



Kandinsky in Milan

THE VODAFONE ITALIA COMPETITION "YOU TOO CAN BE AN ART CRITIC" IS A SUCCESS

More than 500 "art reviews via SMS" sent for the competition in collaboration with the Antonio Mazzotta Foundation, Palazzo Reale and with the organisational backing of EGG.

Some 700 visitors have requested the audio-guide by Vittorio Sgarbi regarding Composition VII

Prizes for the competition "**You too can be an art critic**", organised to coincide with the exhibition **Kandinsky and abstractionism in Italy 1930 –1950** held at Palazzo Reale from 10 March to 24 June 2007, were awarded yesterday afternoon, Tuesday 10 July. The exhibition's 120,000 visitors make it Milan's most popular cultural event so far this year, causing a great deal of comment on the national media.

The winner of the competition is Sara Redaelli, 24, with an SMS on "Abstract sculpture (1934) by Fontana: *"Fontana Abstract sculpture. Ideas from the harsh earth. Ambitious and fragile, you aim high but then, awkward and sad, you curl up under the burden of your limits. You are not iron, you are a man"*. The second winning SMS is inspired by Kandinsky's work: *"KANDINSKY 'Composition 7'... I was line, form, colour; I danced in the finite space of a painting to the rhythm of his brush..."*. The third prize goes to an SMS inspired by the work 'Bleu de ciel': *" 'Bleu de ciel', aquarium of sky amniotic liquid blithe creatures whirling and beckoning: hybrids of reality reveal to me the evolution of the world"*.

The "**You too can be an art critic**" competition was promoted by **Vodafone Italia** in collaboration with the **Antonio Mazzotta Foundation** and **Palazzo Reale** and with the organisational backing of **EGG**. The aim is to increase public participation through the stimulation of critical reviews and comparisons between the works of art on display. The first prize was a cultural trip to London (offered by the company **Il Sipario Musicale**), while other prizes included a conversation on art with the head of the city's Culture Department, **Vittorio Sgarbi**, and free tickets for the exhibitions at the Antonio Mazzotta Foundation and the city's principal museums. The competition was open to all those who wished, in the course of the exhibition, to communicate their impressions of the works on display by sending an SMS to the special number activated by Vodafone. All comments received are on view on the official site at www.kandinskyestrattismo.it until 31 December 2007. The audio-guide dedicated to Composition VII by Vittorio Sgarbi has also met with great success and almost 700 visitors have requested it.

The over 500 comments received represent living proof of the capacity of the works on display to fascinate visitors and stimulate their critical awareness. The first of its kind in Italy, the initiative proved unexpectedly successful, especially with regard to the quality of the messages received. Though limited to the 160 letters of an SMS, the public expressed opinions, sometimes personal and often original, which always grasped the work's most evident meaning, thus demonstrating that abstractionism is no longer perceived as an obscure, cryptic artistic movement. Most of the comments concerned works by Kandinsky, confirming his status as an artist able to communicate with a public of all ages and cultural levels, but many were inspired by Italian abstract artists, among them Fontana, Dorazio, Melotti and Veronesi. No wonder, therefore, that the winner's choice was a work by the great Lucio Fontana, a major figure in Milan during the period in question.

The work of art that gave rise to most comments was Kandinsky's 'Composition VII', a masterpiece from his Munich years produced at the peak of his so-called "Lyrical Abstractionism" phase. The large painting measuring three metres by two greeted visitors as they entered the first of the exhibition rooms, overwhelming them with its spiritual and emotional power enveloped in dazzling colours with a strong musical influence. Its predominance in the public's list of favourites was therefore only to be expected. Various other emblematic works by Kandinsky, including 'Movement 1', 'Red Knot', 'White Zig Zags' (the exhibition's symbolic image) and 'White and Conglomeration' were the object of many observations, but the work that gave rise to most comment, after 'Composition VII', was 'Bleu de ciel', from the Centre Pompidou in Paris. The great quantity of messages of varied and miscellaneous content triggered by this work is the most surprising thing to come out of the initiative. While comments regarding '**Composition VII**' dwelt mainly on the synaesthetic aspect of the painting, in which a whirl of emotions made of light, colour and sound are condensed in an abstract language veined with a biomorphic component, '**Bleu de ciel**' gave rise to a range of comments. In the painting some saw a dream-like world and others an existential reflection, while there were those who pointed out its childlike, primordial grace and sometimes the implicit drive towards serenity and distance from the objects of the real world.

The high degree of participation and the unexpected quality of the criticism produced were a source of great satisfaction for the organisers. In expressing its opinion the jury dwelt mainly on the originality of the short texts that attempted to enhance the capacity for simple expression by freely translating personal moods and impressions.

The following is the list of the 10 SMS that made it into the final round, accompanied by the marks awarded and a comment on the winner.

The list of winning SMS

	mark
Fontana Abstract sculpture. Ideas from the harsh earth. Ambitious and fragile, you aim high but then, awkward and sad, you curl up under the burden of your limits. You are not iron, you are a man.	30
KANDINSKY "Composition 7"... I was line, form, colour; I danced in the finite space of a painting to the rhythm of his brush...	28
"Bleu de ciel" aquarium of sky amniotic liquid blithe creatures whirling and beckoning: hybrids of reality reveal to me the evolution of the world. Annie B.	27.5
Untitled (Dorazio) Exceptional rain. Regenerating sprinkling of hues. A work that greets the gaze and holds it there, bewitching it: panchromatic hypnosis.	27
BLEU DE CIEL. I am astonished to look at myself in the mirror and see how much desire for carefree lightness transpires within my self	26.5
White 1930 : a clown-like equilibrium, a whirling call to order, the threshold of sidereal space; a mocking cosmos redeemed by light.	26

Composition VII The permanent oxymoron of a calm chaos. 25.5

White. It's colour. But still colour. A note without sound. A pause, a prelude rich in sharp-edged potential . White is waiting dense with expectation. 24

Two tensions. A supple entropy courts the rigid, defined context. Feminine and virile. Like the treble clef on the stave. 23.5

"abstract sculpture" by Fontana: the soul is a thin wisp of silvery smoke tending towards infinity and withdrawing into itself in the eternal existential question point 22.5

List of other particularly interesting SMS which did not win a prize

14 var. of Ver. – Poetry and rigour of a Bach counterpoint become a game of shape and colours that seems to mimic the primordial building up of the elements

Sweet virtuosity of coloured notes like a silent music written for the eyes. Composition VII.

Bleu en Ciel Kites with no strings because free of the burden of the contingent circle colourful in the sky, but a painter's brush may manage to chase after them..."

"bleu de ciel". The sky beyond matter suddenly opens on to the white wall. Polychrome lives navigate. Timeless message of hope. Andrea M

Winkellinie Man's harpoon shrinks as the monster reaches out, a new Moby Dick and former Spielberg shark, thunderbolt and glowering eye of the divinity

Composition N.7: $E=mc^2$ because after the formula of relativity it is one of the most important summaries in the history of humanity.

Bleu en ciel What are the figures one sees? imaginary beings coming down like light feathers following each other and whirling round? thoughts? no! The joy of V.K. painting

Bleu de ciel – it's like observing a drop of impure water under a microscope with all the dynamic life floating inside.