

Eyes with Feathers

I asked Elvio Chiricozzi to write some thoughts on this exhibition. By way of response, I received a fax with the following succinct text, handwritten on ordinary paper:

*“Mon amour mon amour,
EYES WITH FEATHERS
this is not the first time it's happened,
still each time is always the first.
And you're enchanted, you're enchanted.”*

Admittedly, it is unusual to introduce a piece of art criticism with a quote, even a brief one, by the very same artist about whom one intends to speak. And yet, Elvio began communicating the fullness of his evocative power with a mere bit of writing on a piece of paper... a few words, a thought. The problem, if it is indeed a problem, emerged a moment later when I sought to understand the connection between the exhibited work and the written thought, the Teatro India venue, and the overall project of the exhibition.

In 2000, Chiricozzi devoted himself to three important exhibitions: “*Migranti*” at the Pino Casagrande Gallery in March, “*Mi apparisti vestita, il luogo della memoria*”, at the A.A.M. Gallery in May, and “*Occhi con le piume*” (“Eyes with Feathers”), at the India Gallery - three distinct projects representing three independent cycles of work that spanned the whole year. It was the artist's desire that each exhibition show something different from the previous one, making it impossible to “catalogue” him, as he himself explained. Creative work must never have rigid confines; only in this way can the artist remain free - the artist who thereby can and should propose change, prompting freedom in creativity, points of view, and breadth.

That which connects these distinct work cycles and explains Chiricozzi's enigmatic titles is indeed the inspiration behind all his work; that is, his enduring, deep sense of poetry, an automatic, sometimes even unconscious connection. Not only is he a lover of poetry, but Elvio incorporates poetry profoundly in his art, perhaps as inspiration but undeniably as nourishment. He is constantly discovering new associations through conversations with his poet-contemporaries, reading classical verses, and even listening to certain lyrics, which in turn inspire new creations. The process he performs is that of a painter who successfully transforms poetic fragments in such a way that they stay in mind not necessarily as memorized verse but simply as associations, colours, transparencies, actions, visual suspensions, sensory presence.

And the work, in turn, always has a particular relation to the space containing it. In fact, all these exhibitions are marked by a certain duality due, on the one hand, to the artist's awareness of their impermanence, of their provisional and momentary nature, and, on the other, to his desire or aspiration that the modification of the space effected by that particular work remain permanent, definitive, and absolute. Chiricozzi carries this duality to the extreme. The relationship between his work and its environment is absolute: not only does he study how each exhibition should be mounted, but he builds a model in order to verify the best rapport between the work and the place. In this regard, Elvio's relationship with Teatro India and everything the space has signified over the years has such an emotional and associative power in itself that it led him to the idea of falling in love, of enchantment.

Actually, the EYES WITH FEATHERS were already present in the A.A.M. Gallery in one of the drawings displayed there, but here Elvio – perhaps even he taken by surprise - confesses that in this place... *you're enchanted, you're enchanted.*”

Alessandra Maria Sette
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