Alessandro Gioiello: A Thought That Is Neither Mine Nor Yours

By Maria Vittoria Pinotti

When one first approaches the study of a painter, there are several aspects that may reveal themselves. Chief among these is the deepening of the path of their research, which includes direct familiarity with the works and the discovery of the spaces in their studio. Yet, sometimes something unexpected occurs, seemingly anticipating the developments of an apparently uncertain evolutionary journey, eventually reaching its natural fulfillment, capable of satisfying the anticipation and reflections it generates. Thus, in my repeated interactions with Alessandro Gioiello regarding certain themes in his work, I came to understand how necessary it is to leave some aspects unresolved, allowing the painting itself to question its own needs and motivations. Therefore, the matter goes beyond merely listening to words: it is rather an intimate reading of thoughts emerging on the canvas like a bloom, sometimes languid, sometimes vigorous.

I remember clearly how, shortly after one of our conversations, Alessandro Gioiello shared with me a collection of notes under the name *Pensieri Sparsi*, (Scattered Thoughts) and none of us could have imagined that they would eventually become the title of this exhibition. The sheet contained various notes, brief annotations of just a few lines, hinting at a profound inclination toward the most intimate and personal reflections. It was precisely in that moment that I realized these *thoughts* were born from a perception both disturbed and subtly rippled by the slow flow of sensations, all directed toward a small, private collection of objects in his studio in Racconigi. Vases, glasses, bouquets of flowers, seashells, shoes, T-shirt, glimpses of walls - so many tiny traces of a far more complex thought, whose simplicity and ordinariness must not deceive us. It is certain that Gioiello works on what Carlo Carrà had called "ordinary things" and with the issues discussed by the philosopher Martin Heidegger and later by the art historian Meyer Schapiro concerning the meanings of the shoes that Vincent van Gogh painted in several versions. However, it would be far too superficial to see in these works a transcendental, symbolic, or metaphysical component, for there is no reality more objective and barer than this last trace. And yet, reflecting on what has been said, each work reveals Alessandro Gioiello's entirely natural tendency to make objects live and coexist within the environment of the canvas, as if their mere presence were a sign of a concrete space dense with impressions.

For this reason, I imagined long days and hours of intimacy, almost of confession and mysterious dialogue, with the painter in his studio - not so much with the objects depicted, but with himself in his deepest introspection. Although he paints simple and common things, he first chooses them carefully among many possibilities. These are meditative choices that sometimes also require compositional work, so that the objects do not merely *meet*, but rather *tell* a story. Thus, the bouquets composed of flowers with tender and stiff stems, so fragile and thin, sometimes open and bursting, as if swollen, or touched by a gentle breeze, remain unfolded and without fixed boundaries. Often, the background merges with the foreground through the use of tonal brushstrokes, whose light conveys the sense of a soft shadow, barely liquefied, with a caressing, grazing imprint. Therefore, *Pensieri Sparsi* primarily represents the construction of a journey through light - at times

soft, discernible in every millimeter, warm and clear both in method and in the intensity of its vivid gleams. It is precisely this dialectic, so strong as to dissolve substance and volume, that allows the figures to carry with them even the time of their emergence. Yet Gioiello's flowers are more *sensitive* than *naturalistic* - vegetal tangles, vigorous and impetuous entanglements, indifferent to perfect forms - they tell something about a looseness of execution, revealing a painter with a sensitivity close to the skin.

At this point, a question arises: what would happen if each object resting silently on the canvas were removed from the context in which it exists? And if this were to occur, could we measure how much the small, warm world in which these objects live would be stripped and deprived of its original poetry? Indeed, poetry and painting sometimes coincide, and this encounter in Alessandro Gioiello's canvases allows the subjects not to match exactly what is seen, but rather what is thought. Therefore, poetry in this case seems a matter of distance from one's model - a deliberate step to be taken, a risky passage between his truth and the reality of the painting. Within the interlude that unfolds lies the entire fraction of time in which the painter remains alone in his studio, intent on gaining the awareness that the poetic essence of an object resides in perceiving its simplicity - without excessive artifice or harmful constructions. In this way, a fundamental question for painting itself is addressed: whether the artist can express not so much the relationship to the physical act of seeing, but rather the sense of gentle, meditative anticipation that precedes everything else. Just like in poetry, the work remains suspended in a halo of silence, for it does not merely express what it depicts, but also the fact that it is representing it with both the power and the impotence of expression. Thus, each object corresponds to a precise flow of thoughts, a pure, balanced alchemy capable of measuring spaces and forms.

I believe that Alessandro Gioiello, in this way, performs an operation similar to that of a poet, who suspends, paces, and weighs silences and pauses, juxtaposing and uniting the stanzas of a verse composition. It is natural that each work involves a carefully calibrated balance, a visual weight modulated across a few tones, and for this reason I was not at all surprised when, in reading *Pensieri Sparsi*, Gioiello stated that "the works I like the most are those that make me imagine I could taste their color." Just like the movements of a piece on a chessboard, the painter modulates the paint, varying it from bluish grays to the lighter ranges of earths and pinks, with floury whites, rosy powders, hazelnut, and biscuit tones, letting a dusty light fall that brushes and illuminates them only in certain defined points. The object is transformed through imagination not as an unconditional reflection or an automatic, instantaneous response to reality, but rather as an act of acute discernment that reveals its most elemental nature. Paradoxically, imagination does not serve to escape reality, but to enter it more deeply: we are not concerned with how truthful an image is, but rather with understanding how it guides us toward a new orientation in the way we see things. Thus, I like to imagine that Gioiello's *Pensieri Sparsi* are ultimately not only his, nor entirely ours, but rather a sort of small private refuge, a shared physical space, certainly never closed.