The Weight of the Concrete explores the legacy of Turin artist and publisher Ezio Gribaudo (1929–2022). The exhibition is a comprehensive homage to his multifarious oeuvre at the intersection of image and language, where it resonates with voices of experimental poetry. A scenography designed by Milan artist Davide Stucchi (born 1988) carries Gribaudo’s work into the present. The exhibition borrows its name from Il Peso del Concreto (1968), a seminal book that featured Gribaudo’s early graphic work alongside an anthology of concrete poetry edited by poet Adriano Spatola (1941–1988). In accord with his interdisciplinary approach, this exhibition explores Gribaudo’s idiosyncratic oeuvre and his poetics of matter.

Central to The Weight of the Concrete is Gribaudo’s emblematic Logogrifi series, which he developed from the 1960s onward. The Logogrifi were deeply entangled with his activities as a bookmaker and reflected his fascination for new industrial printing processes, typefaces, language games, and relief matrices. Grounded in linguistic or visual riddles, the Logogrifi are akin to logographs or word puzzles where a series of verses cryptically allude to an unnamed keyword and offer clues to other words based on its letters. To Gribaudo, a Logografio oscillates between legibility and abstraction, at times verging toward readable forms and at others scaling the enigmatic world where image and language coalesce.

The Weight of the Concrete explores Gribaudo’s distinct poetic repertoire of forms—encompassing textual, figurative, and topographic elements, invariably disconnected from their sources—which heralds the emergence of a new grammar and, consequently, novel forms of reading. His works—appearing first as achromatic embossments on blotting paper before transforming into wooden and polystyrene reliefs and ultimately culminating in vividly colored pieces using typographic ink—persistently interrogate the ways in which form, language, and matter continue to shape and redefine one another. Gribaudo’s relentless experimentation with printing technologies was sparked by his dedication to publishing artist monographs, featuring contemporaries such as Giorgio de Chirico, Jean Dubuffet, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Bacon, Lucio Fontana, Asger Jorn, and Wifredo Lam, and his interest in popular print formats like newspapers, dictionaries, atlases, and children’s books. To emphasize the non-hierarchical relationship between his artistic work and publishing activities, the exhibition’s final chapter presents a unique selection of Gribaudo’s rare publications and archival materials.

The Weight of the Concrete gathers these graphic and poetic operations with the support of Davide Stucchi’s scenography. Drawing on his longstanding practice of using ready-made objects and industrially produced materials, Stucchi’s spontaneous and conceptual responses to Gribaudo’s works reflect a mutual fascination for the industrial reproduction and repurposing of standardized materials. Operating at the intersection of visual arts, design, fashion,
and scenography, Stucchi’s interventions echo and amplify Gribaudo’s interdisciplinary body of work.

*The Weight of the Concrete* will be complemented by a publication reflecting the editorial premise of *Il Peso del Concreto* (1968). It revisits and reimagines this poetry anthology and the archive of its making, pairing Gribaudo’s graphic work with a new selection of historical and contemporary concrete and experimental poetry. It will also include essays elucidating the interplay and poetic interconnections between language and matter. Published by Axis Axis and Grazer Kunstverein, it is scheduled for release in the summer of 2024.

*The Weight of the Concrete* features a sound program, *The Weight of the Tongue*, which serves as a prelude to the forthcoming publication. Focusing on the vocalization of experimental poetry, the program gathers the voices of Tomaso Binga, CAC onrad, Bryana Fritz, Susan Howe and David Grubbs, Katalin Ladik, Hanne Lippard, Nat Marcus, and Patrizia Vicinelli.
In the second half of the 1960s, Ezio Gribaudo developed his first logogriphs by embossing blotting paper with modified zinc or copper print matrices (metal plates used to reproduce type or images). This resulted in a repertoire of forms in relief, revealed by the interplay of light and shadow, which alternated between textual, figurative, topographic, or even orographic manifestations. Conceived in the printing workshops where Gribaudo simultaneously pursued his career as an artist and a book publisher, these logogriphs are characterized by their graphic sobriety, small format, achromatism, unicity, and deliberate avoidance of expressive elements. Through the associative and anachronistic arrangement of shapes, the series nurtures a poetic ambiguity that challenged the predominantly rational norms of the printing industry at the time.

