

ALFREDO PIRRI

Fare spazio

Opening: Thursday, 21 March 2024, 6-8 p.m.

Until 27 July 2024

Wednesday to Saturday 11am-1pm | 3pm-7pm

Galleria Tucci Russo presented Alfredo Pirri's works for the first time in 1990 at his 'GAS' exhibition in the then venue, Mulino Feyles, in Corso Tassoni in Turin. The collaboration with the artist has continued over the years and the present exhibition constitutes the ninth solo show, which follows Alfredo Pirri's last exhibition entitled 'Motore' held in Torre Pellice in 2019. The artist's works are now presented again in Turin in the 'Fare spazio' exhibition at *Tucci Russo Chambres d'Art* in Via Davide Bertolotti 2.

The gallery's three rooms display recent works divided into two main groups.

The first, entitled *Compagni e Angeli* ('Comrades and Angels'), in the entrance hall, consists of a series of 32 watercolours on paper dedicated to Antonio Gramsci. The artist created these between 2022 and 2023, in parallel with the work on a large public and permanent installation dedicated to the statesman commissioned by the Apulia Region. This set of pictorial and spatial works originates from some passages taken from Gramsci's letters, one in particular in which he speaks of the state of the prisoner: «... *In the third year, the mass of latent stimuli that everyone brings with them from freedom and active life begins to die out and what remains is that glimmer of will, which manifests itself in the reverie of unrealised grandiose plans: the prisoner lies on his back in his bunk and passes the time by spitting at the ceiling, dreaming of things that cannot be realised. This I will certainly not do, because I hardly ever spit and also because the ceiling is too high...!* » (1).

On the bottom of each of these watercolours, with their vivid and sometimes metallic colours, is a reproduction of one of the covers of the notebooks that Antonio Gramsci wrote during his imprisonment in the Turi prison, printed digitally and in a format faithful to the original. The regular shapes, imprinted in watercolour on the photographic reproductions (mainly using the pad technique), allude to geometries that seem to compose and decompose before our eyes to be captured in 'real time', which fixes them in a pose momentarily frozen in its visible form but ready to change configuration. Within the space of the sheet, they create magnetic tensions produced by the colours that allude to architectures imagined by the free and luminous meditation of Gramsci locked up in his cell. The coloured bands are painted freely over or alongside reproductions of these notebook covers from the early 1930s, dialoguing with them both chromatically and geometrically. The covers are split between some distinguished by the seriousness of dull monochrome colours, others characterised by a mimetic reference to precious materials such as crocodile skin, and many distinguished by imaginary and exotic architectures from those distant worlds that Italy would shortly invade and try to conquer. The guiding spirit of these works therefore consists in conceiving a 'tribute' to the thinking of Antonio Gramsci not in a static or rhetorical manner but by highlighting that *luminous way of thinking* that made him a champion of freedom and one of the constant references of our civilised living.

On display together with this collection is the sculpture/model of the monumental work of the same title *Compagni e Angeli* ('Comrades and Angels') that the artist created in Bari within the building housing the Polo bibliotecario Regionale Pugliese in the former Rossani barracks.

The second group, exhibited in the third room, consists of five large works made with mixed techniques: watercolour on Arches paper mounted on aluminium, Plexiglas with metal inclusions, acrylic paints and varnished wooden frames. These works, unlike the first group, are more monochromatic.

Their colours, originally bright and primary, are modified and muted through the constant addition of a medium grey, a *neutral hue* that dilutes the luminosity and brings the dominant tone back towards an indistinct and hazy atmosphere. It is as if the works were not so much *shrouded* in mist or vapour, but rather painted directly from these 'materials' that impregnate the paper backing and from which emerge circular shapes like waves of sound or water that expand in space with a heavy sound.

They appear to be the natural development of the works already shown by the artist at the Gallery in Torre Pellice (Alfredo Pirri, 'Motore', 2019) where there was a series of watercolours that rendered the same motion of circles that extend into space dynamically through the expansive use of colour. In the works on display in the exhibition, circular inserts of pastel-coloured Plexiglas are superimposed over these dynamic surfaces, sometimes enriched (and embellished) with metallic brass or copper straws that shine on the greyish backgrounds. As if they were celestial bodies caught in their moment of greatest splendour, on the borderline between appearing and disappearing, or poetic and dreamy phrases shining with reflected light. «... *for a year now, cosmic phenomena have interested me (perhaps the bed, as they say in my country, is aligned with the earth's fluids and when I rest, the cells of the organism rotate in unison with the whole universe) ... I have been waiting with great anxiety for the summer solstice and now that the earth bows (in truth, it straightens up after bowing) towards the sun, I am happier (the question is linked with the light they bring in the evening and there's the earth's fluid for you!); the cycle of the seasons, linked to the solstices and equinoxes, is something I feel as flesh of my flesh... » (2)*

Finally, in the smallest room, at the centre of the larger ones, tensions are decanted by hosting a solitary work, created with transparent and reflective colours applied on a Plexiglas surface that is also transparent. The work radiates into the empty space through the pure energy of colour. A solitary work for a room as silent as a chapel... or a cell.

1 - Antonio Gramsci, letter 11 July 1929 to his sister-in-law Tania

2 - Ibidem

Alfredo Pirri (Cosenza, 1957) lives and works in Rome. He has shown his work in numerous national and international exhibitions, including: Castello Maniace, Syracuse (2021); Museo Nazionale Romano - Palazzo Altemps, Rome (2018); MACRO, Rome (2017); Museo Novecento, Florence (2015); London Design Festival, London, UK (2015); GNAM - Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome (2013); Palazzo Te, Mantua (2013); Project Biennial D-0 ARK Underground Konjic, Bosnia Herzegovina (2013), where his installation *Passi* is on permanent display; Museo Archeologico Nazionale Reggio Calabria with the permanent work *Piazza* (2011); Centro Arti Visive Pescheria, Pesaro (2007); Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France (2006); Havana Biennial, Cuba (2001); Accademia di Francia - Villa Medici, Rome (2000); MoMa PS1, New York, USA (1999); Walter Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany (1992). In 1988 he participated in the 43rd Venice Biennale. In 2023 Alfredo Pirri received an Honorary Degree in 'Architecture - Architectural Design' from the University of Roma Tre.