

Martina Corgnati, in Sonia Costantini
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(Translated by Howard Rodger MacLean)

The transparent and refined painting by Sonia Costantini seems to knowingly make itself the heir of a composite tradition that from the most secret Moholy-Nagy transmits itself by way of direct derivation to Albers and through indirect elective affinities to Rothko. Although what seems even more drastic in the young painter from Mantua is the reduction to minimum terms of a formal presupposition which ought to give the painting the solidity of a structure that is even more absolute. However, abandon to the intrinsic possibilities of colour is controlled. With the rigour of the most convinced rationalist, while at the same time with the subtle sensitiveness of a lyricist of the archaic era, Costantini's painting promises virtual and extremely profound spaces "by way of removing", in consequence taking away from the eye whatever reference that allows it an opportunity, a foothold and a definition. Although the surface also proposes itself in its absolute intangibility, in its mirroring, reflecting and impenetrable alterity. Independently, therefore, from what Kandinsky defined as its "spirit", that of its intrinsic qualities.

And from one canvas to another Costantini always evidences colour almost as a "theme" for monochrome symphonies with very few variations, for impeccable formal- optical analyses in which in the most hidden depths of the colour - amidst the molecules - would make one think of the pigment spread in sovereignly uniform patinas, letting loose an endogenous light, one whose almost vibratory and radiating quality Costantini knows how to bring forth.

Light here is not matter, it is not utopia, ideology or programmatic research but a phenomenon of an energetic, quantic and impalpable nature. The painting knows how to retain the "physical", scientific datum of light. From one canvas to the other it seems to plan the laws of refraction and absorption. And it does this, however, with an apparent paradox. Not in a technological, electronic or experimental way but with the most simple and traditional means: oil and egg tempera. This is because the light of these surfaces also possesses a more concealed and less definable nature, a poetic nature. Never aggressive and peremptory.

For this reason it spontaneously finds itself in the company of mechanical-electronic "objective data", minutely measurable, although at the same time of the melancholy late summer "intent" of the Aldobrandini Lunettes, the supreme silence of the rooms by Vermeer and the crystalline clarity of the Opens by Motherwell. It is always the same light of painting, universal entity, and yet each time surprising in its authentic and recurrent manifestation. And regarding this one doubts whether a mathematician would ever be able to write its formula.