

# “Perceiving Politics as a Poetic Fact.” Mauro Staccioli, the PCI, and Engaged Artmaking

## Abstract

Existing scholarly narratives largely fail to account for the political militancy of Italian abstract sculptor Mauro Staccioli (1937–2018), despite his avowed commitment to the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and multiple statements affirming the political nature of his practice. Combining a close reading of Staccioli’s key writings and statements, sustained analysis of archival evidence, and historical contextualization, this article demonstrates the extent to which the orthodox Marxist politics of the PCI and the artist’s work intersect. Despite commonalities of purpose, Staccioli’s abstract, site-specific, and ephemeral practice chafed at the longstanding figural preferences of his party. The article argues that, in such use of experimental artistic strategies, Staccioli’s work articulates a new, albeit still orthodox paradigm for Marxist artmaking that is fully staked in the contingencies and urgencies of the Years of Lead.