These early works, presented at the Quadrennial of Rome (1965), the Venice Biennale (1966), and the São Paulo Biennale in Brazil (1967), originally had titles echoing Greek and Roman expressions or neologisms, such as Pa­lindod­ia Grafica, In Aversa Charta, Zootropio, Gerolessico, or Rébus, signifying either poetic or mechanical processes of transformation. These were eventually replaced with the umbrella title Logogrifo, under which Gribaudo expanded the series to include various formats and materials.

The title Logogrifo (logos, “language,” griphos, “riddle” or “fishing net”) informs Gribaudo’s poetic strategies, defined by an ideographic paralanguage composed of ultra-modern, sophisticated imprints. By working the surface in a way that is barely visible to the naked eye, new semantic dimensions and modes of reading open up between the object and language, similar to concrete and experimental poetry, as expressed by Ardriano Spatola in his introduction to Gribaudo’s monograph Il Peso del Concreto (1968): “In Ezio Gribaudo’s logogriphs, the matter – not matter at absolute zero, but (industrial) matter – as a result of complex technical processes becomes, through an anti-reductive operation, the language; in the works of these poets, it is language that becomes, by the same anti-reductive procedure, the matter. In both cases, the privileged moment is that of pure research, which makes aesthetic quality just one stage in its process of penetrating reality.”
Davide Stucchi’s scenography, using industrial elements such as Styrofoam and LED tube lights, addresses the visibility and historicity of these works through a gesture that encourages a meditative and analytical reading. The achromatism of the logogriphs is highlighted by Styrofoam panels, which are commonly used as light reflectors in fashion photography studios. Stucchi’s arrangement not only reflects but also amplifies the ambient light, augmenting the enigmatic and fragile aura of the logogriphs and making them appear as though encased in a protective yet delicate shell. The tube light, repurposed as a reading aid, uncovers the latent, more sculptural aspects of Gribaudo’s images, which are characterized by embossed details surrounded by empty space.

2.

*Logogriph* (Logogriphs)


Relief on polystyrene

Scenographic elements: LED tube lights

*Logogriph* (Logogriphs)


Carved lime wood

Scenographic elements: concrete bricks

By the end of the 1960s, Ezio Gribaudo’s *Logogriph* gained a three-dimensional consistency, moving from the subtle play of reliefs on paper to the soft and malleable thickness of engraved white expanded polystyrene plates. Becoming genuinely “portable sculptures” due to the lightness and density of this industrial material, these works, made with sophisticated tools, contradicted the period’s academic rules of sculpture. Light, malleable, and fragile, these sculptures – a translation of the earlier paper *Logogriph* – appear to float, as if on a white page, in the void, revealing a hybrid world of the architectural and the organic, where landscape and technology coexist in a play of light and shadow.

The wooden *Logogriph* from the 1980s embody a similar semi-abstract and organic strangeness, emerging from the symbiotic relationship between an image and its imprint. These incised wooden panels can be seen as sculptures, their varied layers uncovering lines and shapes, prompting an unearthing of imaginary, possible forms. They can also be viewed as hypothetical printing matrices, hinting at the possibility of new reliefs or prints toward the emergence of novel imagery. Realized in lime wood, they represent a symbolic fusion of nature and printing *matrix*. These matrices can be metaphorically interpreted through the Latin root word mātrix, meaning “womb.” In ancient Rome, a matrix was also used to designate a “mother plant” from which other plants were grown. This reading highlights the profound, life-giving, and re-
productive possibilities of these works, where matrix and nature, both suggestive of fecundity, merge and images gestate.

