



# Tetsuya Nakamura

**W**ith Tetsuya Nakamura we had become used to seeing futuristic machines, space ships painted in psychedelic colours and characterised by a plasticity straight out of science fiction, shooting through infinity with our most fantastic dreams trailing in their wake. The artist has not lost the playful, light-hearted and irreverent aspect of his previous works, and for Steellife jumped headlong into a celebration of the pure expression of form, autarkic and imperative, so absolute that it needs no decorations or colour schemes. But let us proceed gradually.

Tetsuya experiences art in everyday life, reinventing and reshaping household objects thanks to his well-structured imagination, teeming with ideas.

A bath tub can become a kind of sinuous, aggressive convertible with a surface emblazoned with the kind of airbrushed designs beloved of bikers, with the seductive, beguiling profile à la Moore and a handful of cartoon colours thrown in; a Mini Cooper is bedecked with a series of multicoloured patterns until it becomes extravagant, original, unique.

The artist's talent lies in customising everyday objects, even those whose aesthetic charms are not immediately obvious, with a sheen

that recreates and regenerates  
them according to a formal diktat that feeds  
on geometric yet harmonious abstract designs,

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luminous, iridescent patterns of colour: fluid inventions that owe much to science fiction and a visionary imagination reminiscent of Blacque.

In Tetsuya's work, the colour, graphics and decorations are as one with the form. There is a strong element of reciprocity and interchange: the colours bring out the strength, the form contains the explosion and harnesses the meaning.

The work created for Steellife appears to contradict what we have just said - but only in appearance.

**THE FLASH OF LIGHTNING** is still typified by the decorative patterns usually airbrushed onto motorbike petrol tanks, helmets or anything else appreciated by bikers. However, the patterns are not inspired by a palette of colour, an obvious way of attracting the onlooker. They are carved from the tough, electric brutality of steel.

Rather than hiding it, the artist allows  
the material to express itself in all  
its gleaming splendour. By stripping it bare,  
we see its majestic power of expression.

Without colourful embellishments, the work is forced to submit to the onlooker's pitiless gaze, which is precisely the moment in which we understand how the precarious fluidity of the airbrushed patterns has now materialised into an incredible aerodynamic, futuristic sculpture.

It is a three-dimensional piece that has been worked on in only two dimensions, made up of contoured, engraved sheets of metal, the result of the artist's profound considerations of the value and potential of working with the exposed surface. The collection of silhouettes create new patterns and profiles, some gentle, some sharp, harmonising with the dizzying speed that aerodynamically lengthens the frame.

It is a racing car straight out of the future, with the kind of acceleration even Batman would envy, and a vibrant, animated plasticism in the vein of Boccioni. The title, *Flash of Lightning*, says much about the work: a flash because of the virtual speed at which it seems to run, glimpsed only for a few hundredths of a second, and also because it is so dazzlingly beautiful that the observer finds it hard to maintain the enchantment. Playing with words, we could add that it is a "blazing" new vehicle, made up of *flamboyant* elements.

Tetsuya tells us that he approaches a sheet of steel in the same way as a piece of canvas. He sees it as a flat surface with which to interact.

While on canvas he interacts by adding things,  
with steel he subtracts, creating solids, hollows,  
light and shade.

The effect is startling, nothing seems to be missing. In fact, the addition of colour would ruin the clean lines, and minimalism of this work.

One last thought: the stripping down of the surface, as if the sheet of steel was a precious piece of lace, creates the illusion that the 750 kg have lost substance.

The resulting perception is one  
of an elegant lightness, a bold graciousness.

The fact that each part reflects the light, multiplying the adjacent faces as it does so, means that the work in all its essential simplicity actually multiplies the points of view, perspectives and suggestions tenfold.

Could it be just a flash of light?