

The colour after black

The paper and sheets by Paola Ricci look like layered maps dipped in time. “Unusual painting” that goes back to sketching “black over black” and recalls a fossil like shape passing through a pale light towards an emerging bright light. Evoking, therefore, a strong emotion that sends back a “before” and “after” sensation of the painting. I am going to list a few precise sensations : One- a sense of a long forgotten painting of which we regret the absence. Two- The experience of using painting materials, reduced to dust or carbon thread-shaped markings that take with them the scar of a too human fate. Three- To find oneself in the unexpected lessening density of this entanglement is like coming through intertwining branches.

A strong blend interlaced between reality and dream which opens, however, towards a horizon, a clearing amongst the leaves. These unrestricted sensations lay like twisted sketches upon an opaque background. It is like walking along the edge of a peat-bog; the hidden fossilized layer of humble living material feels like fermentation beneath ones feet. Its passage to fossil-black is recent and the water is black because it is filtered by suspended particles of coal. Colour takes part in black’s life when it fades but can re-emerge from the black of combustion. Many different shades of black, similar at last, carry one towards the signs of a flowering, sprouting from green, beginning with the layered tangle of humus to produce the meaty fragrance of fungi and sudden blooming of cyclamen and daffodil bulbs.

A completely natural art-one could say- scarcely noticeable, like the “sound” of growing grass and the expanding of roots into the earth and branches into the air. But also a completely non-natural art that speaks silently when the earth has lost its memory of earth. This is the entanglement of impressions on Formazioni” (Formation) as Paola Ricci’s art operations are aptly called. A spontaneous complex series of meditations that sum up the artist’s contemplations on Tintoretto’s paintings ought to be reported: in the great Venetian cycles of the “ Scuola di San Rocco of the “ Madonna dell’Orto” and the “Ultima Cena” dramatically final and tormented in the church of San Trovaso. A limited production of drawings on paper by Tintoretto is known because he preferred “ drawing with a brush” in a layered structure. The changes of the image are achieved by overlapped drawing and re-drawing with a brush. In spite of belief, the key to understanding Tintoretto’s technique is the drawing, a particular drawing that Paola Ricci follows with a devoted obstinacy. Tintoretto loved painting on the preparations (charcoal on white chalk preparations and white lead on the dark ones) but continued to work with a brush at various stages of the painting, earlier with white lead but frequently with blackish pigment and also with violet-red-lacquer or even “the remains of the palette”. This presence in the paintings, which had not been observed earlier with the use of research instrumentation, showed Tintoretto’s “cucina della pittura” (painting cuisine) and his absolute excellence four hundred years after his death and showed, above all, the function of “Venetian drawing” which was thought not exist, but appears as one could say interwoven in the painting. We can see directly in Bellini how the figure is not helped by the drawing, a true preparatore drawing, but by the interwoven drawing contributory to the painting itself while on the other hand the landscape, G. Bellini’s landscapes, in spite

of being without any apparent drawing meditation are at every reticle perspective carried out spontaneously. Amazing...

There is also another trick that Paola Ricci manages to penetrate after observing Tintoretto's canvases. That whirling of spiral sketches, a brightness that creeps through the darkness and makes figures appear in the distance, without outlines, like a ghostly crowd.

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