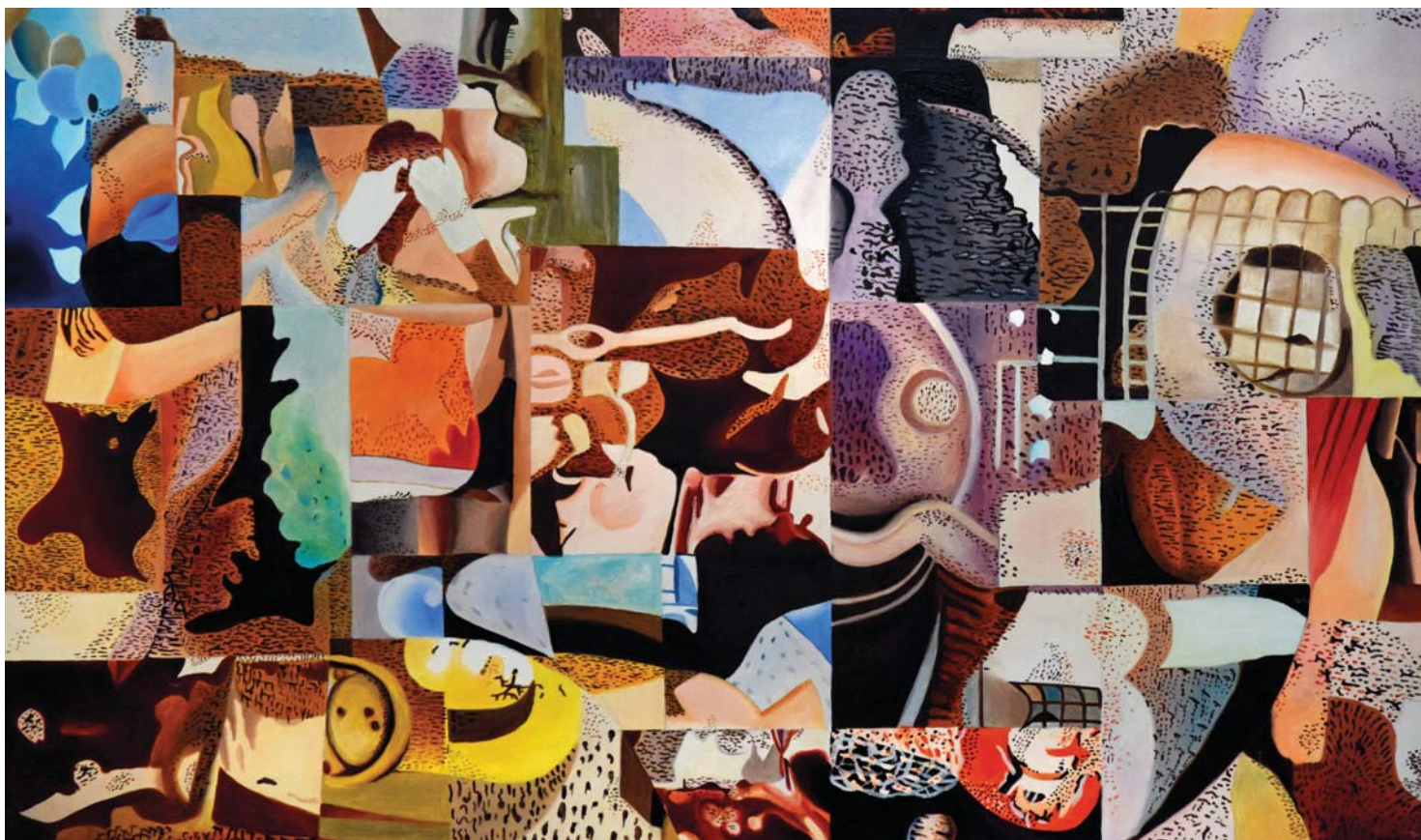
*Oxymoronic Morphology*, 1972  
oil on canvas, 120 x 80



