



Marco De Luca GEMMAE LUCIS

Pallavicini 22 Art Gallery from 17th to 25th April 2021

Curator of the exhibition Roberto Pagnani

My first encounter with Marco De Luca's work dates back to several years ago and it was a really joyful event. His works struck me for the richness of shades and for the variety of tones on tones as well as apparent ranges of non-color. Were they different shades of gray? No, really it was a perfect color whispered in the most decisive coloristic elegance. There, where a background of "non-color" is expressed in a sudden blaze of a colored tile, that lights up the whole composition. Actually, mosaic is painting and Marco De Luca is an artist who has always used painting, skillfully moving from pigments to mosaic, combining everything with important architectural mastery. Essentially, his works are sculptures that have freed themselves from the weight of materials and are lightened in a vertical ascent where the static is reinvented with extreme technical skill. Significant is the sculpture / mosaic "The mountain and the cloud", present in the exhibition at Pallavicini 22, in which we see, in the mountain, an erect and sudden development formed by multiple squares with spaced tiles and continuous changes of inclination of the trends never, however, drastic in the different orientations, so that the mountain itself becomes the backbone of the cloud, without however stunning us with its bulk, thanks to the tapered shape. The light of the material which, at first distracted glance, could be candid and almost colorless, in reality, is a casket of very elegant colors in which stone tiles of various shades of marine green, gray green and blue green are combined, embellished by soft earth-colored tiles that suggest golden light while not being gold at all. Then, above the mountain, here is the cloud that rests softly on the top. Its rarefied tesserae leave more space for empty interstices and then gradually regain fullness as you go up to the top and increase the horizontal succession of small multiples of stones.

Extremely striking are the two steles "He" and "She", also exhibited at Pallavicini 22, which appear as two thin vertical apses ascending towards the sky. They are like niches that host a sublimated and abstract idea of the divine; there is silence in the concave part but there is also a powerful and spiritual sound. They are like two elements that belong to an "archeology of the future" where contemporary art is directly linked to the great history of the past, returning to be a solid bridge between all human eras. "She" is clear and silvery, made up in its outline by female sections of shells, oysters to be precise, which De Luca collected on the Adriatic beaches. These sections undulate like perpetual sea undines making the mosaic vibrate as in an infinite perpetual motion. It's wonderful the central part in which the shell fragments are applied flat and bear cuts on the mother-of-pearl tesserae, vertical cuts that push the composition towards the empyrean. "He" is, precisely, the male stele whose center is dominated by a compactness of strongly joined stone mosaic tiles, with a high "strip" that breaks the strength of the filling made up of smaller and more homogeneous tiles. But it is in the frame of the apse that a real revolution takes place ... The artist invents a very personal mixture like macerated paper and, individually, at a safe distance from each other, inserts tiles that make the stele extremely ethereal and thus they liberate the divine contained in it.

Roberto Pagnani

(free translation)

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