

Contemporary languages on display at Building in Milan. Demetrio Paparoni proposes a return to figurality. – Carlo Franza’s blog

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BUILDING presents, from Thursday 20 January to Saturday 19 March 2022, *On the Wall*, exhibition curated by Demetrio Paparoni with works by **Paola Angelini, Rafael Megall, Justin Mortimer, Nicola Samori, Vibeke Slyngstad e Ruprecht von Kaufmann.**

The exhibition project, which includes **more than forty works** of contemporary artists who use the **figurative painting** in a profoundly different way, it has been specially designed for the four BUILDING floors. The **works, made for this exhibition or never exhibited before in Italy**, are largely large in size.

The **title of the exhibition** opens up to different meanings. If on the one hand it suggests that it is a painting exhibition, on the other it recalls the **wall concept** as an element of division between two adjacent spaces or as a limit to be overcome. Referring to the Renaissance concept that sees in the painting a window open to the outside world, the curator identifies in it a poetic detonator capable of opening passages towards the outside world, but also towards an intimate or virtual dimension. If of **access or escape door** it is a question, to allow its crossing is the ability to relate to the meaning embodied by the work.

In the conception of **Demetrio Paparoni**, an exhibition is the **attempt to give order to the chaos of contemporary languages**, an attempt made in vain by the multiplicity of artistic phenomena. Governing chaos, explains the critic commenting on the choices that accompany this exhibition, is one of the objectives of science to understand in advance something that has not yet happened. Since chaos is the result of randomness determined by forces outside our control, it will still be ungovernable. Extending this reflection to the sphere of artistic languages, the way in which they are born, develop and interact creates a fluid condition that makes every attempt to focus on the complexity of the different phenomena subjective. Although each exhibition arises from the attempt to orient oneself in the pluralism of languages, to provide a compass that allows to find a way out of the labyrinth, even in its best studied forms, it will still be the staging of a failure.

In fact, according to Paparoni, **the curator’s perspective cannot give life to a univocal reading of a fluid phenomenon such as that of art**. This difficulty can be found both in putting together works by different authors within the same exhibition, as in the case of *On the Wall* at BUILDING, as well as in dealing with the work of a single artist in its unpredictable formal, linguistic and conceptual variations. Although at the time the medium used by the artists in this collective was painting, *On the Wall* highlights a strong diversification of the languages and intentions of the artists on display.

In *On the Wall* Paparoni limited his choice exclusively to the field of figurative painting, unlike the exhibition *Contemporary Chaos*, curated in 2018 at the Vestfossen Kunstmuseum (Norway), or in other exhibitions, in which the critic had given a plastic representation of the chaos of contemporary languages, putting artists who use different means of expression in dialogue. The project at BUILDING is also proposed as a continuation of the reflection started with the exhibition *The New Frontiers of Painting* (2018), and

continued with *The Last Supper after Leonardo* (2019), as part of the celebrations for the centenary of Leonardo's death, both held at the Stelling Foundation in Milan.

Paola Angelini (San Benedetto del Tronto, 1983). To characterize his poetics are the link between concreteness and vision, the influences of personal memories and the history of painting, the role of discontinuity and dialogue with the masters. In 2014 and 2016 he participated in the artist residency programs at Nordic Artists' Center Dale (NKD) in Norway and Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation in Venice and in 2017 he obtained the Master in Fine Arts at KASK & Conservatorium, School of Art in Gent. In 2011 he exhibited in the Norwegian Pavilion of the 54th Venice Biennale, in the exhibition entitled *Baton Sinister*. Among the exhibition venues where he exhibited his works are: Marsèlleria (Milan, 2016); Palazzo Pretorio Museum (Prato, 2017); Space K, National Gallery of the Marche (Urbino, 2017); Brandstrup Galleri (Oslo, 2018); BGE Gallery (Stavanger, 2019).

Rafael Megall (Rafael Melikyan, Yerevan, 1983). At the center of Megall's works there is the representation of nature, which is however stylized and transformed into an ornamental pattern. His main subjects are panthers, tigers and jaguars, but also shattered porcelain, cartoon characters, iconic figures, monstrous and hybrid beings, often depicted on a phytomorphic background. Nature is represented in a flattened and stylized way with bright, saturated and electric colors closer to digital images than to real ones. The absence of perspective, of depth, the dense geometry of the graphic signs, their repetition and their intertwining create a *horror of the story* which recalls the tradition of the ancient Armenian miniature and of the bas-reliefs that adorn places of worship and palaces. To create her paintings Megall uses oil colors and stencils, the result of digital processing. Many of the elements used in his works have a symbolic and religious value. In 2017 he represented the Republic of Armenia at the 57th Venice Biennale. Personal exhibitions have been dedicated to him by the National Gallery of Armenia, in Yerevan, and by the MoCA in Moscow. He participated in the exhibition *The new Borders of Painting* at the Stelling Foundation (Milan, 2018).