Davide Stucchi’s intervention unveils his fascination with the spectral and dual nature of things, as well as his attraction to the ambiguous aesthetics of shadows. A minimal yet sophisticated arrangement of standardized LED tube lights amplifies the brightness of the polystyrene Logorifi and intensifies the dynamic interplay of light and shadow. By placing Gribaudo’s heavy wooden Logorifi horizontally on concrete blocks, Stucchi reinforces their role as matrices. With this poetical and humorous response to the exhibition’s title, The Weight of the Concrete, he grounds these pieces in their topographical aspect within a scenographic language that playfully subverts modernist conventions.
Ezio Gribaudo’s achromatic experiments gradually shifted toward a resurgence of color. This transition aligned with his growing interest in the mechanical processes of printing using cylinder presses and the impact of typographic inks on paper, a fascination that became progressively evident in his works. This development is rooted in his publishing activities at the Turin-based Fratelli Pozzo Moncalieri printing company. In 1959, Gribaudo became its director and transformed the company, which originally specialized in printing train schedules, into the art publishing house Edizione d’Arte Fratelli Pozzo. During Piedmont’s industrial renaissance, he championed the integration of labor and culture at the company. There, employees, artists, and Gribaudo collaborated, driven by their shared enthusiasm for exploring new machinery and delving into the intricacies of print production. “Perhaps I will have time to visit Turin in October to try the new machine; I am very curious to see it, but the four colors at once are a bit daunting!” wrote his friend and fellow artist Pierre Alechinsky, amid the developments in offset printing. As a result, the white Logogrifi inevitably yielded to the enchanting pull of color.

Gribaudo’s Cieli series (1974–75), initially known as Logogrifi colorati according to various archival sources, came about through his experimentation with disregarded materials sourced from printing workshops. These works, bridging the realms of landscape and color field painting, were crafted using typographic inks on paper. Challenging traditional fine art norms, Gribaudo applied synthetic and industrial hues onto paper (later mounted on canvas), addressing classical landscape themes through the contemporary lens of machine technology. These atmospheric pieces, whether depicting horizon lines or ethereal events, offer meditations on the vastness of the sky or the blank expanse of the page.

Davide Stucchi’s installation of beaded curtains creates a new visual horizon, a sensory filter, and an alternative color grid pattern. These standardized beaded curtains, both domestic and theatrical, suggest a transition between inside and outside involving the gaze and the body. In a playful nod to Leon Battista Alberti’s classical definition of painting as “a window open to the world,” Stucchi suspends Gribaudo’s Cieli from mechanical arms typically used to display television screens in any position.
This room is dedicated to the intimate relationship between Ezio Gribaudo’s artistic works and his publishing activities. Davide Stucchi’s intervention blankets elements of the space, from the floor to the exhibition furniture, in carpet. This gesture creates a hushed atmosphere reminiscent of Gribaudo’s Turin studio, which is lined with books from floor to ceiling.

Scenographic elements: moquette, furniture

*Flano* (Flong)

The *Flano* works, first exhibited in 1961, were derived from flongs, paper molds used to cast metal stereotypes. These solid printing plates could be curved around the cylinders of rotary presses, on which most newspapers were printed until the advent of offset printing. Ezio Gribaudo viewed these residual post-industrial objects as technological ready-mades, on which he intervened by erasing traces of ink from their previous jobs and coating them with white, silver, and gold, among other colors. Arabesques of shadow reveal the negative forms of the printed reliefs, onto which Gribaudo added graphic or pictorial gestures to enhance certain motifs. The hierarchy between text and image – as exemplified by the *Flano* based on a page from *La Stampa* newspaper – disappears. Text becomes image, and image becomes language.

