

SOUND AND COLOUR IN THE AGE OF KNOWLEDGE: A NEW PERMANENT WORK OF ART BY DIEGO ESPOSITO

The University of Teramo is embellished with a new work of contemporary art within one of its most prestigious sites: the great hall of the faculty of law, in the modern university campus of Coste Sant'Agostino.

The great hall of the modern building has a simple structure, as a vast environment degrading towards the stage, with the access gates placed on the right and left of the hall occupied by lively red chairs and a wide windowed wall behind the public. The artist's attention focused on an area of the environment which represents its main architectural feature: the ceiling. It is windowed with four transversal bands crossing, from right to left, the whole vast environment and has wide portions of double walls made up of eight transversal and inclined bands, four of which are visible from the public side and the other four from the stage. On this double possibility to view the work, never perceptible in its entirety, Diego Esposito has conceived and built *Scale di colore suono del tempo*, a work of art whose title indeed indicates the scope, certainly not new to the artist, in which he extended himself. Once again, Diego Esposito wanted to modulate its visual composition in relation to the musical discipline, certainly akin to the pictorial one, due to their common history and to the several cultural synergies of the contemporary age. From the public side, four murals are visible, each of which, on a white background, bears in the centre the name of an artist linked to the territory of Teramo. Luca d'Atri was a painter whose important works, exhibited in the central and southern Angevin Italian area, date back to the 14th and 15th centuries and whose name is associated with a golden yellow square. Andrea Delitio was also a Renaissance painter whose presence is documented from Venice to Rome, but especially in the land of Abruzzo: his name is associated with a red square. Zachara da Teramo was a musician active between the late 14th and early 15th century: his name stands out on a white background, with three quatrains of one of his love ballads on the sides. Finally, just before the stage, is the name of Jacobello del Fiore, a Venetian painter whose marvellous polyptych is exhibited in the Duomo of the city: from his name four axes start, oriented according to the cardinal points, and coloured in gold/East, red/West, yellow/North and blue/South. On the opposite side of the transversal bands, the paintings, visible from the stage, are structured according to the rules of the oriental culture telescope perspective, assiduously attended by the artist, or of the medieval inverse perspective, in homage to the mentioned artists. Thus, the visual cone opens towards the horizon dominated, in the window closing the hall, by the view of the majestic Gran Sasso of Italy, a geographical element of fundamental importance in the culture of Abruzzo. The bottom of each painting reports five lines, seamless in the first and then fragmented into seven, six and five parts in the following ones, with colours changing from gold to blue, red and yellow. Above this ideal staff, each time seven squares of various colours rotate in the space to define a new pictorial and musical notation.

The work *Scale di colore Suono del tempo*, like others the artist

has created during his long career, seems to be "oriented towards the East", in the sense that the artist seems to draw more and more energy not only from the vast cultural field of Western art history, but also from more distant countries: there are in fact supremacist echoes of the modern iconic Russian culture and also of the far East, which he knows well due to his assiduous frequentation. In this particular case, the work of art unfolds in the space by referring to and establishing a relationship also with the ancient presence of artists of his homeland, artists who have worked in a particular moment of crisis and cultural refoundation, in some respects similar to ours, in the transition from the medieval thought to humanism, when the icon was still anchored to a strong spirituality and the reality faced out in the new perspective abstraction. Ages when the painting was an educated threshold through which one could begin to show and tell the invisible to most people.

Today, *Scale di colore suono del tempo* represents an additional, interesting and new formalization of a poetics that Diego Esposito has pursued for many years. The artist has recently exhibited works which have a definite affinity with this one in Teramo: in particular *Suoni di luce*, exhibited at the Museo Genaro Perez in Cordoba (Argentina) in 2010 and *Tessitori di suoni* showed at the Centro Cultural Cori in Lima the following year. On both occasions, an evocation of the sound was present (and not only that).

This reveals the presence, in the poetics of the artist, of his cultured lineage from the Enlightenment thought, that since the 17th century has meant combining the visual appearance with the auditive one. From the first experiments of Abbot Bertrand Castel to the bestknown outcomes of Wassily Kandinsky or of the Italian Luigi Veronesi. On several occasions, Diego Esposito has looked for direct relationships with composers and musicians who, like him, believe in the synergistic relationship between the arts.

His interest in evoking the auditive appearance dates back to 1972 with the work *Suono di tela*, twelve red and three yellow canvases that, with their foldings, compose an early harmonic map; this interest was then resumed as an iconic suggestion in the early 1990s, in the seven notations of the floor work *Stanza dell'aria* (1989-90), showed at the 16th century Villa Imbarcati in San Quirico (in the countryside around Pistoia and irreparably destroyed during a consolidation intervention wanted by the new owners), in the works of *Stanza della Musica/la luce dell'udito*, created in 1991 for the Castello Estense di Mesola in Ferrara, among which *Forma sonora*, in which the artist models the shape according to the idea of an harmonic flow. Also in the works exhibited at the University of San Diego in 2000, at the Kunstverein in Ludwigsburg in 2001 and at the garden Yuwaku of the University of Kanazawa in Japan in 2004, the references to the musical sound are strongly present although only at an iconographic and poetic level.

An interest in the direct involvement of sound appeared later, in 1995, in the seven different sounds of the water jumps in *Cascata* at the Villa Jucker, in 1999 in the sculpture *O suono*

of the Gori collection, on which a wellknown percussionist, Luis Agudo, played during the inauguration, and in 2003 in *Hys (Haifa Yellow Sound)*, presented at the Second International Installation Triennale of Haifa, a work consisting of a yellow panel, a yellow neon light and the recorded sound of a music specially composed and performed with a violin by Master Andrea Castagna. On the occasion of the solo exhibition held in Rome in 2009, at the Galleria Giacomo Guidi, Diego Esposito showed seven large watercolour paintings associated with *Magnetic attraction*, a work whose conceiving dates back to 1991: nine suspended yellow squares on the floor and nine circular black elements on the walls accompanied by a special musical processing of nine sounds, each one evoking a wind, by Master Roberto Cacciapaglia. Finally, we must remember the *Latitudine longitudine* project, which provides for similar works each other but always related to the installation site, already in Italy, China, Argentina, Peru, Japan and France, and soon in other countries, in which through the observer's gaze, the depth of the stone is put into relationship with the "harmonic musicality" of the celestial bodies.

Aldo Iori