

CASTIGLIONI

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SALOTTINO RENDEZVOUS **19.11.2022 - 18.02.2023**

On the occasion of the second edition of Milano Drawing Week presented by Collezione Ramo, Castiglioni has the pleasure to introduce *Salottino Rendezvous*, the first solo show with the gallery by Stefano De Paolis (b. 1992).

When Stefano De Paolis speaks, he caresses the air, polishes the sphere of discourse, leans a little forward and with outstretched hands delivers karateka blows.

It's impossible for us to talk about the work of a colleague, fellow student and friend without picturing his shirts, his boots, his back hunched over the table, the surgical white ring light reminiscent of those of architects or influencers.

Because the work of De Paolis lies in the creation (thankfully) of an imaginary (thankfully) that rides across multiple times and dimensions. All of his concentration is in the drawing, in the tense nerve that runs through the wood of the pencil. Its point condenses a sensation both light and ethereal.

Whereas in painting we could find its traditional genres, Stefano makes drawing a genre itself.

There is no portrait, still life, landscape, but rather the constant perversion of creating a new world made up of his gentle rules, passions, desires.

When we discuss De Paolis' work, we both perceive the tension of white as a limit and possibility, where things emerge with a feeble voice and with that slightly ancient, yet classic, taste that ghosts have, for example, in cinema.

The image in the exhibition is crossing the wall and its dimension, in constant stress to manifest itself.

It's not by accident (or maybe it is) that one of the characters presented by De Paolis in the exhibition is also called *Fantasma (Phantom)*, as the title of the latest episode of a saga released in cinemas or the front of a box containing an action figure, of which the label defines the model.

It could be the "Super Saiyan" or "Gear fifth" version, but instead it is "Phantom", as if to prove that the planets shaped by his sensibility are aligned.

Stefano's drawings are the pages of a novel that pleases him (and pleases us). If the pages turn yellow (but Stefano is very well prepared), his imaginative urge, which often leads him to tell us possible scenarios concealed from us, does not age instead.

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Let's think, for example, at the control panel: the point of view changes, we become distant observers, the narrative subject becomes his project and De Paolis here is asking us the imaginative effort (thankfully) to enter his world and to reflect on our own nature.

Who am I? We can picture ourselves as the aforementioned Pilot inside of his vehicle.

We now stand in front of the control panel and the artist succeeds in making us make another shift: the control panel once again becomes an evocative subject, like a cinematic aerial scene, this time of an ideal city on a blue planet, perhaps the destination of the journey (the end).

We are sitting in a cinema seat, we are talking about the movie we have just seen, we're out of popcorn, one last sip of Sprite remains and everything seems to fit (well done Stefano).

Our journey is also over. Yes, but the artist is still creating a mechanism of enigmas in which a white rectangle, excluded from the drawing, a rectangle where nothing more is possible (to be accurate, but also mysterious, as we like an artist to be) makes us return to the origin: everything must happen, everything is still potential, the Pilot is now eluded from his process of narrative salvation.

The Phantom is finally able to manifest itself.

Now we realise that Stefano De Paolis' drawing has some interesting peculiarities. It is not the point of the pencil that traces the path (the set of signs), but it's used as a filler medium. We have seen Stefano, on the table, with his lamp, his karateka shirts, getting into the millimetres of the sheet, dissecting it and taking care of each portion.

Like artists in the 16th century used to do, the instrument is engaged one portion at a time, one small square at a time, in the great whole that gets lost in the making, becomes a useless detail only to return back to drawing. Here also lies the artist's perversion of being gentle to everything, to caress, and then gradually disclose (even to himself) the image.

Back home, we continue talking about what we have just seen. We ask ourselves: is it true that reality depends on its observer?

As we sit, we begin to daydream about what lies beyond the closed door of the kitchen.

It gets late, one of us stays over, thoughts are hives in our heads and in the room there is a wooden wardrobe reminiscent of the one Stefano showed us. We are barely used to the darkness, and helped only by some contrasts that define the volumes surface, it slowly emerges in our eyes. One of us gets up and goes to the wardrobe, the other watches him grabbing the handle... he is opening the closet door.

Text by Federico Cantale and Giacomo Montanelli

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STEFANO DE PAOLIS

1992 Bergamo, Italy. Lives and works in Milan.

Education:

2015 – 2020 Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, Milan, Italy.

Group Exhibitions:

2021 “Osservatorio X”, Superstudio, Milan, Italy; “Moon Scale”, Arrivada, Milan, Italy.

2020 “Degree Show” curated by Edoardo Monti, Palazzo Monti, Brescia, Italy; “Palazzo Monti: Transatlantico”
curated by Edoardo Monti, Mana Contemporary, Jersey City, USA.

Residencies:

2019 Tfac residency, Elephant Lab, London, GB.