

Paolo Biscottini, Shadows
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(Translated by Howard Rodger MacLean)

The research work by Sonia Costantini is undoubtedly based on the awareness of the fundamental value in painting of transparency and luminosity, conceived as the register of the modifications which are not so much those of visual perception as they are of mental perception. The configuration of the work is neither the representation of the visible work, nor the attempt at crossing thresholds. And, even less so, does it appear to refer to processes of a 'diary' type. Costantini's luminosity possesses mental value in so far as it is the testimony of the changes which the mind records whereas thought and emotions flow according to distinct diagrams - although not lacking in tangencies - whose aesthetic result probably consists in the perception of recognizable shadow zones as being the primary source of this same luminosity. And in this respect one can see the clearly Lombard or Po Valley character of such a creative process, in the Lombard pictorial tradition recognizing the specific experimentation of the lights investigating the darks within chromatic transitions as slight as quivers and beats (and we can especially cite Luini and then by way of a research of light in colour, gently exploring the mists to the point of discovering their unthought of and unexpected flashes as in the Lombard Informal or, with elevated results, in the painting by Claudio Olivieri, from the end of the 1970's onwards). And these shadows which Costantini's painting individuates on the canvas with rigorous and refined processes - ranging from the plaster imprint with pigments, egg tempera with successive 'veilings' and the use of the spatula with oils worked in left-handed rotation - appear, rather, as being pulses of consciousness which in the semi-darkness opens itself to light. That all of this also gives rise to formal values is neither casual nor irrelevant in that it corresponds to a cognitive need (albeit within a painting which intends to remain abstract to the point of the abolition of the title which even involuntarily might act as a referent). A need which only superficially might take on the form of self-knowledge but which consists, rather, in a cognitive perception of the rhythm of existence itself and not only of one's own. The shadow that goes beyond the frontality of space kindles its depth. And at one and the same time it is material and spiritual if it is true that in the physicalness of painting - almost evidenced by the slight rippling of the spatula - the artist is given the awareness/knowledge of present time as the recording of a pause which the mind conquers almost as new space and time.

A rigorous planning permits the outcome which every work by Costantini embodies. A planning for which the technique is only an instrument given that the investigation of the surfaces for the discovery of light is - like reasoning itself or musical rhythm - nourished by apparitions or improvised inventions which give rise to subdued Lombard narratives in which with extreme discretion there is the testing and examination of the truth of both herself and of things (and Claudio Cerritelli has recently written about a "will that often verges on silence and isolation").