

The exhibition, organized in collaboration with WIELS-Contemporary Art Center in Brussels, is the largest retrospective ever held in Europe, and the first in an Italian public institution, devoted to the German artist Thomas Bayrle (Berlin, 1937). Together with other artists such as Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter, Bayrle is one of the pioneers and leading exponents of Pop Art in Germany and one of the most influential contemporary artists in his analysis of the different media, his reflection on the production and mediation of contemporary images and the relation between the public and private sphere within the dynamics of the consumer society, ideologies and post-ideologies.

By incorporating, at the height of the Cold War, symbols of both capitalist and communist society, that were being defined on either side of the Berlin Wall, but also continuing to question the iconic and communicative mechanisms of contemporary globalized society, Bayrle has probably provided the most powerful portrait of contemporary mass-humanity, the complexity of its situation, oscillating between myself and others, including solitary alienation and the paradoxical plurality of relationships. In the wake of the reflections of the Frankfurt School, the identification of a hybrid contemporary identity that combines consumption and ecology, propaganda and denunciation, sexuality or pornography, and spirituality or religion, Bayrle is a key figure, both as an artist both as a teacher and intellectual, to understand the art, indeed, the very function of art in contemporary society. In their obsessive, almost Piranesian repetition of a single basic motif to create images in which the micro generates the macro and the single element is connected to the whole (the practice of the minimal matrix which has become this artist's signature technique), Bayrle's works are based on a constant overlapping of styles and approaches of Pop Art, Conceptual Art and Op Art, to the point where they are configured as condensates of the artistic language of the neo-avant-garde in the late twentieth century. With more than 200 works, from 1960 to the present, the exhibition explores all the salient phases of Bayrle research and the different facets of his career, including works from Italian and international museums and private collections. Curated by Devrim Bayar, Curator at the WIELS-Contemporary Art Centre in Brussels, and Andrea Viliani, the retrospective brings together works in very different media, 3, offering a complete overview of the artist's career. On the occasion of the exhibition, WIELS and MADRE produce a catalog, comprising texts by Devrim Bayar, Jörg Heiser, Marta Kuzma and the artist himself, as well as images of all the works presented at the two exhibitions in Brussels and Naples, and an extensive scholarly apparatus. The catalog, published in English by Walther König Verlag and in Italian by Electa, presents an original approach to the oeuvre and the creative process of an artist whose works are the most impressive portrait of the society in which we live, while at the same time revealing the reticular, interconnective, layered, and ultimately contradictory nature that inspires the title of the exhibition itself, which re-contextualizes the expression "all in one" or "all included".

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