Justin Mortimer (Cosford, 1970). His works combine images from the Internet with archival material from old books and magazines to visualize a world where nothing is stable or certain, echoing in the tectonic cracks that they appear in the old world order. Mortimer has received prestigious awards including the EAS Award (2004), the NatWest Art Prize (1996) and the BP National Portrait Award (1991). His work has been included in several reviews and publications on contemporary painting, including *Landscape Painting Now* (2019), *The Anomie Review of Contemporary British Painting* (2018), *A Brush With The Real: Figurative Painting Today* (2014) e *Vitamin P2: New perspectives in painting* (2011). Among the recent solo exhibitions we remember *Tomorrow*, Space K, Gwacheon, Korea (2020), Djanogly Art Gallery, University di Nottingham (2015), *Future Perfect*, Singapore (2015) e *Haunch of Venison*, London (2012).

Nicola Samori (Forlì, 1977). Starting from meticulously made copies of works by great masters, especially from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in which the clash between light and shadow dominates, Samori transforms and reinterprets them with the troubled spirit of our century. Punch, scratch, literally peel off the painting through a sudden or meticulous gesture, giving life to new works that have their roots in the tradition of art history, and then arrive at the expression of torment with a contemporary language. As well as on wood or canvas, the Romagna artist also paints on surfaces such as copper and semi-precious stones, integrating their material peculiarities in his works. Even fresco and sculpture are techniques he used. Samori has two holdings in the Venice Biennale (2015 and 2011). In recent years, his personal exhibitions have been hosted at Palazzo Fava, Bologna (2021); at the Mart in Trento and Rovereto (2020-21); at the Made in Cloister Foundation and at the MANN, National Archaeological Museum of Naples (2020). To these are added further solo exhibitions abroad in institutional spaces such as the Yu-Hsiu Museum of Art in Taiwan, the Neue Galerie in Gladbeck, the Center for Contemporary Art in Szczecin and the Kunsthalle in Tübingen. He participated in *The new Borders of Painting* (2018) e *The Last Supper after Leonardo*, (2019), both at the Stelling Foundation.

Vibeke Slyngstad (Oslo, 1968). Participate in international exhibitions since the 90s. His pictorial practice, rooted in Romanticism, at the same time faces a critical analysis at the limits of photography, of which he also takes up in his landscapes the defects due to the spots of light. In 2009 he participated in the 53rd

International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale exhibiting in the Nordic Pavilion in the exhibition *The Collectors*, edited by Elmgren and Dragset. Among his exhibitions are mentioned *Contemporary Chaos*, Vestfossen Art Laboratory (2018), *the New Frontiers of Painting*, Stellite Foundation (2017), *Inside Outside Architecture*, National Museum of Art, *Architecture and Design*, Oslo (2013).

Ruprecht von Kaufmann (Munich, 1974) His strong and emotional paintings are intentionally disturbing. At times linked to dream situations, in his representations, in which the artist places emphasis on the narration, one often hears the echo of situations at the limit, where it is not predictable what will happen. There are also elements in his work that suggest a dark humor and a dense melancholy. Von Kaufmann has an extensive exhibition activity, which led him to show his paintings at the Kunsthalle Erfurt, at the United Nations headquarters in New York, at the Museum Böttcherstrasse in Bremen and at the Georg Kolbe Museum in Berlin, at the Kunstlaboratorium in Vestfossen, in Norway. In Italy he participated among other things in the exhibition *The new Borders of Painting* at the Stellite Foundation (Milan, 2018).

Demetrio Paparoni (1954), lives in Milan. Art critic and curator, he founded the contemporary art magazine in 1983 *Celestial Theme* and the publishing house of the same name, which he directed until 2000. From 1996 to 2008 he taught History of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Catania. His recent book *Art and Poststory, Conversation on the end of aesthetics and more*, together with Arthur C. Danto (Neri Pozza, 2019), is forthcoming in the United States, published by Columbia University Press. He is responsible for the art section of the newspaper *Tomorrow*.

Carlo Franza