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Passaggi della memoria (Passages of Memory)

2007

Bato's recent pictorial production shows an artistic path that rapidly burns through the stages of a representational maturity increasingly focused on the essential. If in his early works the echo of great masters of contemporary art, such as Bacon, had influenced his composition and colours, now, faced with the renewal of his mark, ever freer and more spatial, we cannot help directing our reading towards a genuine autonomy, towards a personality that is gaining more and more character and individuality. Many works of the imagination are in fact a crude cloning of social reality. They are nothing but mimesis. In Bato, reality is not "photographed" and then presented as such, faithful to a false social model, but is interpreted, commented on, in several works ridiculed, and set against the vision of his own critical and dissenting viewpoint. Mimetic or imaginary-specular desire is the desire for the identical. It reproduces the real, even without knowing it. It gives birth to a great number of "narratives", works of fiction, or even collective behaviours such as carnival, where the imagination does nothing but re-propose power, even if it only draws a parody of it. Bato, on the other hand, works on *phantasia*, which discards every superficial mimetic effect and, by taking deliberately fictitious objects as the subject of its discourse, reveals structures that disclose another reality, which gives them meaning. The meaning of Bato's works today is the meaning that a gesture, a simple mark, a blink of an eye very often takes on. A non-mimetic alphabet, but one that is essential and sufficient to describe a "fact" of memory or to tell an emotional event that has developed only in our inner self, stimulated from outside. We could therefore conclude by noting the underlying irony that gives definition to the message, whose representation today appears more instinctive, less bound to formal perfection, and also aimed at re-evaluating space or, as a due reference, the unspoilt environment that surrounds us, unaware and often unknown to us.

— Michele Gerco, Passaggi della memoria (Passages of Memory), 2007