*Premonitions*, 1974  
oil on canvas, 70 x 100



*Tribal Dance*, 1975  
oil on canvas, 60 x 100



*To Paola*, 1976  
oil on canvas, 60 x 100



*The Hidden City*, 1976  
oil on canvas, 60 x 120



*Reverse Universe*, 1978  
oil on canvas, 80 x 100



*Secret Emotions*, 1979  
oil on canvas, 75 x 150



*Other Skies*, 1984  
oil on canvas, 50×110





*Apotheosis*, 1984  
oil on canvas, 60 x 120



*Suspended Time*, 1985  
oil on canvas, 60x100



*Indoor*, 1985  
oil on canvas, 60x120



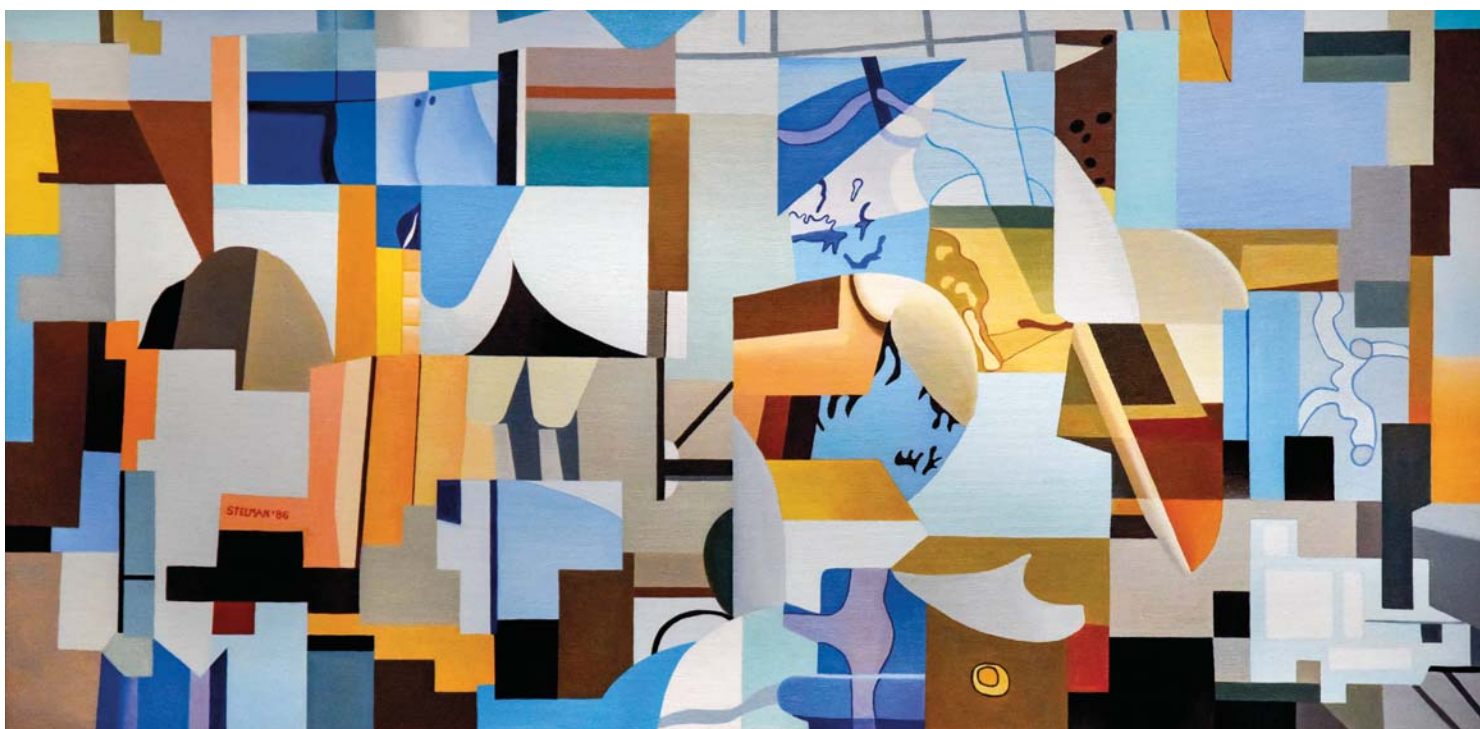
*Mute Lyrics*, 1985  
oil on canvas, 60 x 120



*Tacit Offers*, 1985  
oil on canvas, 60 x 120



*Shadow of the Motion 1*, 1986, oil on canvas, 50×100



*Shadow of the Motion 2*, 1986, oil on canvas, 50×100



*The dream of Eros*, 1986  
oil on canvas, 60 × 120



*The Human Dream*, 1991  
oil on canvas, 60 x 120





*Motionless Going*, 1991  
oil on canvas, 60 x 120



*Travel*, 1991  
oil on canvas, 120 x 60



*Deafening Silences*, 1992  
oil on canvas, 60 x 120



*Sky and Sea Around My Country, 1994*  
oil on canvas, 60 x 120

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## BIOGRAPHY

Stelman (Stelio Manneschi) was born in Talla (Arezzo) on 10 November, 1927.

His mother Lina, painter and miniaturist, died when he was only one year old.

Even as a boy he manifested a strong passion for painting, which was intimately connected with the missing figure of his mother.

Stelio attended Liceo Scientifico “Francesco Redi” in Arezzo, where one of his teachers was Professor Salani, a close friend of Piero Calamandrei, whose political views they both shared.

Afterwards he studied Political Science at the Cesare Alfieri University in Florence, where he graduated with a dissertation on the First World War.

