

**TEXT FOR THE CATALOGUE of the group show " PARIS, INTERIOR PORTRAITS",** Galleria 9 via della vetrina contemporanea, Rome, December 2000

*"Je marchai en suivant une longue galerie qui me fit successivement homage de tout ce qu'elle avait à m'offrir... un fauteuil place dans un coin, une épinette, sur une console un pot de faïence bleu rempli de cinéraires, et dans un cadre ancien le fantôme d'une dame d'autrefois aux cheveux poudrés mêlés de fleurs bleues et tenant à la main un bouquet d'oeillets"* (Marcel Proust, "A la recherche du temps perdu")

The idea to set up the exhibition is born out of two passions: Proust and Flemish painting. The certainty that both the objects in a house and its inhabitants hold memories in themselves, coupled with the Flemish concept defining the world as a sum of objects containing fragments of life, deriving from the Creator. The aspect of each object, including human beings, becomes the paradigm of itself. Objects, which seem common at first sight, hold in themselves a complex symbolism, so that each object contains its own soul.

Paris, July 2000, the first meeting with some of the exhibit's artists take place in an apartment in Rue de la Chaise, 7<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement. *"Il y avait des Guermantes qui restent Rue de la Chaise, disait le valet de chambre; il était second cocher chez eux."* (Marcel Proust, "A la recherche du temps perdu"). We entered a living room with dark brown walls, which Proust describes as retro, from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, later to be replaced with brighter coloured rooms reminiscent of the fashion of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Inside there were several books, old objects, portraits of forefathers lying about with nonchalance, a reproduction of Mademoiselle de la Rivière by Ingres, and another one from Vermeer. Finally, their art pieces which, as in a game of Chinese boxes, reproduce details or point of views of that same apartment, in which often people appear as well, inhabiting the place in perfect harmony with the surroundings, almost as other objects themselves.

*"En somme, l'idée d'un logis, simple contenant de notre existence actuelle... était absolument inapplicable à cette demeure, ensemble de pieces, aussi réelles qu'une colonie de personnes, d'une vie il est vrai silencieuse, mais qu'on était obligé de rencontrer, d'éviter, d'accueillir, quand on rentrait."* (Marcel Proust, "A la recherche du temps perdu")

Then the encounter with the Woodi-Tat couple's resounding objects took place. Banal objects of common use found in some flea market, which having been used, handled, lived, contain in themselves a soul that makes them a receptacle of Memory, a memory that was silent, and can now finally speak. Objects similar to Proustian "madeleines", which instead of being savoured, ask us to be heard, allowing us to remember. An old watering can, and the common sounds of a French garden functions in the sameway as a "madeleine", sharing its same evocative capacity, in which imagination and Memory merge. Beyond the power they hold, which derives from the fact they have been used, they have lived, these resounding objects take on a new existence, an unexpected beauty similar to a Proustian hat: *"Et, de même qu'il est quelquefois troublant de rencontrer les raffinements vers lesquels les artistes les plus conscients s'efforcent, dans une*

*chanson populaire, à la façade de quelque maison de paysan qui fait épanouir au-dessus de la porte une rose blanche ou soufrée juste à la place qu'il fallait – de même le noeud de velours, la coque de ruban qui eussent ravi dans un portrait de Chardin ou de Whistler, Françoise les avait placés avec un goût infallible et naïf sur le chapeau devenu charmant.” (Marcel Proust, “A la recherche du temps perdu”)*

November 2000. We meet again the last two artists (Julie Polidoro and Eva Jospin) who welcome us in their respective ateliers in Paris and Rome, among cans of multi-coloured pigments, brushes of different sizes and shapes, and inanimate objects waiting to be painted. With the disappearance of the human element, painting becomes a research of the space's soul, of the aura hidden among common objects of domestic use: an old wicker chair, a mop, a tray with colour-changing glasses... The language of the paintings, reflecting as magical mirrors the environment in which they are created, becomes almost informal, and colour becomes essential. For both artists it is a unifying carrier, the fruit of an accurate choice in the calibration of juxtapositions and tones: from reds to mauves, from greys to ochres... as in a modern Whistlerian symphony.

Elisabetta Giovagnoni and Romolo Ianni