

New Italy, soft, pretty and pleasant

(Renato Barilli makes an outline about future Italian art: lightness, personal imagination and love for handicraft distinguish new artists who are far from asceticism and from austerity)

After “Anniottanta” and “Anninovanta”, Renato Barilli attempts again prophecy art in “Officina Italia” exhibition: who will be the new Italian artists that will resist in the next future? Barilli, helped by a young staff like Dede Auregli, Alessandra Borgogelli, Fabio Cavallucci, Roberto Daolio, Ario Franciosi, Silvia Grandi, Mauro Manara, Guido Molinari e Claudia Pedrini, concentrates on 53 artists.

They are: *Giovanni Albanese, Elisabetta Alberti, Andrea Aquilanti, Maurizio Arcangeli, Matteo Basilè, Francesco Bernardi, Bianco and Valente, Paola Bitelli, Marco Boggio Sella, Marco Bragaglia, Pier Paolo Campanini, Paolo Canevari, Monica Carocci, Piero Cattani, Sarah Ciracì, Gianluca Cosci, Cuoghi and Corsello, Ferruccio D’angelo, Santolo De Luca, Enrico De Paris, Chiara Dynis, Emilio Fantin, Luisa Lambri, Michele Mariano, Eva Marisaldi, Luigi Mastrangelo, Antonella Mazzoni, Maurizio Mercuri, Sabrina Mezzaqui, **Alessandro Moreschini**, Federico Pagliarini, Luca Pessoli, Cristiano Pintaldi, Leonardo Pivi, Premiata Ditta, Annie Ratti, Antonio Riello, Alessandro Rivola, Laura Ruggeri, Marco Samorè, Marilena Sassi, Gaetano Sgambati, Andrea Sperti, Federico Tanzi Mira, Alessandra Tesi, Sabrina Torelli, Cesare Viel, Luca Vitone, Francesco Voltolina, Fiorenzo Zaffina, Alberto Zanazzo e Italo Zuffi.*

The works (illustrated in a catalogue edited by Mazzotta) are detached, till November 2nd in six places with different opening: October 2nd, 3rd, 4th. The first opening is at the Gallery of Modern Art in Bologna, then in the city-hall of Castel St. Pietro, in the ex Arrigoni factory in Cesena, in St. Domenico Cloister at Imola, in Stoppioni Picture-Gallery of Santa Sophia and at Rolo Banca 1473 in Forlì.

Renato Barilli speaks to us about that.

Mr Barilli, what does it mean “Officina” in the exhibition title?

Well, officina word is rich of a famous tradition, remote and recent, which concerns Emilia Romagna. You must think about *Officina Ferrarese* recovered by Pasolini in the Fifties. As

for us there was an “Officina bolognese” opened in autumn 1991 when the international review “Anninovanta” closed. It collected a lot of new artists who weren’t selected then.

In 1997 took place two exhibitions about new italian art: the first one called “made in Italy” was set in the “Centre d’Art Contemporain” in Ginevra. It was edited by Paolo Colombo and it concerned only 12 artists. The second one was bigger and it was edited by Edoardo di Mauro in Turin. Its title was: “Va’ pensiero”. Which were the similarities and the differences proposed in your exhibition?

As for the two events, one is too small, the other is too large. The former makes a selection running the risk to create a hurried chosen group. On the contrary, I think that games must be opened and flowing so that new artists are not cut off. As for the exhibition edited by Di Mauro, it had hystorical purposes. So new futurists like Arienti, Cavenago, Dellavedova, are not included. I think that Mr Di Mauro had a little prejudice against a “neoconcept” climate that today is very outstanding.

What means the not convocation of Maurizio Cattelan, Vanessa Beecroft, Mario Airò and Giuseppe Gabellone, that’s to say the new artists introduced at Venise Biennial Exhibition?

Cattelan had already been invited at “Anninovanta” so he was excepted while the others were present at Biennial Exhibition so it was not useful to propose them again.

How will the exhibition be structured?

Personally I am a very incorrigible classifier, but in this case I held back for three reasons. The first one is the search of young people. They use in an off-hand manner different techniques like pictures and video. They are always elusive and available to such a point that now I don’t know several guests’ different solutions. The second reason concerns the exhibition’s places. They are seven and they are very different from the point of view of quantity. Finally, it’s very different my relationship with my collaborators: now it’s me to learn from them.

Which past prediction has been maintained in the new exhibition and what's the news?

I have noticed a graduated removing from hard to soft. The real picture continues to have bad luck. Installations are falling while pictures, video and a lot of special inventions are developing. Most of young artists work with charm, lightness and imagination. Austerity and asceticism are very far from them.

Do you think that an italian "genius loci" can come out from exhibitions like that ?

I think that the will to get charm and happiness is a feature typically italian that we cannot find in an american, german or english painter who prefers to use rigorous logique process.

Why in 1997 young italian art was not really considered at Biennial and Documenta exhibitions?

As for Biennial, young italian artists were not very numerous because of Celant who was frightened by new. So he gave up to organize "Open" section. Unfortunately it was not a personal decision but it was the decision of international organizers*.

By Franco Fanelli

*This interview is published in *Vernissage*, in *Il Giornale dell'Arte*.159, october, Italy, 1997.