*Il Peso del Concreto*

1968

Ezio Gribaudo and the Croatian-Italian poet Adriano Spatola (1941–1988), a leading figure in the experimental and sound poetry scene, collaborated on Gribaudo’s *Il Peso del Concreto*, a monograph published by Edizioni d’Arte Fratelli Pozzo in 1968. Conceived as an artist’s book, it brings together black-and-white reproductions of Gribaudo’s early *Logogrifi* reliefs on paper – sometimes photographed in macro by Francesco Aschieri – with a selection of concrete poetry edited by Spatola. The publication sheds light on the intrinsic relationship between Gribaudo’s *Logogrifi* and concrete and experimental poetry at large. Their shared ambivalence toward the connection between image and language and their ability to resist usual modes of reading is enacted through a visual, material, and tactile interdependence: As Spatola put it: “Concrete poetry is inspired – in its process of formation – by the languages of other arts, especially the visual arts: it wants to become an object, it refuses to be read.” The relationship between concrete poetry and Gribaudo’s visual research he described as “a relationship between two substantially similar methodological behaviors that are experimental in approach, and not the relationship between two products detached from the context of the here and now.”
In the 1960s, Gribaudo’s work gained international recognition, and these publications and archival documents offer historical context and insight into this vibrant period. They focus on a specific archive, that of the production of Il Peso del Concreto at Fratelli Pozzo, as evidenced by documents bearing the publishing house’s stamp. Correspondence from poets such as Julien Blaine, Pierre Garnier, Vojin Kovač, Fernando Millán, Franco Vaccari, Adriano Spatola, and Franci Zagoričnik, as well as those involved with the Argentine Diagonal Cero movement, attests to concrete poetry’s dynamic and international network at the time. This archive offers a behind-the-scenes look into the editorial project and the works featured in it, and includes an excerpt from the book’s original layout by Gribaudo. It is complemented by Geiger 10 for Adriano Spatola 1966–1996, a limited-edition publication edited by Maurizio Spatola and dedicated to his brother Adriano. This anthology provides further evidence of the link between Gribaudo’s work and experimental poetry throughout the 1960s and beyond.

The Weight of the Tongue

• Katalin Ladik, Lullaby, 1977, recorded in 2016. 02:11
• Katalin Ladik, Psalm, 1977, recorded in 2016. 01:08
• Katalin Ladik, Song for oiled stove tube and female voice, 1977, recorded in 2016. 01:29
• CAConrad, LLTGBR 1, 2023. 00:33
• CAConrad, LLTGBR 2, 2023. 00:37
• Bryana Fritz, Lingua Ignota, 2023. 6:32
• Tomaso Binga, SognOgnor, 1999. 5:25.
  Courtesy of the Archivio Tomaso Binga
• Nat Marcus, Let Me Roll It, 2023. 4:37
• Patrizia Vicinelli, Poesia fonetica da Fondamenti dell’essere,
  Courtesy of 3ViTre Archivio di Polipoesia
• Hanne Lippard, Work, 2020. 01:10

This archive is activated and complemented by a sound program, The Weight of the Tongue, and an upcoming publication, The Weight of the Concrete (2024). As the 1968 anthology Il Peso del Concreto featured predominantly male voices, these projects attempt to expand and renegotiate the original editorial premise by including a broader range of historical and contemporary poems. The Weight of the Tongue focuses on the vocalization of experimental poetry, gathering the voices of Tomaso Binga, CAConrad, Bryana Fritz, Susan Howe and David Grubbs, Katalin Ladik, Hanne Lippard, Nat Marcus, and Patrizia Vicinelli. This sound program acts as a prelude to the publication The Weight of the Concrete (2024), which will revisit and reimagine the 1968 publication and the archive of its making, pairing Ezio Gribaudo’s graphic work with a new selection of historical and contemporary concrete and experimental poetry.
Books by Ezio Gribaudo and others are displayed in a non-hierarchical manner alongside archival documents, photographs, silkscreen prints, and objects. This paraphernalia highlights the international scope of Gribaudo’s publishing projects and collaborations.

During his editorial adventures in the early 1960s, Gribaudo met the French intellectual and art critic Michel Tapié (1909–1987), who became a friend and frequent collaborator. Tapié invented the concept of Art Autre (or Art Informel) and, in 1960, founded ICAR, the International Center of Aesthetic Research in Turin, where many experimental exhibitions and talks were organized. Gribaudo published and edited a number of books with Tapié, including *Morphologie Autre* (1960), the series *Baroques Ensemblistes* (1961–63), *Continuité et Avant-Garde au Japon* (1961), and *Devenir de Fontana* (1961). The latter led to Lucio Fontana, Tapié, Gribaudo, and photographer Francesco Aschieri taking a trip to New York together. Through Tapié, Gribaudo met and befriended many of the leading figures of the international avant-garde, including artists from the Japanese group Gutai. Gribaudo’s personal and professional development was nourished and enriched by these encounters and his many travels around the world.

