

## Silue: the “*today*” of the living form

A piece of planking, a latch, an indeterminate mass of charred matter, two or three black lines on a white canvas background..

Or: the same “*catafratta*” matter, a small multicoloured cloth, the black line again, this time on a cardboard, some scratches. That’s it. However this precarious assemblage of matter and signs do not flow – as would be the case from Occidental Contemporary Art History – into the informal, into the organic, into the conceptual, into the graffiti in some new impoverishment.

This conjunction of *scraps* and signs continuation in Silue’s work ignite an unexpected return of figures emerging in a flowing story syntax. What has happened? Some crucial decades has passed in world history and in the present configuration of phenomenons that push multitudes to conjugate the future in a new form. That’s it. If we look from this perspective, Silue’s exhibition holds a *new fact*.

Standing in front of his works it is inescapable the call at a knowledge of the *contemporary* in which art – with the critical language that investigates it and the opportunity to render it to the public – become *eternal avant-garde*, in a dimension in which historical consolidated classifications begin but not end a discourse properly open, because it is talking about today’s living shapes and about their exile to the new shape of signs and languages.

So it is completely adequate the title of this exhibition, chosen by Nadia Raimondi, *Sans titre*, being the present without necessarily a definition and the exile which constantly embody silence and marginality.

Silue does not perform the imminence and transformation which from the frontier renew our world, he does not theorize it neither explains it: his work is, definitely, a proof and the visual sign of a change already consolidated.

The future however surprises and bypasses with speed that renders perceptible in an infinitesimal fraction what is happening, what has *already happened*.

Silue’s exhibition then becomes a circumstantial reconstruction through which we understand what has already happened to our culture and the shape of our present. Here in Emilia Romagna, in Italy, like in a Parisian suburb, in Berlin like in Pavullo nel Frignano.

But let us get back to the matter, from where we started: *a piece of planking, a latch...* if we could apply to these few things put in relationship what we know, and believed to know; if we could apply the three or four categories that they are trying to, nobly but uselessly, retie the *scoubidou* of our knowledge into the fast storm of the time we are living in, we should say: nothing new. But we cannot say it instead.

We cannot evoke, behind Silue’s back, the safe and classificatory shadow of the masters, but we can almost see that shadow, like a shape from a Chinese lantern: we can see standing out Burri, Mertz, Haring, Basquiat ... of course before them Dubuffet ... but the thing is that those shadows behind Silue *are not stocked*, still, as it usually happens, in the post-modern remake, collage, interlocking, quotations, graft contaminations.

The new fact is that in Silue's work shadows *flow*. *They live* then: they change. It means they swap postures, and bearing and matter, predilections and charm, frames and backgrounds, subjects and digressions. Until a scrap matter is animated in a theatre of distressed lives as cretti, in a painting where pop art and comics take the forms of a daily epos, light but crude, animated by bodies made of exhausted thinness, in essential survival like the scraps with they are made of: drowned and recomposed bodies in their disarmed and busy humanity.

Nevertheless it is not expected that the historical sum be alive at least in the short and foul breath of the air of quotation. But when history advances this is just because *it has found a plausible shape*, then that *shape* is new, I a historical and *alive* at the same time.

And now a *planking*, a *latch*, a *nail*, in Silue's work interweave each other not to determinate a formal and essentially static statement, without present and development, without theme but to coagulate into temporary scenes and transient the visual seconds of the present and the ancestral narratives , of an experience which is pronounced for the first time, where singularity and community are interwoven, and where experience calls its own sign and the small daily narratives inherit from the universality of destinies, and *micro* and *macro* narratives exchange glances of common foundations.

Who are the people who inhabit Silue's works? Which anthropological background do they draw from? Certainly from a mixed culture but on a level that surpasses hybridation.

It equals to saying that this artist knows evidently about *our* past (European) but thanks to the realism of his past (African), he infuses globules and creates unexpected reactions, and narrates unpublished events. Composes parables which have ideas and opinions, explains ways, styles and life's problems. And the colourful African ethnicity of his world of shapes is not oppressed by traditional stereotypes but certifies change.

So we could say: that the intentions in Silue's work is the *insertion into consolidated occidental and historical shapes of an ancestral non European bearings and of an urgent expressive quest...* but this is biographically obvious, in an artist who from the Ivory Coast comes to Modena.

We will instead raise the bar and hit the exegesis on the right height, which for us is this: what has really happened in Silue's work is, on one hand, *the use of shapes, matter, composite declinations, taken from Occidental Contemporary Art and hybridized with a non European aesthetics* and, on the other hand – and this is the new synthesis – *the candid abandon of the real protagonist of the whole current Occidental Contemporary Art*, i.e. the subject addressed in his inexhaustible psychical variant and idiosyncratic, that is the Ego.

The appearance of the subject has constituted the big jump that drove his art from the bottleneck of decoration and purposes (didactic, with religious or ideological aim) but this has happened from the *Sixteenth Century*, to where there is no knowledge and codes, to where there is no caesura between individuality and collective dimensions.

