

# Nino Mustica. The Infinite Form

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What sparked in Nino Mustica's mind in the mid-1990s that revolutionized his way of making art and, in some respects, even our way of understanding it? The artist, almost fifty at the time, came from what was ultimately a traditional background—fitting the stereotype of an artist tied to his homeland, Sicily, so rich in strong emotions and archaic tendencies. Only a few biographical clues hinted at a certain creative restlessness, which had led him to travel and spend long periods in New York and London between the 1970s and 1980s. And yet, despite demonstrating his ability to handle large decorative dimensions in public installations and theatrical settings, nothing foreshadowed that turning point, that invention which would occupy him for another thirty years, until the end.

One might simply speak of an “illumination,” a sudden intuition, a dazzling revelation—something not impossible in either art or science. Mustica himself surely found himself at the center of such a conceptual “flash.” However, this was not solely the result of personal, individual, or even stylistic maturation. The shift did not arise from a purely subjective factor, but from a true epochal transformation, of which the artist was among the first to grasp one of its possible developments. In this sense, one can speak of a historical change in which technology plays a predominant role. Mustica, in fact, applied 3D technology to his art—not merely as an evolution of techniques for representing objects or architecture, but as an extraordinary expansion of the possibilities for constructing form in three dimensions. It was, in a sense, the elimination of the gap between dimensions—the two of the surface and the three of space—allowing for the creation of physically real forms that, until then, could only be seen in certain paintings by Yves Tanguy or Salvador Dalí.

Mustica's enthusiasm for the possibilities offered by this technological application evolved as all great intuitions tend to: an explosive, almost violent assertion, followed by continuous refinement and testing of details, to assess the durability of that initial excitement. Of course, this is not a matter of evaluating a scientific theory by scientific methods, but according to the freer intentions of art: not a question of truth, but of beauty—and there was plenty of that. Rather, one might wonder why so few—among them Mustica himself, Tony Cragg, and the “starchitect” Zaha Hadid—have brought this formal possibility to physical completion. Cragg did so in his sculptures, and Hadid in her design objects as well as in the conceptual basis of many architectural projects. Perhaps the hesitation lies precisely in a kind of “fear of the infinite” inherent in this application: the infinite possibilities in the creation of form are overwhelming, especially since each contains infinite variations of itself, in a dazzling array of hypotheses, all equally valid. In fact, transformation must be controlled, always bearing in mind that every line—and every curve, recess, and fiberglass undercut—is merely a moment, an infinitesimal instant within a continuous metamorphosis that the artist has “frozen” according to his intent.

In the end, stretching the concept slightly (though not excessively), one might say that Mustica's is an “Impressionist” experience or, if you prefer, a three-dimensional evolution of photography. At the same time, one should not forget that in this case the creative experience does not occur only at the end of the process, when it crystallizes into form, but perhaps above all at the beginning—when color is laid down with a broad, decisive brushstroke, already anticipating its unknown future development.