

Fantasmagorical fancies of wonderful friends

The first motor of a strange exhibition like that was a kind of tam tam. It was rather unusual for forms and conditions of realisation: nor critics' selections neither signalings. It was a free choice, a wish to get together for an exhibition where, paradoxically intents were more important than works. To be clearer paintings are surely the protagonists of the exhibition, but it's something like an action of nobility rather than of ostentation, as usually it happens. An action that translates the will to give works in order to ransom "**Rocchetta Mattei**". The castle, with special and strange peculiarities; quite an "unicum", for its architecture and its history, gives free play to people's imagination that see it just once (especially artists, who are delegated by society to realize dreams) in order to get some more wonderful and visual stories. Anyway the aim is to redeem it from its degradation and to find a good cultural intended purpose. So it's a free getting together of friends who didn't make exclusions, but they accepted the idea enthusiastically.

This one started from the residents of Vergato, but it has been enlivening by *Luigi Ontani's* presence, especially affective, who made a lot for his country, ennobling the glass doors of Capitani della Montagna building at Vergato with its beautiful inventions, full of a light and ironical symbology, a kind of oneiric dimension packed with a big omnivorous culture and leaded with lightness and wit, qualities that we have been noticing since the first works and in the "*d'apres*", a kind of revisiting of the big italian painting where the artist is the author and the main character. These distinctive features are kept in painting and that confirms the predilection for literary or mythological arguments and it gives a big place to word used in all its linguistic possibilities as it happens in Earl Mattei portrait. He is exuberant in the heraldry and in the quantity and kind of symbols that refer to scientific and historico-literary passions of the nobleman. Another leader of the revival acted in painting during last ten years in our country is Salvo. His "ottomanie" exotic fairy landscapes, partly seen and partly dreamed, a wonderful excuse for pictorial will, are well included in the exhibition. In fact, here the artist suggests a special work: a minaret with snow, as if *Salvo* had "really" dreamed Rocchetta with its spires and its ottoman bell-towers in Appennines climate. We can say that also *Gian Marco Montesano* prefers fables and metaphors told in a cold irony and not very interesting for resolution, as we can see in this work, where the artist sets the castle far from memory. In fact he draws it with charcoal as in an old postcard. The fortress is high and unapproachable on the rock. Also *Bruno Benuzzi*, *Luigi Mastrangelo* and *Fabrizio Passarella* belong to a kind of school which likes imaginary and

kitsch subjects. The former presents a work from 1982 that corrodes the pictorial matter in its outlines in order to get an effect of floating-icon where we can notice a wise interpretation of a medieval devil with a poisonous flower, the stramonium which is the title of the work, that gets out of a ear. *Mastrangelo* evokes, in an innocent and sensual way, a cartoon India, where the figures of the young, pagan god and its many coloured pheasant are cut out so that to form an ideal and symbolic triangle on a united blue background. As for *Passarella*, he tenaciously follows his oriental dreams, the “somewhere else” that has always had a big fascination for occident people. He presents a little painting full of symbologies in relation to Visnu’s last incarnations. Here, the hero named krisna, a sweet flute-player and a smart dancer, shows himself to his friend Argiuna in his cosmic form.

Andrea Renzini and *Gabriele Lamberti* are a little bit younger. The former presents many creatures born from tales and comics. Here there is a flying carpet where one of his “ego” represented by a hieratic hero is laying. *Gabriele Lamberti* proposes a seeming plastic tale, a little white mill and a whistle young shepherd setting and hanging in a dark atmosphere as if they were out of a domestic, usual, daily nightmare.

Tino Stefanoni is very different. In his work, he proposes the lunar apparition of a big tower partly catched by a night shadow of a sky with rare stars. The image is more ironical and tender than dark just like the allusive title “the place of alder-trees”. In his painting, *Massimo Liviadotti* gives a beautiful, theatral image with a big wall of wings on the background. In the foreground there are two characters. The one is a white woman standing up, the other is a black woman more mysterious, a little bit hidden by a red curtain which makes a chromatic contrast with the white temple where the evening shadows and the gold intensity of surrounding architectures extend. A lot of mystery also in *Maurizio Osti*’s painting. He takes an ancient japanese print about a wild boar-hunt and he multiples it by four, but he nearly completely hides the two main images under a lot of deep synthetic matter. Angelo Generali still proposes the arab world as an european man on holiday can see it. He presents the Earl face and Rocchetta’s interiors as if they were clicks or rather frames (and he suggests that the former and the latter could be arab).

The others like *Marco Lodola*, *Felice Levini*, *Giorgio Zucchini*, *Ascanio Renda*, *Ernesta Scudellari*, **Alessandro Moreschini**, and also two friends of the castle like *Mataro* (an amusing citer whose origins are from Vergato) and *Izumi* (a young nomad self-taughtman through continents) refer to a more european mythology, as well as Levini’s and Zucchini’s work which is smart and rich of symbols. One can say a soft parietal ornament of pre-modern time. *Renda*’s and *Scudellari*’s painting is very ancient, nearly protochristian.

Finally, *Lodola* and ***Moreschini*** are both attracted by the numerous chances to mix contemporary “iconosfera” with classic and mythological one. The former is attracted by industrial materials, the latter by the comparison of the iperdecorative possibilities between his hand and computer*.

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