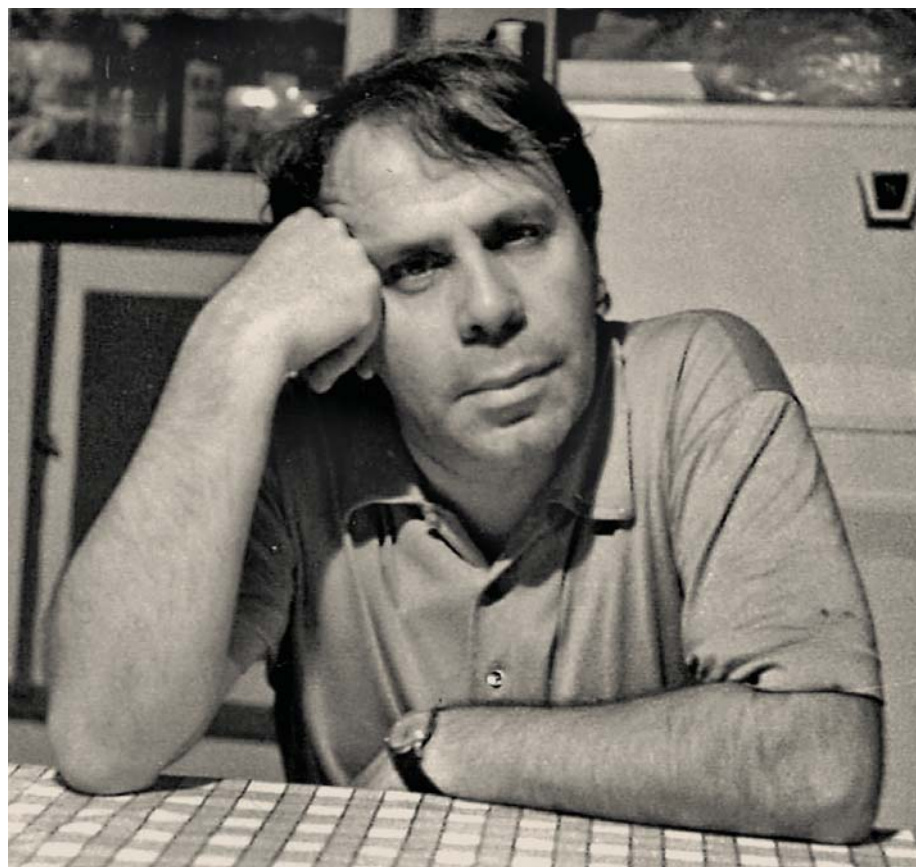
In 1955 he married Paola Giulia Giovampaoli. They had 3 children: Marco, Letizia and Stefano (who, as a twelve-year-old boy, invented the pseudonym for his father).

Stelio and his wife Paola, an English teacher, shared a passionate interest in literature and art, hence their love for travelling and visiting museums, monuments and art galleries of the most important cities in Europe.

He began his painting career by depicting highly evocative views of Arezzo at night, to which he imparted a distinctive symbolist flavour. Notable among his works were his reproductions of famous paintings by renowned artists, such as Van Gogh.

In the 1960s he turned to abstract art, experimenting with intense colours.

He worked as a sales agent and spent his leisure time practising his painting skills. But it was in the early 1970s that he decided to devote himself to the creation of a truly original and personal style. By reassembling clippings taken from newspapers and magazines of the time, he tried to give shape to his ‘visions’, thus producing preliminary sketches which would be of use during the realization of his paintings. In his tangled landscapes he was able to convey an irreverent message against the pervasiveness of the media by way of an impressive use of colour.



He used to paint while listening exclusively to classical music.

During the period from the early 1970s to 1994 he dedicated his life entirely to art: he would spend hours in his study, preparing his sketches and paintings with the same meticulous care for detail as that which he devoted to the various initiatives.

His style was constantly refined by means of dedicated research (as proved by the letters that he and Giulio Argan



Stelio with his wife Paola in England



Stelio with stage actor Paolo Poli at the art exhibition in Ferrara (Italy)



exchanged between 1974 and 1975) and went through different creative stages.

After a few exhibitions in his beloved Tuscany (Borgo San Lorenzo Town Hall in 1973, art gallery “L’incontro” in Florence in 1973, “Sala Civica” inside the “Bastioni” in Arezzo 1974), on 8 January 1976 Stelman displayed his works at the “Astrolabio Arte” in Rome, with a solo exhibition presented by Sandra Giannattasio.

In the following years he exhibited many times: in 1983 he was at the “Inquadrature” Art Gallery in Florence, with a presentation by Giuliano Serafini; in 1984 his works, presented by Mariano Apa, were exposed in the hall of the “Circolo Artistico” in Arezzo; in 1985 he exhibited in the halls inside the “Logge Vasari” in Piazza Grande, Arezzo.

