

The shadow of perception

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Galleria A arte Studio Invernizzi, Milano

A sound... of emptiness. The wall, the upper area of the gallery has white, purely white works. The shadow is the first opportunity for encounter, the trace for beginning this journey in the enigma stimulating perception.

SHADOW. The body and the 'physical' aura of each element of Pinelli's painting constitute it and remind us of it as the first element of the whole of this exhibition. This is an exhibition that is born and articulated in the artist's thought as a project in space, which is regarded on this occasion as a challenge to æ and also cohesion with æ the architecture of the gallery on its two floors.

WHITE on the upper one; scattered elements arranged on the wall require the eyes to acclimatize themselves, almost a pause from æ or interruption of æ everything that is on the outside. An entrance, an abandonment. After crossing the threshold of the gallery, one ascends visually to the highest point of the identification of a body of colour: white on white. And it is then that one interacts, reveals oneself, humbles oneself and sinks with one's senses into what this exhibition requires: all well-known symbols are abandoned and the 'body' of the work is slowly tracked down, allowing it to emerge from the surface of the wall... beginning with the shadow... from the only sign that is evident, possible, tangible and, at bottom, incorporeal.

If for some time, as both critics and public have frequently noticed, the work of this artist is investigating "painting" æ its infinite modalities, its contents, the very 'attitude' of painting and 'being painting' æ on this occasion, Pinelli requires fresh attention. For the

artist, who seeks in a subtly infinite manner each locus of painting, it is yet another involvement of validity, not only of its functioning, but of "painting" itself, of its existence and its dialogue with the eyes, with its own body, with the environment.

Perception æ or rather 'the shadow of perception' æ is the title that I have given to these introductory notes (with an interview) to the exhibition. Because it still regards perception its most extreme aspects æ as evident as they are infinitely subtle æ that involve the passages, rooms, individual elements and these taken as a whole (because, on this occasion, it is a matter of a whole entity in space, in the articulated totality of the project).

During the encounter between the artist and the present writer, this sound of the 'necessity of the work to be perceived' rose in the dialogue, first of all slowly, with difficulty (almost a withdrawal) and then, little by little, in a musical crescendo, the orchestrated uproar of the 'body', the emergence of the walls, the "rhythm". Thus fragmentation was disseminated everywhere, taking part in each space and every wall. It was a dialogue with the ambiguity of existence and perception, regarding the possibility that the work may be ambiguous, tempting or indefinite.

'My work lives on its ambiguity,' Pinelli reminds us, 'because, in my opinion, it contains many levels of perception that I myself am not yet aware of... because, however much the artist works, and tackles the work, seeking to control it, supervise it and allow it to be born... there are a thousand references, values that you aren't familiar with and that, perhaps, sometimes, emerge through the comparison with the critical interpretation, and that, as on this occasion, reveal different points of view, interpretations that change also with the generations. The ambiguity also lies in these different possible interpretations, comprising various generations in the availability of the values of the work itself that doesn't only "move historically", in chronological order, but which has its "mode of creation", changing, allowing it to be interpreted æ also by the public æ in different ways... if a work vibrates with pure ambiguity, which distances it from being a cold, precise work, as if it had been executed scientifically, it will be possible to interpret it as

an open, continuous expression in a state of evolution. I would like a work of mine to be a concrete space of painting the creation of which is provided by a balance between control and freedom, and the possibility of its interpretation, never obligated, stereotyped or constrained by parameters... ambiguity is also unforeseen... open to question.'

And it is this movement æ between the ambiguity of perception and the existence of the work æ that appears as an unexpected occurrence in the eyes of the visitors when they go down to the lower floor of the gallery. There's an unforeseen sound, a space of colour, and the light is almost blinding compared to the white shadow of the entrance. It's a shadow that continues to exist, but it's in a changed form.... Pinelli's work seems to speak of change here, in this huge single space that's literally invaded, coloured and inhabited. The level of perception is changed not only through the work but by modifying, through the eye, the whole interpretation of the work, by broadening the concept of painting and by changing the rules.

YELLOW. The eye scans the space and the primary colour occupies its horizon. Once again this is a 'flood of colour', the loss of the work's body, the elimination of the contrasts. It's almost impossible to recognize the elements. Thus begins the eye's subtle search to recognize painting, track down its features, its limbs... and again, the artist suggests using the shadow so that everything may emerge from nothing, as in a continuous pianissimo sound, and rise... orchestrate itself with the light and become a new symphony.

