

Press release

IVA LULASHI

Passion pours passion flows

Texts by Cristina Masturzo and Antonio Grulli

March 23 - May 10, 2021

Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani - Via Ventura 6, 20134 Milan (Italy)

On March 23, 2021, at Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani (in via Ventura 6, Milan), *Passion pours passion flows*, the new solo show by Iva Lulashi with recent and unseen works, opens. After *Eroticism* in 2018 and the bi-personal exhibition *Close Elsewhere* in 2020 (together with Regina José Galindo), the seductive painting of the artist born in Tirana in 1988 returns to the gallery's venue in Milan.

The title of the show comes from a telegram written by Mario Schifano, in response to the question of his friend Corrado Levi, about what burning passion was for him. The complete quotation from Schifano, in the linguistic continuum of the telegram, appears as a stream-of-consciousness on the issue: "Passion pours passion flows since always it is useless to resist letting go and enjoying it and then come back soon you will find it in Italy too your Mario" (quot. from Corrado Levi, *Diaries here and there*, Giancarlo Politi Editore, 2011).

From the continuous flow of images, and even before of actions, Iva Lulashi's canvases come to light, starting from traces found, for example television or film frames, to reflect on the visual language of an Albanian story never consciously experienced by the artist.

"Schifano's sentence, which I did not know before - declares Iva - is part of the literary excerpts exchanged in a chat between me, Cristina Masturzo and Antonio Grulli. In addition to finding it very effective, I was interested in the link between the pictorial material and the verbs "pour" and "flow" used in that letter by Mario Schifano, who describes passion as a fluid. The sensuality of the pictorial gesture is one with the content of my work, so I found this reference perfect".

After all, painting, and in particular that of Iva Lulashi, "is perhaps today the last space for erotic encounter still possible", writes Antonio Grulli in his text, which will later converge in the exhibition catalog. Not only that: in this specific moment the pictorial gesture remains one of the few spaces of resistance, Masturzo and Grulli agree. "We are living days and months in which physical proximity, the proximity of the skin, even when it is not forbidden, is seen again, perhaps for the first time in many decades, as something selfish and immoral, harmful to the social body", confirms the critic; painting thus becomes an antidote to this aseptic living, "a skin in which we can meet and touch each other again".

Observing Iva Lulashi's canvases, which envelop the viewer with a welcoming pastel palette, involves the senses in a subtle voyeuristic pleasure, reserved by the artist especially for the female point of view, a pleasure that has the flavor of freedom and a "counter-representation of desire", according to the definition of Cristina Masturzo.

"With a clear fascination for the image and the erotic imaginary - Masturzo writes - the canvas becomes a place of resistance, vindication, empowerment". And again, continues the critic, "Iva Lulashi's painting, so densely inhabited by bodies, by an eroticism that is sometimes suffused and other times unscrupulous, undermines the device of the patriarchal gaze and invests the desire for a transformative power".

Painting therefore, particularly in the recent production of Iva Lulashi, escapes the usual interactions between object and subject of the erotic imaginary. On the contrary, painting freely *flows* over these habits, superimposing on it a changed and changeable reality, which only supports the logic of enjoyment, of burning and explicit passion, to which it is - Schifano certifies - almost *useless to resist*.

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