

Luca Macauda Alla testa dell'acqua (The Water's Head)

Text by Gabriele Tosi

On Macauda's surfaces the painting is soaking. His gestures sink and re-emerge like if guided by a wave, they vibrate dynamically thinking at an earthy matter with a water-like fluidness. The mental confidence of the stroke melts free, away from any aggressive extreme because it creates that candor that is able to melt the caves of artifice. This is how I understand the use of these soft pastels, that, being pure and without solvents, make the artist work on bonds, feeling the image instead of projecting it from the eyes. The vulnerability of the matter – a rush touch can cause a botch – matches with the visual refusal of any fossil form, its long-lasting brightness delegates to the light, that is the life, any characteristic and formal task.

Macauda works vertically, stretching out the canvas on a frame that he makes rotate. This procedure subverts the stroke from the gravity of the body and commits to the impression the direction of the painting. Because of this procedure, the working surface is larger than how we see the finished artwork in the framework. The painting is bound in the structure and becomes a witness of the relationships between the freedom of gesture and the acknowledgement of a dimension.

His most recent works are the result of a technique that is new to the artist. After drawing a dark hatch on the background, Macauda, who is not ambidextrous, works on the canvases blindfolded and with both hands, in order to be able to see the painting only after drawing a surface, focusing the sight more on the choice of colors.

The facts describe Macauda as a silent painting experimenter. I look at his early works and I notice they already prove satisfying expressive and formal answers and – if the cap fits wear it – that are somehow fulfilling and repeatable. Luckily it is very rare that a porous work such as this accepts to be repeated and, if the artist is more sincere towards his own work than to what is certain, he can accept the transformation only as a meaning of the work itself.

In contemporary art the word 'work' is used instead of 'artwork'. In physics 'work' can be grossly defined as the strength that acts on an object and causes its movement. When I notice these canvases do not exit from the vacuum and in the meantime are not any variation of any model but the

experiential result of what comes first, the word 'work' does not seem to me cold and inappropriate anymore. The result is a painting that maintains a somehow tactile memory of the research. I had the opportunity to enjoy his most recent works and I saw clearly a continuous change. Sometimes there is something that moves, grows, emerges: in the change of the color, in a more energetic surfacing from the background, in the amount of gestures. Sometimes it is like after a birth, the innovation is charged, overwhelming and darkening, as if a very long period had passed between the dimensions in a very short time.

I think at how many times people asked: "The world is already full of images, why keep creating ones?" This way of painting claims, among others, the merit of giving a reasonable answer that can be formulated putting ourselves in a condition of being open to what we feel about us, to those conditions that make us feel what we deeply are, regardless to the external phenomena. For instance, conducting us to those places where a feeling can reach us without any code or communication. Macauda lives such experiences in archaeological sites near Modica (Sicily), where he was born. Paintings are named today after those antique places not because of a sort of esotericism of origins, but because the artist, presenting the nitty-gritty, tries to give the painting a sort of magic, which has been lost many times in art because of the selfishness of thinking at art only: it is the possibility of giving a balance between the present of the human being and the obscure fragments of a past, that will seem unreadable and inhumane if the contact to it is removed.

Luca Macauda (Modica, 1979) lives and works at Brescia. His personal exhibitions include: We do what we're told, A+B Contemporary Art, Brescia (2012); Unlikeness, A+B Contemporary Art, Brescia (2010). Collective exhibitions: 030\_2.0 Arte da Brescia, Piccolo Miglio in Castello, Brescia (2014); EC.02 Caravaggio Contemporanea, Ex-Monastery of San Giovanni-Caravaggio, Bergamo (2013); Oltre il pensiero. Quattordici ricerche attraverso la materia, Palazzo Guaineri delle Cossere, Brescia (2013).