

# A CASE OF SUBSTITUTION: THE SCREENS BY SCHIFANO

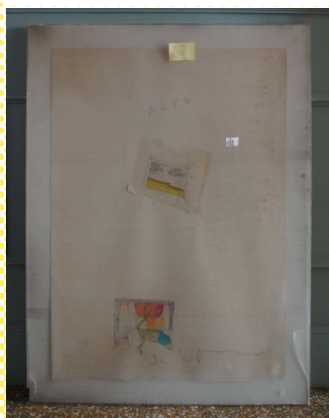
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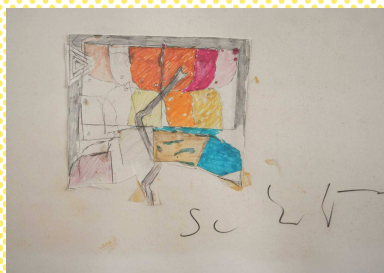
## Introduction:

Mario Schifano (1934-'98), one of the most important Italian contemporary artists, from the early Seventies introduced in his production the motif of the screen in the series of "Paesaggi TV" (lit: TV landscapes), and elaborated it during all his activity. In this series he reproduces in his paintings images captured from the television, and covers it with a sort of screen in transparent ruled plastic in order to highlight the starting point.

These screens appear very often damaged in a such considerable way to impose to conservators extreme choices.



The artwork before the treatment



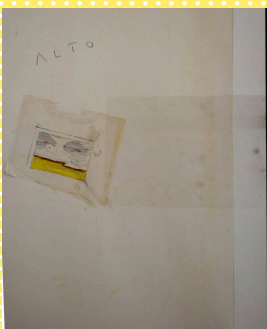
Detail of the drawing and the signature



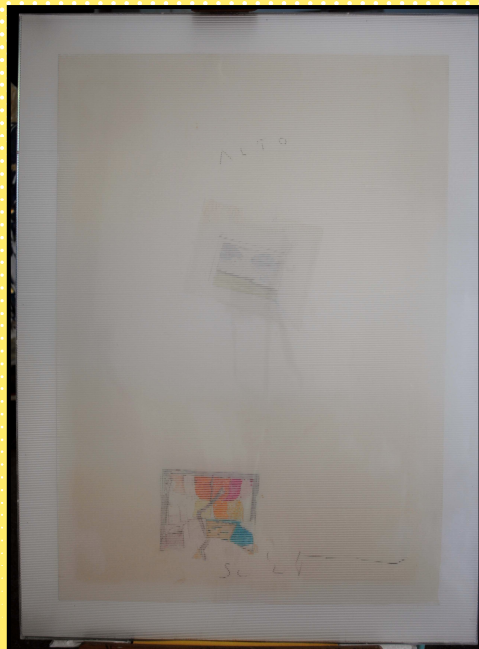
Details of the missing pieces and the biological spots of the screen



The treatment of isolation of the plywood



During the cleaning



The artwork after the restoration with the new screen



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Preservation Of Plastic ARTefacts in museum collections

The POPART Project

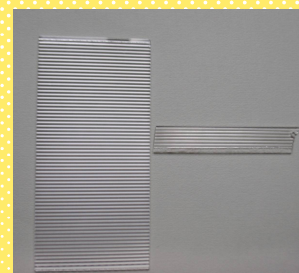
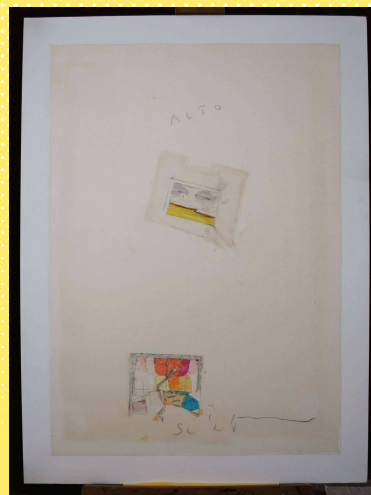
7 > 9 March 2012, Paris

The artwork presented, signed by the artist and coming from a private collection, belongs to this series, in a simple and immediate version. Here Schifano associates two television images quickly drawn by pencils and felt-tip pens on paper sheets, that are cut out and glued on cardboard, then glued on plywood. This panel is larger than the cardboard and painted with white alkyd enamel on the excess surface. Finally he screens the composition with a ruled poly methyl methacrylate screen (the identification of the plastic has been possible with FTIR analysis).

Like other artworks of the series, the most conservation problems were presented by the plastic screen, that was broken and affected by some missing pieces, so that the aesthetic value of the work was seriously compromised for the prevalence of the lacuna on the image. Brown circular spots, present on the internal face of the plastic, were referable to a fungal attack. If the dirt and the biological attack were easily removable, the missing pieces weren't restorable at all with aesthetically acceptable integrations.

Considered the importance of the optical effect of the screen for the meaning of the artwork and the evidence of the damage, a deep market research has been carried out to find a new transparent methacrylate panel with the same thickness and ruled section. So, with the agreement of the owner, the use of this materials has been decided in order to substitute the original screen with a new one, characterized by the same shape, measure and optical effect (transparent methacrylate sheet, 2mm, art. 53, provided by the New Glass srl, Cavarina - Varese). The sheet has been processed according to the original, by fixing edgings of 2,5 cm at 90° along the four sides of the main face; the holes for the screws have been done in correspondence to the original ones.

On the other hand, it has been possible to carried out the conservation treatment for the paper and the cardboard. Particularly, the parts of paper detached from the cardboard have been fixed using cellulose ether (Culminal MC2000). The dirt and dust present on the surface of the sheets and cardboard has been removed by Wishab and synthetic sponge, while the white painted surface of the plywood has been cleaned by demineralised water and swab. Apart from the dust, the cardboard was affected by detachments from the support, deformation and an evident yellowing due to an acidification process caused by the contact with the plywood (for this reason along the edge the parts covering the white enamel appeared less yellowed). In order to slacken the acidification process, the cardboard has been isolated by the plywood applying on it a thin film of acrylic resin in solution (Paraloid B72). Then, it has been fixed to the support with cellulose ether (Culminal MC2000) and kept under weight to obtain the flattening. The application of the new screen has concluded the restoration treatment.



A sample of the new methacrylate panel and a fragment of the original screen (right)

The recto after the conservation treatment without the screen