In 1967, the Cuban artist Wifredo Lam (1902–1982) invited Gribaudo to participate in the *Salón de Mayo* exhibition in Havana in 1967, which also included works by Pablo Picasso, Alexander Calder, René Magritte, Joan Miró, and Eduardo Arroyo. On this occasion, Gribaudo contributed to the collective mural *Cuba Colectiva*, painted on the night of July 17, 1967, by around one hundred artists to manifest “the revolutionary cultural internationalism,” as Alain Jouffroy wrote in the preface to the book edited a few years later, in 1970, by Gribaudo.

Gribaudo’s books for Edizioni d’Arte Fratelli Pozzo are designed by an artist for artists. They prioritize the text, presenting it in a large black typeface that offers both a reading experience and a visual exploration. The process of bookmaking, and the necessary expertise it entails, not only shaped the aesthetic and graphic style of Gribaudo’s work but also provided him with a creative freedom that allowed for experimentation, as noted by his friend Jean Dubuffet in 1976:

“I am astonished, given the ethos of the era, that you should have devoted so much of your time to your duties as a publisher, all while pursuing the development of this fascinating body of work that could very well resonate loudly with the public... But I find as well that you are right to do it, since in this way, you keep yourself from becoming a tributary of the vicissi-
“...tudes and compromises that all too often beset the very equivocal position of the professional artist.”

In the early 1960s, Gribaudo collaborated with Fabbri Editori to produce *Le Grandi Monografie*, a series of more than thirty monographs dedicated to important international figures, such as Karel Appel, Francis Bacon, Alberto Burri, Giorgio de Chirico, Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Henry Moore, and Francis Picabia, among many others. He often collaborated with other publishing houses like Einaudi and many authors, critics, and poets.

This collection of books and archival material is complemented by a selection of independent and experimental publishing projects featuring Gribaudo’s artistic work.

As an epilogue to the exhibition, Davide Stucchi presents the limited edition of *Logogrifi* embossed books on chairs intended to bear and reveal the weight of a body – an intervention that gestures toward the imprint of Gribaudo, the presence of his absence.
Ezio Gribaudo
(1929–2022, Italy)

was an artist and art publisher based in Turin. Gribaudo’s work, notable for its fusion of figurative, textual, and topographical elements, was shaped by his expertise in typography, industrial printing, and publishing. He managed the Edizione d’Arte Fratelli Pozzo publishing house and was instrumental in the Le Grande Monografie series by Fabbri Editori. In collaboration with Michel Tapié, he contributed to the International Center of Aesthetic Research (ICAR) in 1960. Gribaudo was also committed to curatorial projects, such as an exhibition of works from the Peggy Guggenheim Collection at Galleria Civica d’Arte Moderna, Turin, in 1976, and Jean Dubuffet’s exhibition-performance CouCou Bazar at Promotrice delle Belle Arti with FIAT in 1978.

Gribaudo’s artistic trajectory is characterized by a prolific exhibition history. His work has been featured in exhibitions both in Italy and internationally since the late 1950s and continues to be shown today.

Solo exhibitions of his work have been presented at, among others, Galleria d’Arte La Bussola, Turin (1959); Galleria Schwarz, Milan (1967/1972); Galleria la Bertesca, Genoa (1967); Galleria Viotti, Turin (1968); Galerie de France, Paris (1968); Kunstverein Göttingen (1971); Petit Palais, Musée d’Art Moderne, Geneva (1971); the Museo de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro (1973); Marlborough Graphics Gallery, London (1974); Galleria Michaud, Florence (1975); Etablissement d’en face, Brussels (1990); and Galerie Sans Titre, Paris (2022).

