

1. The luminous objectivity of the surface

Those who commented the work by Rolando Tessadri during the past decade - 1996-2006 - evidenced the historical context of contemporary abstraction as the complex system of reference for a painting constructed on the essential elements of the line and, above all, on the imaginative value of light.

If during the 'trials' of the 1990s what prevailed was the pulsing rhythm of the matter which the gesture flexed and contained within certain dynamic and transversal structures, in the works belonging to the opening years of this century one is aware of a greater control and a significant abandoning of the rapid movements of the colour.

The need for this orientation was not an immediate one. It came about by way of internal passages where the artist entrusted his work to nuances, to impalpable shocks of the colour that strayed in emptiness, driven by light evanescences.

Space is a silent zone, far from whatever structure of reference, a dimension suspended over the impalpable energy of light. In fact, the previous schemes constructed on diagonals became more fine to the point of being dispersed in the colour made up of minimum 'flashes'.

The painting of these years - 2000-2002 - was therefore an indeterminate threshold that was the prelude to the demand for refounding the structure of the form through the presence of parallel chromatic bands, planes of colour composed in the measure of a movement given both different and co-present tones.

The physical quality of light is posed as the central problem of Tessadri's research, the place of the emanation of imperceptible visual values which vary in their intensity and which are rarely reduced to a purely constructive intention.

If anything, the artist uses the structural screen of the linear incidences in order to communicate a synthesis of space by way of the use of the chromatic potentialities experimented with diverse techniques. The analytical sensitivity of the colour is not an end in itself but implies a reflection concerning geometrical grammar as the non-dogmatic dimension of constructive thought, place of the crossing by the eye which goes beyond its own limits in the luminous objectivity of the surface.

Tessadri is fascinated by the poetics of sign and colour reduction. He employs the essential instrument of the line although he is also interested in annulling it in the pictorial medium. In this sense he is aware of the need for a very close relation between the sign and the surface, between the weight of colour and its relative transmutations.

This attention is never separated from the planning phase of the chromatic field. Painting becomes an exercise which is lived as the search for equilibriums that are underway, a presupposition that allows expression by way of different vibrations: both inside the individual surface and in the sphere of a sequence of planes in reciprocal relation.

The idea of the "series" is derived from the tradition of Constructivism, above all from that element which is reflected around the succession of colour variations based upon the compositional shiftings and the verification of the times of perception.

Tessadri conceives the relation between the individual pieces as a precise course of changes where the intuition of light stimulates the indeterminate sensation of space, a sensation that is strengthened by the reversible running of the eye which moves from one point to another, from the first to the last surface of the series as in a total and indivisible process.

2. The silence of colour, painting without clamour

The analytical phase is always the necessary premise for this type of research. The composition project is developed in an open way so that the spectator can move during the perceptive sequence, developing a cognitive experience that is open to manifold reading possibilities.

The eye 'interrogates' the surface although it never manages to exhaust its solicitation, to understand the complex identity of the colour which advances by way of additions and subtractions, at times almost touching on the zero degree but never proposing to take this upon itself in a definitive way.

There is absolutely no perceptive methodology which is capable of resolving the oscillation between the visible and the invisible. In fact, the reader must always bear in mind that state of "the ambiguity of the idea and the project" which in 2000 Tilly Meazzi defined as the characteristic of "the decidedly silent work by Tessadri".

The silent condition of the pictorial research on the part of the new generations is an indication which derives from the past. Filiberto Menna talked about it during the middle of the 1980s with regards to a group of young painters - Poor Abstraction - who expressed "the need to counter the noise of the world with a concentrated and silent space in which the artist is able to perfect minimum means, those that are absolutely indispensable for undertaking the construction of the new".

During the 1990s other critics underlined the need for subjectivity which the young painters felt in sustaining the silent presence of painting as the possibility of acting in a secret and allusive way, with an ethical and aesthetic commitment that it was rare to find in the teeming proposal of new languages.

As Giovanni Maria Accame clarified on various occasions: "A possibility that is not tied to definition but to indetermination. It is in the margins of suspension and uncertainty that we can make free hypotheses for the future and rereadings that change the sense of the past".

In consequence, the silence of painting lies in its destiny that is lived with secrecy, in the value of reflection and revelation of pure colour, more fully investigated in the essence of its own internal nutrients. Its strength lies in the action that is not replaceable by other linguistic hypotheses, allowing the painter to work by concentrating on the imaginative quality of the veilings and tones. It is not fortuitous that the persistent value of painting as subjective art – lacking external referents - continues to give rise to the argumentations of criticism when without preclusion it knows how to individuate the relations between ideating and doing painting.

Orietta Berlanda, for example, when presenting an exhibition by the artist in 2002, underlined his ethical choice as being "far from the glamorous clamour" of today, instead close to an art dimension "whose value lies in never letting itself be completely revealed".

Consequently, the painting by Tessadri is concentrated within the assiduous work of the decanting of colour, of the objectivation of light as a substance that cannot be reduced to a system of unalterable components or characteristics, not only measurable by way of the quantitative mechanisms of optics but above all by means of the qualitative levels of matter.

3. Grids of light, meshes of imagination

In being faced by the constitution of painting as an individual practice supported by specific procedures which cannot easily be simulated, there is the need for a criterion of reading that follows the times of colour emanation. It is necessary to grasp, to 'receive' the invisible revealings between colour and colour, to 'catch' the relations between different bands of light which dilate ad infinitum or else investigate the variants that lie within the identity of a sole colour. The most appropriate warning is that of not losing oneself when faced by the often undecipherable body of processes that construct the changeable connections between the surfaces, between the individual canvas and the series, between one colour and the lines when taken as a whole.

The value of time is suggested by Tessadri by the sequence of the surfaces and by the rhythms within an individual image. In this way the time of perception is never a casual value but proposes itself as a complement that is necessary for the revealing of the colour-light, an extension of the meaning of the work in the infinite process of the perceptive event. The question is to be in syntony with the relations between tone and tone, between saturations and transparencies and between the vertical equilibriums and the horizontal flows that impel the forms in the uninterrupted flux of space.

The geometrical grid disappears when faced by the colour event, what is often defined as the epiphany of light (although it would suffice to talk in less holy terms about “chromatic genesis” as the origin of every luminosity).

Luminosity constructed as visionary structure: this can be a definition that is suitable for approaching the intentions of those painters - like Tessadri – who explore the becoming of “painted light” while not foregoing contemplation of the mutations of colour, in this way going beyond their own circumscribed ‘weave’.

In Tessadri’s most recent works - 2006-2007 - the technical skill and valuation takes on a state of tension that is necessary for the results to be achieved. The refining of the work processes subjects the construction of the colour to a process of identification with the imaginative function of the structural grids.

The procedures are perfected with each minimum passage: from the application of the weaves of sewing thread on the canvas to the use of an impasto of acrylics and glue spread on the surface using a large soft spatula (doctor blade). With this passing - as in an exercise of frottage - the underlying mesh is evidenced, modified according to the distance of the single threads. Tessadri explains that the colours are constructed in starting out from a common base - a coloured grey tending towards red and blue - which is then altered with other colours in order to obtain tones that in a different way modify the geometrical subdivision of the space.

It is in this way that the subtle variations of light are determined and which become more intense when observed as a whole, with the ‘coupling’ of paintings in a series, producing effects of more radical tension in the case of the monochromes.

The fundamental value of these procedures lies in transforming the regularity of the patterns into expansive luminous bands, into taking the geometry towards a state of ‘vertigo’ in which the empties become fulls, in which the rhythmical repetition of a well-structured warp originates that unlimited vision of time which Tessadri imagines as being space without confines.