

MILANO
GALLERIA 10 A.M. ART
FROM 26 NOVEMBER 2026 TO 29 JANUARY 2027
REGINA CASSOLO BRACCHI
"IDEAS FOR RENDERING THE UNIVERSE.
DRAWINGS, STUDIES, PROJECTS ON PAPER, AND SCULPTURES"
Curated by Paolo Campiglio

On the back of a *Studio per scultura* (Study for Sculpture) from the early 1950s, one of the countless sculptural sketches made in a notebook, Regina Cassolo Bracchi (1894–1974) transcribed one of Novalis's thoughts that confirmed her commitment to abstract art: she wrote in pencil: "supprimez le rythme de l'univers et vous supprimerez l'univers".

On the front of that sheet are two pencil studies for a sculpture showing the shape of a rhombus with a square inscribed within it, which seems to float rhythmically within a multi-lobed space formed by four circles or semicircles. The distant echo of an earlier study of a flower and its natural forms is merely the initial inspiration for that sensitive attempt to transcribe a universal rhythm offered by the duplication of the number four, and thus centred on the number eight. "The number eight", she transcribes again from Novalis on the reverse of that sheet, "symbolizes eternal movement in the spiral of the heavens".

The idealism behind the artist's poetics, apparent in her drawings and, by extension, in her sculptures, is in fact, on closer inspection, a constant feature of her body of work: it can be traced back to her earliest abstract studies of the 1930s, in the rhythmic rendering of the invisible, through her studies of flowers in the 1940s, only to resurface, with a new awareness derived from the grammar of abstract art, in the 1960s and 1970s.

This ongoing attempt to transcribe the universe is the common thread running through more than fifty of the artist's drawings brought together in this exhibition and presented by the 10 A.M. ART gallery in Milan in collaboration with the Archivio Regina: a substantial body of studies and sculptural ideas on paper that spans the artist's various creative phases and bears witness to the consistency of her abstract imagery over time.

The *Studio di riflessi sull'acqua a Venezia* (Study of Reflections on the Water in Venice), a small drawing produced in 1936–37 that has recently been discovered in a notebook of abstract rhythmic sketches, confirms her early tendency to assimilate the rhythm of nature and to transcribe its invisible language, as an alternative to her contemporary involvement in Marinetti's Futurism. Those reflections are not impressions, but transcriptions of rhythmic codes, a sort of Morse alphabet transmitted by the surface of the water. A rhythm made visible in her *Pentagrammi* (Music Staves, 1936–37) and other rare explorations of imagined synaesthesia, and, in the 1940s, expressed through the language of "flowers", which she examined with the meticulousness of a botanical idealist. This was, in essence, an abstract language: a structural order revealed by nature, which she studied and catalogued over several years during the war. From studies such as *Fiore* (Flower, 1945) emerged works including *Fiore (Struttura Circolare)* (Flower [Circular Structure], 1950), which would provide the foundation for her first abstract sculptures, presented at the M.A.C. exhibitions, where she was the only woman artist represented. Some enigmatic coloured drawings, such as *Fiore/Studio per scultura* (Flower/Study for a Sculpture, c. 1950), translate structures observed in nature into aerial forms, like antennae attuned to the universe's mysterious messages. They also anticipate the Plexiglas sculptures she would develop in the mid-1950s. Her contemporaries, evidently struck by these works, celebrated in the movement's newsletters her "spatial forms realized in plastic".

The exhibition is complemented by the collage *Composizione concreta* (Concrete Composition, 1954), which was shown alongside her sculptures at various M.A.C. exhibitions, which by this stage had become "concrete" in the sense of an essentially geometric phenomenology, while never entirely relinquishing their distant roots in nature. Colourful works such as *Composizione astratto-concreta* (Abstract-Concrete Composition, 1954), with their rhythmic, freely modulated forms, clearly evoke Gillo Dorfles's impressions of the artist's work, which at the time he described as tentative proposals: structures deliberately confined to

small dimensions, in keeping with the artist's established practice. Dorfles remarked admiringly that Regina's works might have been "imagined on a much larger, even monumental, scale", and could readily be compared with the "far more imposing structures of a Pevsner, a Gabo, a Bill or a Vantongerloo".¹

Regina's drawings also bear witness to her brief "informal" phase, from around 1956 to 1958, which manifested itself primarily in works on paper and therefore, hypothetically, in the concept of the tangled circle, as seen in *Strutture circolari multicolore* (Multicoloured Circular Structures, 1950s–60s), as well as in the textured surfaces of her sculptures from the same period. This phase would re-emerge in the so-called "Onde" (Waves) cycle of the early 1960s. Yet this was a transitional phase, characterized by the suggestion of colour and texture, which would soon give way to the "structures" typical of her research during that decade.

It is this creative restlessness, which emerged in the decade following the M.A.C. venture, that lies at the heart of her drawings richest in sculptural ideas and, at the same time, heralds an important series of sculptures in coloured Plexiglas. Regina developed a series of structural hypotheses in works such as *Studio per struttura* (Study for a Structure, 1960); *Studio per struttura* (c. 1962); *Strutture geometriche multicolore* (Multicoloured Geometric Structures, 1960s); and *Studio per scultura (Il grillo)* (Study for a Sculpture [The Cricket], 1966). Her abstract language can be understood as a conscious revival of Constructivism, aligned with international developments in contemporary art. This abstract geometric language, continually renewed through evocative rhythmic and chromatic ideas and defined by a rigorous spatial and structural order, would shape her practice throughout her career, up to the early 1970s. It forms part of a broader continuum of the avant-garde, positioning Regina alongside other leading international figures.

The exception that proves the rule – and the underlying idealism of her approach to non-figurative art within the structural framework of her creative universe – is a very short series presented here for the first time. Once again, many years after that earlier Venetian inspiration, these works return to reflections on the water at Sirmione, where the artist loved to spend her summers. It is the brief but intense "Onde" series – created in several stages in pastel on paper, standing as a necessary digression, seemingly informal and naturalistic in style, yet unfolding alongside her structural explorations – that bears witness to the artist's enduring emotional engagement with the search for nature's secret language.

Regina's extraordinary creative journey in the late 1960s and early 1970s, now liberated from the constraints of belonging to any particular movement, was perhaps her most intense and courageous. Ultimately, it was pure light that she sought to explore, following her investigations into movement and colour. Light was examined not only for its refractive properties but also from a structural and analytical perspective, most extensively in the series *Composizioni a righe verticali multicolore* (Compositions with Multicoloured Vertical Stripes) and the masterful visual grids that emerged from it, such as *Studio per griglia multicolore* (Study for a Multicoloured Grid, late 1960s). What emerges is a wholly personal form of kinetic art, rooted in an underlying investigation that translates onto paper the secret messages she now perceived as emanating from the universe. Regina was finally able to render these messages as essential yet compelling visual communications.

Regina Cassolo Bracchi

"Ideas for Rendering the Universe. Drawings, studies, projects on paper, and sculptures"

Milan, galleria 10 A.M. ART (Corso San Gottardo, 5)

26 November 2026 - 29 January 2027

Opening day: Thursday 26 November 2026 at 5 p.m.

Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

All other days, by appointment only

Free entry

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¹ G. Dorfles, 'Ricordo di Regina', in *Continuità dell'avanguardia in Italia/2. Regina (1894-1974)*, Modena, 1979, p. 19.