

## "Light and Space"

(by Lea Mattarella)

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Andrea is from behind and observes the Cretto di Burri in Gibellina. It's a work from 2003, it's called In the wind and apparently it doesn't seem to fit into anything with the group of paintings that Francesca Bonanni dedicated to the theme of dance. But somehow it announces it. It is a kind of involuntary beginning. This wind, certainly of sirocco, in my opinion already brings with itself dancers twirling and sinuous bodies in harmonic movement with a friendly nature, that touch rugs of circles of water halfway between land art and Gustav Klimt. In these works that have the subject of dancing, Francesca has in fact faced above all two fundamental elements of pictorial doing: light and space. It is evident that the luminosity that emerges from here is that typical of the South, of any southern part of the world that can be recognized among the trulli of Puglia (not by chance mentioned), between the profusion of gold in Morocco just visited, or perhaps among the mosaics that shine between the sun and the olive trees in Sicily. In short, Andrea is there looking at that fragment of earth of which Burri has been able to render the trembling, the uncertainty, perhaps even the fear so well, and Francesca immortalizes him at that very moment. It is no coincidence that here he captures, or rather captures the spatiality of the work of another artist, because she likes to feed on the history of art that she has studied with passion, she has no reticence to reveal her revisited sources, indeed she claims them with pride. And then we are in Sicily. I like to think that in that same journey you saw the figures of Piazza Armerina which are the true initiation of works on dance, the rite of passage between the idea and the realization. Here, here among these mosaics and in front of Burri's Cretto, in my opinion Bonanni has discovered a new reality. She came out of the rooms where she had lived until then, from a Nordic imagery of still lifes of toys and shells to find herself immersed in a blinding light that was able to make her become golden, warm, welcoming. It is true that already in the previous exhibition he had told of exteriors, of fantastic architecture, but those places were theatrical scenes for a representation of objects. Here the figure reappeared. "I was born with the model, when I started I did lots of drawings from life, investigating the body, anatomy," he recalls. So these dancing women, these suspended nymphs, vestals of a world of harmony and grace, are a way to find an old love.

Now, it's normal that if you say the word dancer, and you're talking about painting, you immediately summon Degas. But if these figures are looked at carefully, if you let yourself be carried away by the musicality that you can imagine from their gestures, if you focus on the solemnity and exactness of their pose, it is evident that Degas in this warm and shining Mediterranean world, it has absolutely nothing to do with it. The Bonanni pursues a stillness, a harmonious movement, an attitude that fixes forever a moment in which beauty ends up prevailing. Degas loves dissonance, for him the dancers are "little rats", he frames

them while they scratch their backs, or maybe they yawn. Here there is the timeless silent order of a metaphysical stage, there is no dust of Parisian scenes or decentralized images, hardinesses, labors. If I think of a possible brotherhood between these and other images, Benigno comes to mind in Almodovar's film. Talk to her who spies Alida from the window of her house. She is at the bar, moves her head back and forth, leans over and gets up and he looks at her admiringly, seduced, kidnapped. Francesca's dancers look for looks to seduce and appease, to caress and to reassure. They know that, as the title of a collection of writings by Giancarlo Marmori said, stolen for the occasion from a verse by Ezra Pound, beauty is difficult, but they are given the opportunity to show it and do not intend to give it up. Their lightness is comparable to that of air, the safety of movements to that of the earth, the force of gestures to fire and their constancy in water. All elements that Bonnanni always lets enter into the symbologies of his works. What these sparkling pearls sculpted in the light are looking for, suggests the last work that belongs to this cycle. And it is a way to close the circle that Andrea had opened. There is a dancer, also from behind who has an opera in front of her. It's Matisse's Dance. Nothing jarring, disharmonious, painful. Nothing that is not good where it is. This is the space of harmony, tranquility and stillness. The dance is not an unrestrained and irrational procession, but formal perfection, joints of clear and defined luminosity. In the end Apollo defeated Dionysus. That's how it is for Francesca.

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