

Franco Costa

The vivacity with which Franco Costa exalts his painting with chromatic exuberance inspires us - and appeases us - with the momentum of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy", be it for the linear identity of the gesture, be it for its incomparable musicality.

In a revival worthy of the recent Benedictine Fiftieth Anniversary commemoration that evokes that "exultet" with which the deacons narrated the chronicles of time, singing the praises of past and present from the Byzantine through Medieval Ages in the noble language of the people, Costa eclectically transfers an epiphany of content and color first to an oleographic naïf depicted on the slopes of Positano then to a figurative abstract of a Swedish landscape. The context is glorified and the form denounces a knowledge of architectural design dosed in clever and lucidly interpretative prospective.

Just as the liturgy and chronicles of the "exultet" progressed over the ages, Costa continuously evolves, beginning with one of his typical figuratives that transforms, taking on an abstract flavor through the study of detail. The artist announces a precarious temerity, comments an ecological issue, exalts the strength and power behind an athletic contest, all suggesting a spiritual affinity with the "exultet". With the attention worthy of a journalist in search of a scoop, Costa draws together visual impressions of a period in one continuous movement, revising his technique day by day on the basis of stimulus perceived.

It is along these lines that Franco Costa's painting flows: elegiacally begun, as is customary with most neophytes in art, with those chromatic variations that achieve everything and through which any figuration assumes an almost higher stature, with a yearning both passionately joyous and infinitely serene to live the intensity of the experience itself. Alternating fanciful intuitions with the use of a computer - ever prone to ulterior contemplation - the artist attains a totally original pictorial style that unfolds as persistently as the perpetual rotation of seasons.

From here descend the sails of a regatta bursting like waves into the sky or lactescent as they meld into the sea, resembling a long stream of Cardinals' miters in psalm - singing procession: the ones white in viril competition, the others sacred in spiritual invocation.

Or the frenetic chase of race cars roaring at a speed perceived as a chromatic concentration that expresses the movement but merely implies the noise: accumulated impressions that are immediately detectable in a representative talent which is as technically dynamic as pictorially tending towards the result.

Or still the lunar Swedish scenery and the nocturnal enchantment of a languorous Venice, the tropical beaches and the delight of their flowers: traces of a dissimilar yet equally convincing creativity, focusing prevalently on a quest for serenity and appeasement, representing not only a decorative motif but also the impelling need to express one's own "joie de vivre" in a flare of colors that are both delicate and intimately expressive.

Ecstasy that dwells on the detail that the imagery reflects and that, in its simplicity, reaps the essential necessities of being.

And it is just in the exaltation of being that the painting and creative joy of Franco Costa flourish: in a most welcome contrast to the modern - day world of oppressive precariousness that seems to deprive us of that very serenity of life with which this artist so generously overwhelms us. All to be shared together.

FERDINANDO ANSELMETTI