

Solitude's economy

In the Amy-D Arte Spazio gallery, different artistic forms dialogue with each other on the theme of economic solitude, in a collective exhibition that presents unpublished works by five international artists.

Crossing the threshold, an armchair, or rather, what's left of it, dominates the space. The sculpture by Alessio Barchitta (1991) attracts and at the same time repels the spectator, leading him first towards a familiar atmosphere, but immediately afterwards it translates into a contradiction: the object loses its role and creates estrangement. The violent act of the artist who rips open the armchair because he can no longer wait, as the title *Can't wait* also suggests, is the symptom of that feeling of waiting that often grips us and that we need to subvert. All the elements of comfort lie on the ground like a still life, revealing the internal wooden structure, uncomfortable and, for this reason, non-functional. Reality is served raw to the appetite of a distracted spectator, forced here to empathize with the work in order to understand its paradox, because what seems is not. The cushions themselves betray the expectation of a soft object, trapped by a splendid mosaic that has made them solid and cold. The artist works with materials recovered from a Sicilian river used as an open-air landfill. The search for him therefore begins with the provocative act of the one who chooses precisely what has been discarded by others, with clear reference to the environmental theme and mass consumerism.

The explosive scream of Alessio Barchitta is echoed by the deafening silence of the installation by Marco De Santi (1983). From a pile of rubble rises a reflecting structure that hides a deserted city inside, where the only human traces are in the form of abstract skyscrapers, barriers that man has built to protect and isolate himself, losing any form of dialogue with the nature. By adopting an internal point of view, as inhabitants of the work, the presence of the mirrors multiplies this human and environmental condition, making it repetitive and mechanical, as if there was no way out, nor the hope of imagining a different future. The effect is absolutely sensual and hypnotic, poised between reality and illusion. By shifting the eye away from the work, thus distancing oneself from what is a condition in which man is totally addicted, is it possible to build a form of active awareness? The need is once again to "break" the mirrors, get out of this placid form of acceptance, weave a thread to escape from a claustrophobic labyrinth.

The distortion technique is skillfully interpreted by another artist, Maria Wasilewska (1971, Poland), applied to semiotics to reason about the political climate. The fluidity of our contemporary is reflected in the manipulation of conventional symbols, proposing one resemantization. Some photographs bear witness to *Nango-hi*, a land art work made in Japan where the artist uses an ancient technique of burning wood to give life to a series of irregular shaped sculptures. It is an ecological and sustainable modality, which strengthens the material and protects it from external agents. The wood itself is obtained from a particular variety of cypress growing in a hostile environment, the volcano of Mount Aso. These conditions allude to the concept of resilience.

This term also echoes in some way in the figures of the workers of the coal fields of India, it creeps into the folds of a child's ashy smile, and permeates the whole landscape in which these bodies are immersed and resist, in the raw and poetic shots by Daesung Lee. The capitalist economy ignores the damages of the production process, hides the exploitation of the workforce, presenting a product that is conveniently served and quickly consumed by Western bulimia. Marx called this attitude "commodity fetishism," referring to the tendency to forget all the destructive collateral consequences of the global market, which the Korean photographer documents and presents to us. But those of Daesung are windows on distant realities returned with a disconcerting dignity, a surreal silence permeates the atmosphere with toxic fumes and a masterfully played light returns the silhouettes, the shadows of those tired and proud bodies and ennobles them.

Man's relationship with nature, the urgency of a profound reconnection with it is a need that the Russian artist Lena Shaposhnikova (1990) first manifests as a private symptom by painting in personal notebooks and then shares and materializes on large oil and acrylic canvases. In the huge *Acque color mercurio* diptych, a naked body, furrowed with marks that resemble wounds, abandons itself by immersing in a body of water, as if guided by an impelling primordial instinct. A storm of acrylic becomes luminous rain, and transports what is happening on a dreamlike, surreal level. This work, initially conceived to be a single large canvas, but subsequently transformed into a diptych, metaphorically underlines the need to unite the rational part (the head) with the instinctive and animal one (the body).

The nudity reveals the signs of a suffering experienced primarily by the artist, to which the viewer is called to measure himself and recognize himself, in an appeal for sharing and awareness. Everything is played on the distance: between the two canvases, between man and nature, between the head and the body. This breakage can be read along the edges, which are constantly and desperately trying to be stitched up.

The contemporary globalized economy weaves fictitious, convenient relationships, promising integration but resulting in exclusion and exploitation. This, combined with the pandemic situation of recent years, has accelerated even further the process of social atrophy which traps man in a condition of isolation passed off as a virtual connection. It is a solitude that is amplified in the midst of the crowd, a homogeneous faceless mass, for which each of us is replaceable both in work and in relationships. It is an absolutely social phenomenon, a problem that art, due to its prerogative of sharing, faces and unmask, asking the viewer to make himself "uncomfortable".

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