This unity that forbids, for centuries, the expanding of the ego and leaves to art the sense of the universality counts for the *Divine Comedy*, as for the Giotto's painting at Cappella degli Scrovegni or as the huge Renaissance's culturaleclectic project and probably deteriorated in the Seventeenth Century with a crisis that touched and determined the

Mannerism's hyperbole, and then gave birth to the formidable anticipation of the paintings of the following centuries which were the *Pittura Nera* of Goya, triggering the highest seasons of modernity.

However that formal spark, sensational and marvellous, through which the artist talks about himself, into the current forms of art has exhausted its free nature and touched its limit. His vivid and dying embers have changed the manifest of the self – with its own reasons, heretical and singular – into the shrewd and narcissistic delirium of hegemony, declined not in calculated and mercantile shapes, that do not tell the individual's history nor that of the species. Unless we mean that individual history and that of the species today coincide with that of *merchandise*.

And this could be tragically probable but not necessarily accepted as an occasion for celebration. Could be, at least – this essentially cowardly coincidence – the reason of an art form that opposes and creates a different shape and heretic.

For that reason diversity and heresy today do not advance forward toward The Ego and his unbearable and foul way to show itself and self celebrate but rather toward the retrieval of concrete mental forms through which the artist renounces complacent psyche and tells the truth of his objects.

And it is at this point that Silue takes part in a novelty: his work marked by shapes and materials of Contemporary Art realizes a series of *real micro stories* where the singularity does not come out with the eccentric draw of megalomania but rather determined by those elements of style, a repetition that lends attention – and the priority in the interest of the artist – to a collective story, to a group reality, to the universality of human experience. Aspects created around the concern to elaborate not an egocentric expressions but linguistic structures, and renewal of the archetypes.

What is really clear in Silue's work is the progressive construction of a language, through the creation of a stylized alphabet of signs, ductile and modular which proceed to his main interest: the narration.

One recent work that shows some sharing lines about the story of the collective destiny and the stylized shape, is *Fucking Hell* by Jake and Dinos Chapman, where the collective occidental.

Caravaggio with Morandi, hanging it out to dry on a canvas, a *still life* which refers to *everything that has been before* but does not have any kind of usury, any tiredness, as if for Silue it is possible to paint a *Basket with fruit* ex novo and for the umpteenth: *first time*.

In the epocal and monstrous moment when the Ego produces everywhere his violent celebration, Silue came here to tell us that *we exist* and things exist. Relaunch Kafka's hint: choose the world instead of yourself. That is: make something else exist apart from you.

It is not a coincidence that just someone from the *outside*, a perfect *foreigner*, saw what is not easy to see. But nevertheless it is a fact that holds to our present and to the current human condition that this artist could put his lucidity into the shapes of languages of our own blindness. His vitality in the building of our tiredness. His future impetus in the *hortus conclusus* of our past.

It is in this graft that is *already born* the reality that we do not see. That won't see, reality which guards the borders and dictates the repatriation, where there is no land without language, no language without trespassing.

And then there is no art neither truth without exile by the standard.

The connection between art, expatriation and exile is explosive.

Josif Brodsky said that "The condition of a writer in exile is like the one of a man or a dog launched in the space inside a space capsule (it is more like the one of a dog, obviously, because no one gives any concern to bring it back). And the space capsule is your language".

If Silue's condition incarnates a biographically expatriation as well, the distance from his land and culture, the lucidity of the present make us consider that today it is the same humanity that has found itself expatriated into the celebratory world of merchandise that neither the dominating art seems able to address.

Then, we are that *dog in the space* recalled by Brodski, and the shelter we can build from the disintegration is a capsule of a proper language of a new mixed humanity. This is the duty of arts today.

It is based on the existential, linguistic and cultural needs to build a form which talks again with reality – not only realistic – of lives and things, aiming to put the individual in contact with the community.

Artists as programmatic exiles have been always aware, of how to get a land from signs and in Silue the knowledge of a language as a land, home, ethnic history and private takes on the double strangeness which is of art and life, as Nadia Raimondi remarks.

The passage from the Egocentric to the *us* is tangible in Silue's work in a circumstance so evident in the actuality of social and transcultural phenomenon that can take all the features of "coincidence" but is driven by a global necessity belong to reflections in act by most modern artists.

Bill Viola with works like *Ocean without a shore* where we can see the beginning of single lives deep in an impartial maternity of a primal element; Anselm Kiefer from the *Libraries* with the vertical review of the *Seven Blue Palaces*; Matej Kren with environmental labyrinths made of thousands inaccessible books, the Chapman brothers with 50.000 little tin figures torturing themselves.

A search where the individual dimension is asserted, hostage of mania and exiled from consolidated models, must connect with the historical, to meet the community in a necessary language which comes back to talk about the living forms of things.