In 1985 he was invited to the “Internationale Kunstbiennale” in Seetal (Zurich, Switzerland).

In 1988 Franco Farina asked Stelman to hold an exhibition at the Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara, where he was introduced by Giorgio Di Genova; in 1989 he was at the International Art Fair in Stuttgart; in 1990 the town of Perugia wanted him to exhibit at the Palazzo dei Priori.

Stelio with his wife Paola at a *vernissage*

In 1990 and 1991 he took part in the Art Fair “Arte e Fiera” in Bologna; his works were displayed at the stall of the “Atelier” Gallery of the city of Carrara.

On 3 December 1994 he was invited to expose for the “Telethon Marathon” hosted by the BNL Bank branch of Arezzo.

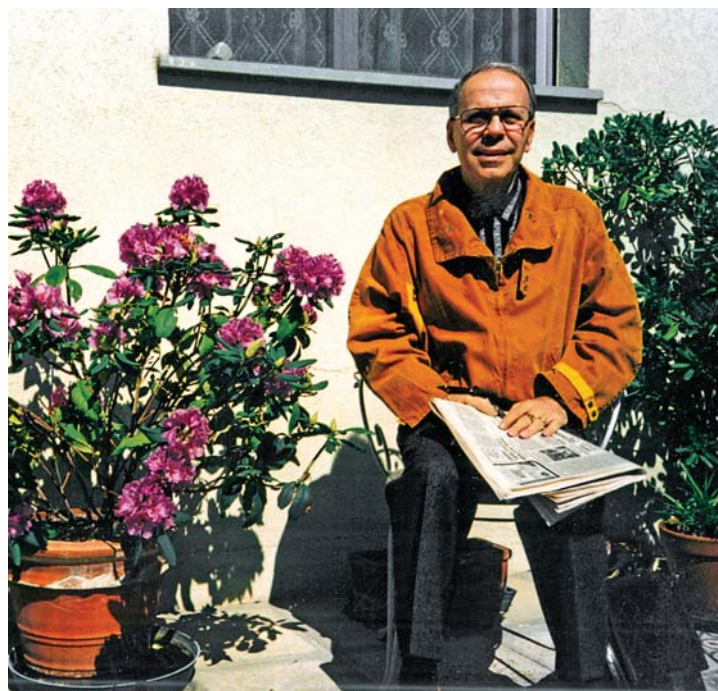
In the years between 1973 and 1994 he had 16 solo exhibitions and 11 group exhibitions, for a total of 27 shows. Most of them were hosted in contemporary cultural landmarks. Due to its forcefully innovative language, Stelman’s art gained increasing interest among the critics.

In his works influences from the main artistic movements of the twentieth century can be detected, ranging from the Surrealists (as can be seen in “*Sloping Rim*”) and Picasso to Pop Art and artists like Rosenquist and Rauschenberg (as “*Mimetic Horizons*” shows ). However, what distinguishes his paintings is the creation of a new “cosmogony” that allows for an active role of the viewer in interpreting them according to his/her personal feelings. Stelman is considered to be the most powerful representative of the Italian Fragmentism as applied to pictorial language (see also G. Di Genova –catalogue of the “XXXVI Premio Sulmona” 2019).

Unfortunately, a long-standing disease from which he suffered caused a serious damage to his sight. This condition prevented him from continuing his creative work. He was also compelled to renounce to exhibitions, which he had always curated personally. He spent the last 4 years of his life taking care of his grandchildren.

He died in Arezzo on 20 October, 1998.

On the twentieth anniversary of his death, Stelman’s heirs organised an exhibition to commemorate the artist. This was held in Cortona under the patronage of the Region of Tuscany, of the City of Cortona and of the Etruscan Academy. From 14



Stelio in his house in Via Giordano Bruno, Arezzo (Italy)

to 30 September 2018 Stelman’s works were displayed in the halls of the MAEC (Etruscan Academy Museum of the City of Cortona), whereas a conference on the theme “*Stelman and the Fragmentation of Language in the Art of the twentieth-century*” was curated by Giorgio di Genova. During the conference Professor Mario Rotta gave a presentation on the subject and many images were projected in the prestigious Academy Hall.

Furthermore, in 2017 Stelman’s heirs started an Association which aims at preserving the artist’s work and increasing his popularity.



The image, as a whole delivering messages, is crushed into a current and banal iconic media context. The resulting shred turns into the symbol of the broken world; and represents the fall of ideologies which had been reassuring islands of truth. The piece is the unexpected, the purest part of the present age, the indefinable. Symbol of the subtle anguish of what is unfinished, suspended and weightless, the scrap does not lead to satisfaction but to a constant search for a final disclosure. The aggregation is the work, the choice comes from the subconscious, ironic and liberating.

Arezzo 1983  
STELMAN