

Stop, this instant!

It seems to me that the title of the exhibition should underline the most salient characteristic of the exhibition itself.

Two polyptychs and other works are exhibited at an airport.

It is thus perfectly logical that the theme of flight should be latent in the correct deciphering of the images.

However, as is evidenced by examining the two triptychs and taking due account of observations made by scholars and distinguished critics from Bonito Oliva to Pratesi to De Benedetti, it seems to me that the theme of the exhibition is more complex than a simple reduction of the exhibition's deeper meaning would imply, on the fly.

At first I thought of a title like "In flight", since the forms that cross the two triptychs somehow contain the idea of the transit of a wing or, in any case, of a flying form which crosses a space modelled according to your natural, spontaneous tendency to enucleate the white that shines through the two triptychs.

In my opinion, the drafting of the triptychs still reflects in you the legacy of Roman Pop Art and of Schifano, with whom I know that the relationship has been convinced and profound.

Not that there is an imitation of Schifano in your painting. I always recognize in you a great originality and real wisdom of the hand, which conceives and formulates spaces of the finest quality and intensity.

But the perception of the triptychs is that of a heavy, thick air, which seems to thin out from the crossing of those fixed, razor-sharp, geometric shapes, long and tapered in one case, and stronger in the other, but which nevertheless evoke very well certain abstract-concrete forms. In twentieth-century Italian art such forms were seen in the paintings of Osvaldo Licini or *neo cretti* by Alberto Burri. Silhouettes, shadows.

The shapes suggest the idea of crossing and therefore of flight since they hover without support and without further naturalistic references. To me these forms of yours have given an idea analogous to those of the Space Odyssey's spaceship, which advances relentlessly without encountering any resistance; very solemn and clearly perceptible. A bit like what happens in the real glider experience in which the tapered shape of the plane flows before our eyes in a sort of admirable "sound of silence" pertinent to both the movement without motor in the air and that at the bottom of the sea.

Then that pictorial material which suggests how something milky and dense is transformed into the clear evidence of forms.

In both triptychs the forms literally travel in space, combined with a sort of ancestral symmetry, which reminded me of the mathematical and geometric calculations of the proportion, the golden section and the Fibonacci progressions, without for this reason I have tried to verify a possible effective correspondence with these scientific suggestions.

But for me it is like scrutinizing a Mondrian painting. That too is evidently built with the mathematical-geometric logic of a very remote Pythagorean ancestry, but then there is no need for any technical

verification. What arrives is the mental structure, the order dominated by a rational disposition that above all knows how to extract a sort of secret life of forms from its rationalism.

And, moreover, in the remainder of the exhibition this vaguely Mondrian element hybridized on what, historically, was the most logical development of Mondrian's thought, that is to say, the informal American, the action painting of a Rothko, makes me think of something similar for you, with those shapes that you make so clearly defined and then, as crossed, once again, by a brush stroke which is almost like that of the bricklayer, who gives the first coat to the wall and still waits to finish it.

As a curious reminiscence of "low" artisan procedures that become "high", changing completely of meaning and becoming a factor of reinvigoration of the form.

And there is this alienating balance in you even in the literal sense which has its balancing element in it.

But the most significant element in triptychs is basically the simplest, truly Mondrian. The forms, therefore, cross the space and those who see can read with reliability the triptychs in all three possible ways.

The shapes, in fact, pass from right to left; the shapes pass from left to right; the forms are immobile and broken into three perfectly congruent parts to each other so as to give us back a unitary image so that the division into three could easily disappear and acquire the single field.

As if we saw gigantic arms which became silhouettes, or shadows, in fact.

You, after all, have always been, as an artist, suspended between two worlds: one of painting, and the other of suggestive, captivating photography, at times animated by an old-fashioned disguise, sometimes looming in the solicitation of *eros*.

And at the same time you have always shown a desire to clean up space from any extraneousness which may disturb its purity and balance. In short, a space abstractly reduced to a kind of quintessence where the soul is placated in a real immobile contemplation. One of the greatest ends of art, after all, today as it was twenty thousand years ago.

Then it occurred to me that in your painting there is that implicit suggestion, very beautiful and compelling, to stop the moment, an expression perhaps abused but which reflects a real and profound need of the human being that pushes him to imagine a real struggle against time that unravels and unravels us.

Of course it can be exorcised, perhaps by going into the part of an eighteenth-century lady who reappears in our own days. But it can be exorcised by making it the very subject of our art.

As if you, the artist, were saying to your painting: stop, this instant.

And your career is nourished with snapshots, but this time not with photographic images so flattering and seductive.

Instead here, in triptychs above all, there is precisely the main topic.

So I thought that the exhibition could be seriously titled: Stop, this instant!

Claudio Strinati

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