

The subtle art of seduction in photography and painting

The exhibition of Antonia Di Giulio in Venice, on the island of San Servolo, compares a protagonist of photographic art and a talented painter.

The two artists evoke an experience of which they preserve precious memories and measure themselves taking as their starting point a chimera, a myth and an icon.

Gibson portrays a young woman in some daring poses that illustrate the subtle art of seduction. The only witness to her beauty is a classical capital whose presence recalls what is unchangeable, eternal, regardless of the flow of time.

To introduce us into his world, the photographer begins by approaching it so much that it is identical to the image he has always dreamed of. Approaching does not mean reduction: we are in a universe in which the shapes exactly fill the space, continually exchanging the pose.

The forms and the stories are repeated and wrapped around the perennality of ancient art which is present in the photography with the classic capital. The photographer is encouraged by the model to tell wonderful stories. The contiguity between the young woman and the ancient stone is the dominant theme: the transience of feminine beauty marks the indistinct border between different worlds, between the ancient and the modern world. But the moment taken by Gibson gives the image a kind of immortality. But how many ghosts, how many ambiguities accompany these icons.

The paintings of Antonia di Giulio that accompany the images do not dissolve the mystery.

The painter, referring to the dialogue born of a common experience rather than adding elements susceptible to puzzles, eliminates frills, deletes sinuosity and curves, abolishes every allusion and with analytical rigor sets out on the path of contemplation of the abstract, of emptiness. The gesture of the painter is always to remove, not to add; to fade into the vague, not to go into detail.

Procedure that has different effects depending on the photos from which it takes inspiration and makes the icy coldness one of the founding elements of his painting.

A law of maximum domestic economy dominates her works in which different combinations of a relatively small number of geometric elements stand out.

While the images of Gibson tell a story, they reveal the origin of a dream that originates from suggestive poses, the paintings of the painter abolish every allusion.

It was really an important meeting that of Antonia Di Giulio with a photographer of extraordinary sensibility, its point of arrival lies precisely in the rarefaction, in the abandonment of every chromatic trace, of every delicate nuance: what in the picture is a reality more real than truth, in the pictorial language of Antonia Di Giulio becomes a stark and severe writing.

Her ambiguities and reminiscences do not survive in the paintings which nonetheless preserve the mystery of how it was possible to pass from the contemplation of the photo to the following path that leads to the pictorial work.

Through the strict expressive language of the artist transpires, like a shadow, the icon of the photo that inspired it.

Umberto Vattani

Rome, january 2019