

**TEXT FOR THE CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBIT "RUMORI IMPERCETTIBILI" (IMPERCEPTIBLE NOISES)
GALLERIA SALON PRIVE ARTI VISIVE, OCTOBER 17-NOVEMBER 6, 1998**

IMPERCEPTIBLE NOISES

Thinking about the subject of this exhibit's presentation, the sensation of being part of a whole felt after seeing for the first time the art works of Roberto Falconieri, Emanuele Costanzo, Federico Pietrella and Alessandro Reale came back to mind.

Reflecting on the specific language adopted by each one of them it was as if, thinking back about each specific painting, I felt a distinct background noise each time. Trapped in the memory of each piece, a tumultuous deadened buzz that seemed to gradually take possession of the images recorded by memory.

To guide me in the observation of their paintings, the non-existent traces of that "omnipresent noise of life" which inevitably accompanies our daily lives.

Beyond the reading of the language of art, the clear-cut break-in of the acknowledged existence, through clear auditory perceptions, of the undercurrent of reality fragments elaborated in the work of these four artists.

The backbone of this text derives from those "imperceptible noises" captured and kept safe in each art piece of as indelible symbols of a relation with reality.

Bravely choosing an almost disused artistic language, that of "classic" oil painting, Roberto Falconieri turns his work into a very personal way of facing a path of self-search.

In his paintings, the lonely and melancholic voice of a mnemonic existence which by showing itself it retracts at the same time, lingering in that idea of space, like a somewhat hypnotic peremptory humming.

In view of almost apocalyptic signs of human presence, Roberto Falconieri immortalises "urban landscapes", insinuating, behind their apparent realism, that profound process of re-elaboration of a distant memory.

From the introspective re-elaboration of the chosen landscape, made by pencil, then completed with oil on a base prepared with a thick layer of dark colour, the place of the artistic "creation" comes into being. In it, the slow re-emerging of a distant memory is suggested to the viewer.

With the intent of reconstructing the image that comes back from within, but almost preventing until the last minute that painful resurgence of the past, the paintings of Roberto Falconieri suggest the idea of an innate desire to dim down and blur reality.

Making the most of the qualities of an almost anachronistic technique which allows a work of chromatic superimpositions, glazing and transparencies, by orchestrating the colours, he tends in fact to cancel them.

Before our eyes, the metaphysical sceneries of the Termini train station with its rationalistic architecture and the trellis of its labyrinth-like tracks, or the 1940's buildings in the "quartiere

Africano”... Real and recognizable places as if engulfed though, by colour, which tends from neutral to a grey and leaden, or lights up, as a burning flame, almost corroding the image.

By using colour for the following stratifications, Roberto Falconieri artworks carrying a strong emotional impact, bordering the limits of the visionary.

In his metropolitan landscapes, a strange sense of immanence transmits, behind a calm appearance, the feeling that something is about to, or has already happened. To reinforce this sensation, the implacable absence of human participants, as if vanished in the distant life of these urban landscapes in which the artist was, perhaps, once the leading man.

And if on one hand the need to liberate oneself of these internal reconstructions of external landscapes to give to artistic creation a cathartic and liberating value is strong, on the other hand, we feel that something evades us.

From this evocative re-visitation of the scenes of his past, Roberto Falconieri seems to keep something out, and by observing his paintings one almost feels a certain sense of reserve, so much the feeling of penetrating in his interior world, in which the artist generously offers to us the landscapes of his soul, is strong.

From the imperceptible nature of the noises heard in his artworks, one can feel the dream-like taste of a rainy day in the end of a summer or late October.

In Emanuele Costanzo’s work, a very different vibe.

Devoid of men but pulsating with life experience, his “urban settings” seem very distant from that image of the city Roberto Falconieri offers to us, as if resurrected from the deep in which Man is a mere memory.

From the emblematic places of Emanuele Costanzo’s “metropolis”, the immediate reappearance of human relations. In them, the impression to hear daytime remains of nightlife: traces of confused and blurred discussions, distant echoes of sleepless nights...

For Emanuele Costanzo the confrontation with a society filled with cultural contaminations, due to its being always more multi-ethnic and multimedia-based, is a real need. From this “cross-over”, a meeting place of various languages, his choice to express himself through different media (from video installations, to wall pieces, to the more “classic” engraved papers and photos, to the use of re-worked and decontextualized objects), and the resulting creation of artworks that are the result of the coming together of several art techniques.

At the roots of his art, an innate desire to re-transcribe reality for what it is, as it appears, without passing judgment of sorts. And to implement this emotional detachment, the need to see life objectively seems impellent. A radical choice then, which distances him from any personal implication vis à vis the art piece he creates.

Emanuele Costanzo records images of anonymous and sordid places devoid of emotions. He photographs and blows up daily recognizable sceneries, uniformly colouring them, and superimposes, through a drypoint, simple signs or drawings: a *penis*, for example, with a garage on the background, or some *sinks*, like those from the Air Terminal lavatories, whose shape he imitates. They are paintings all the same, but engraved ones, reminding real matrices.

From combining chalk, acrylic resin and soap, he makes a series of objects: the “Soaps”, called thus due to their tactile similarity with the material, proposing again on the background, the same “engraved paintings” scenario.

