

Marcello Mariani: (De)In-struction Manual Ottaviano del Turco

Destruction is the perfect antinomy of "creation". In the case of Marcello Mariani's work we are instead placed before a paradox which I will summarise as follows: the more his canvases, his supports, his papers bury (destroy) our certainties regarding artistic creation (with the obsessive, rmaniacal refusal of any concessions to form), the more the image that emerges from this destructive bombardment gives life to a creative process, both original and moving. The more Marcello Mariani tries to help us (or, more aptly, "deviate" us) from this process, inventing formal inspirations (which do not exist in his works), the more it becomes clear that his is a creative process with roots, origins and developments, that are born of sentiments, emotions and inspirations, all dose relatives of that "sacredness" that lives within every one of us, even when we ignore it or try to remove it.

Be skeptical of the artistic relations that Mariani tries to propose to you. He has known fundamental artists from the past century, but he resembles none of them: his work resembles his character and, above all, his smile. To see Mariani smile in his studio, and to look at his works, reveals more than any critical essay might of the origins of his inspiration and the process that guides him.

Not even the hard-to-accept history of his artistic existence (admired but never consecrated) managed to extinguish that smile.

It is possible that some of the larger works will recall Emilio Vedova's abstract-expressionist creations.

Destroy this thought: if you look well, in Mariani's work the formal rigour disappears, something the Venetian painter tried to introduce in his paintings, and leaves space to a free and unshackled imagination, without rules, anarchical and musical.

It is feasible that, especially in the smaller works, a link becomes apparent with the great artist Osvaldo Licini. However, I urge you to continue the work of destruction: Licini recounted medieval tales or created highly sophisticated cosmogonies at times with respect, and often with diffidence, but without ever embarrassing the culture of those looking at them. Mariani never tells a story in only one painting. One could go as far as saying that his works could be seen as the sequences of a sacri-ligeous comic strip.

Mariani seems to start a story that will not end with the painting that announces its beginning. The artist ends up working on a canvas but his creativity (and his smile) are already "elsewhere". At times, the last touches already contain the sign and the weight of he who already believes to have worked too much on that particular inspiration.

Mariani knew Rauschenberg but there is not anything more distant from the American "Pop" movement than the painting of the artist from the Abruzzi. Never, never I repeat, was Mariani attracted by the communicative power of the "object", and never was he indebted to the photographic snapshot or to a cinematic sequence, the unrepeatable obsession of the American school that so strongly influenced contemporary art.

I observed Berengo Gardin's photographs, especially those in which the artist is in the centre of the Bacon-like chaos of his studio. Mariani seems to undergo, in those images, a sort of atomic bombing after which nothing survived, except the artist

and his creative function. Not even the pilot of Enola Gay would manage to erase the eternal value of artistic creation from the history of humanity. Berengo Gardin seems to realize this and thus understand that no photography, even the most beautiful one, can bring to life this miracle of life and culture.