

Domenico (Mino) DELLE SITE (Lecce 1914 - Rome 1996)

Sogno dell' aviere (The Dream of the Airman)

Watercolour, with touches of silver pen, with framing lines in black ink, on paper laid down onto a sheet of black paper.

Signed and dated *Delle Site 32*, written over an earlier signature and date, at the lower centre.

Titled *SOGNO DELL AVIERE* in silver pen on the backing sheet, below the image.

93 x 83 mm. (3 5/8 x 3 1/4 in.) [sheet]

240 x 166 mm. (9 1/2 x 6 1/2 in.) [backing sheet]

'An offshoot, or rather a metamorphosis, of Futurism, Aeropainting was the artistic reflection of the passion for flying which swept Italy in the 1930s, during the years of the great feats achieved by [Francesco] De Pinedo, [Italo] Balbo, [Arturo] Ferrarin, [Umberto] Maddalena and many other pilots, dizzingly celebrated in these swirling, booming canvases…Despite various premonitory hints in the form of isolated pictorial allusions, it was not until the end of the 1920s that the idea of Aeropainting moved in from the periphery to become the true heart, engine and, not long afterwards, also the new face of Futurism, almost twenty years after the publication of its founding manifesto.' As the artist Gerardo Dottori noted, in the catalogue of an early exhibition of Futurist aeropainting held in Milan in 1931, 'Aeropainting doesn't so much mean inserting new figurative elements in painting – propellers, airplanes, atmosphere and so on – as giving painters new, broad-ranging possibilities of inspiration.'

A slightly larger watercolour variant of this composition, horizontal in format and dated 1932, is in the

Archivio Mino Delle Site in Rome. The present sheet is also closely related in composition to a large painting on panel by Delle Site, entitled Il pilota aliluce, which is dated 1932.

Exhibitions

Bari, Castello Svevo and Taranto, Castello Aragonese, *Verso le avanguardie: Gli anni del Futurismo in Puglia 1909-1944*, 1998; Lecce, Museo Provinciale 'S. Castromediano', *Mino Delle Site*, 2006, no.58.

Literature:

Gino Agnese, 'Incontri con Delle Site', in Giuseppe Appella, ed., *Verso le avanguardie: Gli anni del Futurismo in Puglia 1909-1944*, exhibition catalogue, Bari and Taranto, 1998, illustrated p.345; Renato Miracco, ed., *Mino Delle Site: Alle Radici dell'Aeropittura 1931-1934*, exhibition catalogue, Warsaw and Cracow, 2001, illustrated on the cover; Chiara Letizia Delle Site, ed., *Mino Delle Site*, 2006, illustrated p.50; Domenico Guzzi, *Mino Delle Site: Forme assolute della geometria*, Rome, 2008, illustrated p.12; Chiara Letizia Delle Site, ed., *Centenario Mino Delle Site*, 2014 [e-book], illustrated.

Artist description:

Domenico (known as Mino) Delle Site was one of the youngest members of the second wave of Italian Futurism, and one of the most important exponents of the associated 'Aeropittura' movement. Born in Lecce, at the age of twelve he enrolled in the local art school, having already been employed as an engraver for a small school newspaper, and he continued to earn commercial commissions for his linocuts and prints throughout his studies in Lecce under the painter Geremia Re. In 1930, at the age of sixteen, Delle Site moved to Rome to complete his artistic education at an art college and at the Accademia di Belle Arti. Delle Site joined the nascent Futurist 'aeropainting' movement in 1931, while still a student, not long after visiting the exhibition Prima Mostra di Aeropittura – Omaggio futurista ai trasvolatori in Rome, and developing links with the Futurist painter Enrico Prampolini and the photographer and art dealer Anton Giulio Bragaglia.

In December 1932 an exhibition of Delle Site's work was held at Bragaglia's gallery in Rome, followed two months later by another solo exhibition in the artist's native Lecce. Delle Site also took part in the exhibition Omaggio futurista a Umberto Boccioni at the Galleria Pesaro in Milan in 1933, as well as the Prima Mostra Nazionale d'arte futurista in Rome later the same year. Paintings by Delle Site were included in the Futurist section of the Quadriennale d'arte nazionale exhibitions in Rome in 1935 and 1939, as well as the Venice Biennale of 1938. In later years Delle Site produced a number of striking designs for travel posters, but by the 1950s his work had become almost fully abstract. In 1956 a solo exhibition of Delle Site's work was mounted at the Galleria delle Carrozze in Rome, while a retrospective exhibition, containing works dating from 1932 to 1965, was held at the Rizzoli Galleria in New York in 1965. Another major retrospective exhibition was held in his native Lecce in 1989, while Delle Site's work was also featured in several important exhibitions of Futurist painting in the 1980s and 1990s. The artist died in Rome in 1996.