The contrast of the technique on the given image gives way to a prospective reading of his art pieces. In paintings, photography, meant as an “objective”, fast and detached instrument to record daily life is counterbalanced by the precision of drypoint engraving: the hand gesture grazes the image surface in which the colour, slowly deposits itself the graphic sign. In “Soaps” on the other hand, the counteracting of the tactile slippery texture of the object, when the image appears: blurred, as if reality was mirrored in a captured reflection of a water residue covering it.

From the union of these techniques, the two phases of creation are revealed, corresponding to two distinct moments of conscience: the active one exemplified by photography, and the meditative, linked to engraving, or the making of the object.

In Emanuele Costanzo’s paintings one passes from one image to the other, as through the locked frames of a story which corresponds, in each one of his works, to that in which saturated colours are represented. Looking at his work, the end-user can thus transform himself in a creator, elaborating new stories starting from that clue in the plot offered by the artist in his set up.

To disentangle the threads of the flow of time, humans make their appearance yet again on the urban scene through Federico Pietrella.

In his paintings one can always find a date, a true obsession with regards to the everlasting passing of time. But to counter that inevitable wave, the value of artistic creation itself and through objectifying of the concept of time, we slowly take back the fleeting moments of our life experience.

While in his first works, veiled by a sweet and poetic melancholy, Federico Pietrella seemed to be only able to speak in the past tense (like in the crayon painting in which an initial image reading *April 1999* was duplicated in detail throughout thirty days), in this last art piece, in an attempt to almost abandon an unambiguous relation with the past, he expresses himself in the present tense.

From that almost shy and delicate approach with the concept of time, the troubling “toughness” of the gesture made in this last painting: from its background, a beat moves forward, first undetectable, then pounding through, relentless... a symbol of life going by, the voice of a beating heart. To capture the moment of creation, a stamp with a date on it.

Among the countless photographs of that road, the choice of that one shot to immortalise, magically, a casual meeting of gazes. And from that point of contact, the making of an ordinary man into a true protagonist.

In this last work Federico Pietrella has substituted, in an almost manic way, the action of painting with that applying a stamp. Freezing through the automated gesture the act into eternity, he has immortalised in the artwork the time of his action itself. No elements of colour anymore then, no more paint strokes, but backgrounds of the image fatally marked by a date, that corresponding to the moment of execution.

And if from a distance the scene appears to be uniform, well defined and well-finished in the resolution of bright and dark areas on the basis of an only tone of blue, by getting nearer that

impression crumbles away. Beyond the apparent unity of colour, it is the repeated superimposition of a stamp which in fact defines the three-dimensional element.

With relation to this work of Federico Pietrella, there are two ways to understand this art piece, because if on one hand it appears complete and refined to the last detail, it also automatically goes back to the daily relation of the artist with his piece, to the daily performance, to the traces of memories hidden behind every last detail, stuck among them.

Through this poetic re-elaboration of the concept of time Federico Pietrella finally comes to accept every sign. The painting becomes larger than, incorporating beyond those fictitious surroundings, the infinite signs of his actions.

As the exhausted prisoner who counts the days remaining before he is set free, one has almost the impression that he gets back, through artistic expression, that familiar taste of everyday life which often evades us.

Beyond the landscape and the image, the choice of one face to give back, through the repetition of a same image, a value to the annihilation of art. And to liberate the silence from the omnipresent noise, the continuous observation of a frame: it is De Niro, in *Taxi Driver*, immortalised after the failed suicide attempt.

In going through that movie, Alessandro Reale has willingly selected the most emotionally packed scene. He then froze it on the television screen, and transferred it on various canvases through the serigraphy technique.

From that same almost obsessively repeated image on every canvas, a hissing sound emanates: continuous and insidious, then more and more faint, almost no sound, and finally, absolute silence.

Taxi Driver's De Niro is the image of absolute desperation. Because of his failure in killing himself, that man is morally annihilated, as if he were forced to live on, inevitably, in a sort of emotional limbo. But through that total detachment from material values, he gets closer to that sense of transience proper of Zen, reaching thus, paradoxically, freedom.

For Alessandro Reale, in that scene De Niro symbolically represents the present state of affairs of art, sharing with the actor that same sense of estrangement. A state of transience common to the artwork which by ceasing to be definable becomes intangible by the same token. Considering it a form of communication, in order to determine the nucleus one has to resort to his communicative characteristics.

Alessandro Reale conceives images that he puts forward as empty vessels which, in their ritual repetition, re-activate the senses of the end-user to fulfil the purpose of a semantic container. By creating a path of interest and stimulus for the observer, the various elements of the art piece are considered more as evocative cues than having an intrinsic meaning.

Between De Niro and Alessandro Reale's *Taxi Driver* one can find a coincidence of opposites. In the first case, a progressive crescendo of emotions, in the second case, the total annihilation of feeling through matter repetition, like a negative picture with zero content. But in the art piece, only the mould, by contrast, is the true essence.

To defend itself from the impact of the picture, the repeating of that frame which by amplifying the void transforms, paradoxically, the annihilating effect operated on the perception in a new stimulus for reception.

For Alessandro Reale the elaboration of the form is close to the practice of meditation, to the desire to pass on a state of illumination.

Between the deafening sound and total silence, the symbolic force of white on white...

Joining me in the drafting of this text those same imperceptible noises of life I have found again in the work of these four artists, then kept, in the silence of writing, as in the art pieces shown in this exhibition.

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