

Vittorio Brodmann

Day and Night in the Life of a Bakery

15.10. – 10.12.2022

Day and Night in the Life of a Bakery. The evocative title conjures up a host of images before we even set eyes on the exhibition. It suggests something simple and familiar, while at the same time eliciting a curiosity about something elusive, something that contrary to its straightforwardness, refuses to completely reveal itself and may even prove deceptive.

Vittorio Brodmann's paintings tell stories. Familiar modes of production are reflected in the extraordinariness of the ordinary. These are evidenced in the gestures of the subjects portrayed as well as the artist himself and challenge the idea of the self-sufficiency of the artist's own work.

Bread is one of the oldest cultivated foods of our time. With its current industrial production, we forget the manual skills required to actually 'bake bread'.

Brodmann's series of portraits of men are based on images sourced in early 2020 from a website run by bread sommeliers. The site features almost exclusively male bakers performing various quality controls to evaluate bread.

Several of the portraits are drawn from the same person, with Brodmann modifying facial features and characteristic traits to concentrate on the scrutiny of that which has been produced. A gesture of complete devotion. Self-sufficient and withdrawn from the outside world. The position of the baker's hands, recurring in different iterations, aligned, clasped or one laid atop the other, centre on the olfactory or tactile – rather than the usual visual sense.

The moment of this sensory gesture of inhaling an aroma and palpation seems to generate motifs of dreams, wishes, passions and yearnings or even fears, like a speech bubble in a comic strip, image within image.

Brodmann presents the profession of the baker in contrast to his own, that of the artist. While the former remains locked in the moment of quality control, Brodmann breaks with the conventional approach of painting and questions its formal logic. The grid system, to which painting clings with signs of uncertainty, is repeatedly used as a motif – implied informally and amateurishly within the works. At times serving no purpose, or enabling another image within the image motif, which subsequently appears as an isolated, independent image.

Brodmann's colour palette is rooted as much in emotional atmospheres as in the visual content of the image, following a logic of its own that remains indefinite. The painting process leaves things open and does not strive for perfect composition. Whatever was

there before can be painted over or changed later, freeing up space for new constellations. Figures or fragments of figures from earlier works persevere like set pieces.

Brodmann's refreshing, witty approach to the expectations of painting, his exaggeration of the quotidian and simultaneous theme of satisfaction with what one has produced all make up the pieces of the tale he is telling – concurrent overlaps that enable us to grasp the essential information of things, the depth of which lies in the experience and the haptic moment.