

«The work is never alone, it is always a relationship.

To begin with: at least a relationship with another work of art.

A single work in the world would not even be understood as a human production, but rather viewed with reverence or horror, as magic, as a taboo, as the work of God or the sorcerer; not of man».

Roberto Longhi, *Proposte per una critica d'arte*, in *Paragone*, n. 1, 1950.

Giuseppe Stampone, the new ethics of images

Lorenzo Madaro

Giuseppe Stampone considers the history of art - indeed, the history of images - a wide open archive which should be investigated with awareness, by passing through eras and styles while incorporating history and stories within one's own imaginary, visual obsessions and conceptual relationships within specific artworks and certain artists. It is by drawing from an ample repertoire of images, that he carries out actions of extreme awareness: on the one hand he knows well that certain icons are continuously alive, thus they cannot fail to be recovered from his artist's gaze as they still hold active values; on the other hand, he re-reads them, changing some details of the building of the compositions, updating them with new bodies, new crucial details for a substantial understanding of his thought. He is therefore interested in thinking about a kind of art capable of structuring a reflection's path on the present, allowing thought to pass through global images that belong directly to us, by training but also by distraction.

To dilate time, of doing and observation: this is another essential paradigm that emerges distinctly in this personal exhibition through a reasoned selection of recent works created with BIC pen on prepared wood and on paper. In the ultimate era of what is sudden, Stampone instead brings us back to a dilated time, that of the dimension of doing with a

deliberately artisan inspiration that rejects the imposed time and also obsessively focuses on what is necessarily enormous and evident. On the contrary, the artist, through his veiling of traces, brings us back to the intimacy of a work capable of being pregnant in its intimate being, deliberately reduced, in an absolute concentrate of both rigor and vision, which is the same that we breathe when we observe those painted small wooden boards of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, conceived for private devotion or for nomadic needs. Inscrutable details, quotes, iconographic connections: even these addends of Stampone's work require long digestion and restitution times.

Nomadic is also Stampone, first and foremost for his ability to range from sacred images to the history of painting, as happens with the *San Girolamo in the studio* by Antonello Da Messina (1474-1475 ca.) or with the *Wanderer above the sea of fog* by Caspar David Friedrich, to icons of the twentieth century, from Fidel Castro to many others: all of them live the prepared woods and papers, together with the Afghan women, the wanderer young children who observe, amazed, the metropolis, and even the reinterpretation of Giorgione's *The Tempest*, which highlights the artist's commitment to the great theme of emigration. The sources are art history books, but also newspapers, magazines and of course the internet. In its own making - and even prior to the issues investigated -, Stampone's work is indeed political, because in that obsessive construction of images through the veils of the blue BIC, the artist defends his own self-sufficiency by developing his own time. Even when he focuses on the procedural and participatory matters, Stampone's commitment is consciously political, as happens with the *Abbecedario* of sixty letters conceived along with the children of the Ghetto of Rome: a unique, collective work, which validates the primary stages of reflection at the base of his mental and creative path: firstly, there is sociality, sharing. The latter is followed then by solitary, intimate, ritual and meditative work in the studio. The work returns to be invested with a timeless aura, precisely because it embraces so many ages, stories, images and a unique sensitivity, always dilated and in progress.