In addition, Gribaudo’s work has been included in significant exhibitions presented at, among others: the 9th Rome Quadriennale, Palazzo Delle Esposizioni (1965); the 33rd Venice Biennale (1966); Salon de Mai, Paris (1967/1968); Salón de Mayo, Havana (1967); the 9th São Paulo Art Biennial (1967); Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1967); Galleria Civica d’Arte Moderna, Turin (1967); the Museo de Arte Moderno de Caracas (1968); Národní Galerie, Prague (1969); the 8th Biennial of Graphic Arts, Lubljana (1969); the 10th Rome Quadriennale, Palazzo Delle Esposizioni (1973); Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (1979); Muestra Internacional de Obra Gráfica, Bilbao (1982); Grand Palais, Paris (1982); Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli (1986); the Italian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011); Stuart Veblen, Munich (2011); the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (2016); Museo del Novecento, Milan (2017); Galleria Civica d’Arte Moderna, Turin (2017); Pio Pico Gallery, Los Angeles (2020); and the MACRO Museo d’Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rome (2021).

Davide Stucchi
(born 1988, Italy)

lives and works in Milan. Located at the intersection of visual art, fashion, scenography, and domesticity, his work explores pre-existing materials through minimal gestures and interventions. With a conceptual and poetic approach, Stucchi creates installations and sculptures that reveal absent bodies and intimate stories through the tangibility and vulnerability of found objects. Since 2017, Stucchi has been active as a set designer for various fashion labels, culminating in his latest collaboration with Magliano, which began in 2021.

Recent solo exhibitions include:
2546/9728, Sundogs, Paris (2019); Davide Stucchi con Corrado Levi, zazà, Naples (2019); and Light switch (Entrance), Gregor Staiger, Zurich (2019); DS, Deborah Schamoni, Munich (2020); Falli (Phalluses), Martina Simeti, Milan (2021); Clin d’oeil with Luisa Gardini, Ermes Ermes, Rome (2022), among others.

His work has been featured in group exhibitions at the:
16th Rome Quadriennale, Palazzo Delle Esposizioni, Rome (2016); Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2017); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2018); Stadtgalerie Bern (2020); the 17th Rome Quadriennale, Palazzo Delle Esposizioni, Rome (2020); MACRO Museo d’Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rome (2020); Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris (2021); Marsell, Milan (2022); Palazzo Ducale, Genoa (2023); Between Bridges, Berlin (2023); Mendes Wood DM, Paris (2023); Museion, Bolzano (2024), among others.
Collateral program

19/02/2024, 10–17h
ICOM DAY
An Open Day:
The International Museum Day ICOM offers adults, children and families a special program for all exhibitions. The works of the artist Ezio Gribaudo invite children to solve mysterious picture puzzles.
(IT/DE)
Free admission; no registration required

07/05/2024, 15–17h
CONVERSATION MEETING
Language games and picture puzzles: What new concepts of the world do we arrive at when playing creatively with language? In how many variations can images be read? The works of the artist and publisher Ezio Gribaudo invite us to discover the enigmatic poetry of “visual languages”.
(IT/DE), with Brita Köhler
Booking required: Eventbrite Museion / 0471 223435/13

11/07/2024
18h: Book launch The Weight of the Concrete
19.30h: Curator’s Tour with Tom Engels, Director Grazer Kunstverein, and Lilou Vidal, independent curator and Scientific Director Archivio Gribaudo, Turin

22/07/2024, 19h
Submission Submission – Bryana Fritz
Teatro Comunale, Bolzano / Stadttheater, Bozen
In collaboration with Bolzano Danza

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Ezio Gribaudo
The Weight of the Concrete
23.03.2024 – 01.09.2024

In a scenography by Davide Stucchi
With sound works by Tomaso Binga, CAConrad, Bryana Fritz,
Susan Howe & David Grubbs, Katalin Ladik, Hanne Lippard,
Nat Marcus, and Patrizia Vicinelli

Curated by Tom Engels and Lilou Vidal
in collaboration with Leonie Radine

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