

## **Flash Art October-November 2003**

### **Stefano Arienti: on mould, seaweed, paper and other matters.**

"This artist has already left behind unforgettable memories: the fake mould drawn with pastels at the Brown Boveri factory the shredded and stretched plastic bags in the form of seaweed, the paper hats worn by stonemasons made into boats, the books that explode into form by folding the pages. Just as Giulio Paolini gave form to principles, Stefano Arienti, with the same rigour, gives substance to the ephemeral" (Corrado Levi, 1987). For 20 years, Stefano Arienti has been provoking the art world with his laser-like intelligence. His work is neither dazzling nor irreverent nor boisterous, more whispered than spoken, almost silent, never traceable to the work of other artists, never repetitive, original in the purest sense of the word. A solitary type, yet surprisingly disposed to talk and listen, Arienti has investigated numerous new possibilities for making art: engraving slabs of treated styrofoam to reveal the light inside the grain (Postcards, 1990-1991); scratching and splicing 24x36 photo transparencies to modify the frozen instant (Untitled, 1992-1993); manipulating books by substituting the illustrations (Italian Covers, 1997); erasing the colour from parts of posters, pointing the printed images white (the "erasures", 1990-1994), other times puncturing the images along the contours then displaying them backwards (the "poncifs", 1988-1990), or cutting them up and recomposing them in layers, creating thicknesses and shadows (Blue Mountain, 2004), or smearing them with children's modeling clay to suggest heavy brushstrokes (the "pengas", 1990-1991) or inventing a new pointillism by cutting and recombining analogously coloured chips (the "puzzles", 1989). Always lucid, alert, and eager to insist that he doesn't know how to draw, Arienti sums up his career so far: "I learned the history of art by making it".

B.F.