Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Giacomo BALLA (Italy 1871 - 1958)

Forme rumore

Gouache on thick paper.

Signed *FUTUR BALLA* at the lower right.

196 x 321 mm. (7 3/4 x 12 5/8 in.)

Datable to the 1920's, the present sheet is part of a large group of works by Giacomo Balla that remained in his home and studio, the Casa Balla in Rome, after his death. Inherited by the artist's daughters Luce and Elica Balla, *Forme rumore* was eventually acquired from them in 1974 by the art historian Roberto Gnisci. A comparable gouache drawing by Balla, entitled *Linee andamentali* and datable to c.1925, was sold at auction in Italy in 2001.

The present sheet may also be thematically related to a number of other works by Balla, also entitled *Forme Rumore*, which have generally been dated several years earlier. These include a painting of c.1918 in a Milanese private collection and a gouache of about the same date in another private collection, as well as a gouache entitled *Linea di Velocità e Forme Rumore* that appeared at auction in 1980. Also somewhat similar is a collage of c.1915, also in a private collection.

The authenticity of this work has been confirmed by Elena Gigli. This work is included in her archives under the number 2013/553.

Provenance:

Casa Balla, Rome
Acquired in 1974 by Roberto Gnisci, Rome
Galleria Arco d'Alibert, Rome
Galleria Editalia, Rome, in 1985
Anonymous sale, London, Christie's, 29 March 1988, lot 319
Branco Weiss, Zurich.

Exhibitions

Rome, Galleria Editalia 'Qui Arte Contemporanea', *Il Futurismo a Roma: anni dieci-quaranta*, 1985.

Artist description:

A leading member of the Futurist movement in Italy, Giacomo Balla received almost no formal artistic training. Following the death of his father when he was aged just nine, he served an apprenticeship in a lithography shop, while at the same time taking drawing classes in the evenings. He also spent a few months at the Accademia Albertina in Turin. He showed some early promise as a portraitist, and also produced paintings which display an interest in social issues. By the end of the first decade of the 20th century he was painting in a quasi-Divisionist style, resulting in such dramatic paintings as Street Light of 1909, today in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The following year Balla was one of the signatories of the first Futurist artistic manifesto, the Manifesto dei pittori futuristi, and began to take an active role in the group founded by the theorist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. He first exhibited with the Futurists in 1912. The following year he sold all of his early paintings at auction, and devoted himself wholeheartedly to the new Futurist aesthetic. In 1914 several of his paintings were reproduced in Umberto Boccioni's Pittura, scultura futuriste (Dinamismo plastico). Balla's paintings, with their emphasis on lines of 'speed' or 'force', continued to exemplify the Futurist ideal in the years of the First World War and afterwards. During the second wave of Futurism in the 1920's, he remained one of the only artists of the first generation of Futurist painters to continue to express some of the same concerns as his younger contemporaries, with a growing interest in geometric forms. By the early 1930's, however, Balla had reverted to his early realism in landscape paintings and portraiture, including a series of introspective self-portraits.