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Author: Domenico Gnoli

Title: WAIST LINE

Year: 1967

Technique: Acrylic and sand on canvas

Dimensions: 97,5x130,5 cm

Coefficient: 1200

One of forty-three canvases Domenico Gnoli painted in the serene setting of S'Estaca, Mallorca, between 1968 and 1969, Waist line is a product of the artist's most fervent and inspired periods of production.

Creating almost a third of his entire late paintings (of the period between 1963 and 1969) in the last months of his life, these works form the apex of his career.

Representing nostalgic fragments of our everyday lives, they were created for the last exhibition of Gnoli's lifetime at the Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

A direct amplification of the generic and mundane trouser, Waist line exemplifies Gnoli's unique magnifications of the textures and fashions of the 1960s bourgeoisie into a transfixing array of patterns and details to engender a revolutionary aesthetic redefinition of the figurative



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tradition.

Following the renowned show at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1969, the work was exhibited in the internationally acclaimed Galerie Schmela, as well as one of the artist's key retrospectives at the Kunsthalle, Darmstadt, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam and the Centre National d'Art Contemporain in Paris: an impressive exhibition history that attests to the importance of this work within Gnoli's exceptional artistic practice.

An abstracted surface of monotone grey hues variegated by faint vertical lines that guide the composition, the consecutive configuration of the work is interrupted only by a conventional grey button.

This object of visual spartanism and banality transfixes the viewer's gaze, as the proximity of the undulating rhythm of the ribbed herringbone pattern creates an oscillating visual effect. As a result of the horizontal waistband that divides the composition and the starkly flattened perspective, the sense of distance is collapsed and the work succeeds in dwarfing its audience.

Exposing the still life aspect of a buttonhole, a shirt collar or the tip of a shoe, Gnoli employs an arbitrary focus to shift our perception of the mundane, documenting not just that which is overlooked but capturing unique facets of the 1960s quotidian from a magnified perspective. Through a metamorphosis of the ordinary into an abstract

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synergy of texture and pattern Gnoli instils the everyday with something ineffably new and unique.

The son of an art historian, Gnoli's life as an artist was preordained: "I was born knowing that I would be a painter; because my father; an art critic, always presented painting as the only acceptable thing. He pointed me towards classical Italian painting, against which I rebelled soon enough.

The Surrealist tactic of unveiling a new image of the world is reflected in his illusionary magnifications, whilst at the same time his extreme amplifications negate any pre-existing objectivity moving ever closer to abstraction. The linear composition of Waist line brings to mind the geometric abstractions of Frank Stella or the vertiginous visual effects of works by Op artist Bridget Riley; a connection that becomes all the more relevant when considering the artist's career defining exhibitions in New York in the 1950s and his desire to create something exceptional for his solo exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery later that year.

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