'I have always talked about "painting", as I do here too... everywhere. The characteristic of my work has always been that of seeking this perceptive aspect of the work, virtually a "state of anxiety" of the surface. I'm thinking of the monochromes... of the painting executed practically with the breath... with the state of anxiety of the senses and the intellect.... If, for years previously, the search for this "state of perception" and this uneasy yet strong state was concentrated essentially on the concept of painting and the picture... in time, the work has concretely moved in the same direction, putting forward, however, a number of objective hypotheses æ in other words, issues and questions that have continued to be raised and have always con-

tained the endless key to perception, its mobility and, as we were saying, its ambiguity.'

And yet for some time now the work has moved, multiplied and been disseminated between perception and the gaze, not only in order to modulate its existence, but also to allow a new seduction of the senses. In fact, towards the end of the 1980s, in an interview with Antonio Passi, the artist spoke about the new needs of the work, of its relationship with the public. Pinelli referred to it as 'the relationship between the public and the work that has placed in me the accent of the tactile character of my painting... so that not only did the eyes and mind participate in it but also the sinuosity of the forms was an invitation to touch it.'

WHITE/YELLOW. 'As you have noticed, when preparing this exhibition I decided to move the axis, the direction of the gaze... in the sense that, in effect, I regarded the wall as the absorption of the work and that consequently the work and the wall were one and the same thing. And so, in this case, there's a white painting on a white wall and a yellow painting on a yellow wall. So that this stimulus of perception may truly be speeded up and those looking at the work are hardly aware of it... almost as if they didn't have an object to look at... and then... what you call the shadow... the substance of the shadow. The shadow is important in my work... a basic element of my work... it seems to be fundamental now... in these two parts of the gallery space.'

This is a thought that takes shape in a space that is still a purely pictorial, not environmental, manifestation.... 'Painting doesn't vary... it modulates itself, but it's a basic characteristic in all art, and painting in modern art... from Mondrian... in all the process of simplification of painting over the years has reached a point of essence, of the absolute and, in my case, also of gestural expressiveness. "Vertical/Horizontal/Slanting"... are the three basic gestures of painting... the painter's gestures... for various problems these modes are requested.... In this exhibition, I'm displaying some results... but also some problems of painting and its conception of it, expanding its body and gestures.'

Thus the "place/space" is a journey in form, in the totality of the space where the form dwells, arranges itself and emerges; Pinelli's form is not in itself a symbol, but rather a need that emerges in its coming into being, in its appearance. Each work comprises a problem of one of its manifestations; the problem is painting, its revelation, conception and arrangement, the way it is created by the artist's thought and practice.

'My work is painting, but there's nothing representational in this... even in this very different period, which is new for me... the form doesn't represent anything but itself... it experiences a space that's the wall... where segments, bodies and forms meet... and the my thought and artistic practice undoubtedly originate from there... from the language of "painting", of creation... but with my third eye I'd like to reach the atomic substance of form as a vital element in the constitution of a different nature of painting... what I've always tried to do, from my earliest works, has been to break up the work in order to disseminate it and thus experience a new reason for creation and its possibilities.'

I reinterpret Pinelli in this yellow space. A diffusion of colour, of one of 'his colours' æ but everywhere. And yet this thought is evolution. In his painting its elements coexist, the dissemination and the sensuality that is, at times, audacious; there's a desire to allow the expanded tactility and the noble concept of painting to be caressed with the eyes. Is it possible to require the painting of concepts and objects to become 'diffused'? The colour introduces this possibility... the visitor's senses make it feasible.

'Because I now paint a gallery with a colour... because there is this invasion... for the first time.... As I've already told you... it's a question, a sort of subtle gift, but also a risk (because art must also be reasonable mutability and risk, and it must be open to question)... as I said before, I attempt this deviation so that the painting may, in some way, merge with the wall... be almost totally absorbed and become little more than a 'small sound'... a minimal cadence that emerges moment after moment, allowing the substance of the shadow to create the deviation... it is diffusion... if the shadow manages to

create the deviation and the painting manages to emerge perceptibly from this surface... once again I will have managed... with a small feather to make music on the 'harp' of the poetry that I play blindfold.'

The visitors move between the spaces with their senses, the shadow is the basic element, an accent that becomes a body... 'the white, the absolute white is the light, the maximum sound... white as the priority event... the yellow... the need for it to happen... at the bottom of the wall... the colour of the lower part that serves to stress the white upper part and indicates the "reason" for this operating in space, also by means of sounds and contrasts.... It's not an environment, it's a dialogue in the place, but always working on the wall, like painting... a sound with its development, a sound that grows and floods the senses.'

Painting seems to have been portrayed yet again with the ambiguities of appearance... and it is, instead, in continuity, accommodated in colour, immersed in its continuous sound perceivable through the traces, the sounds of the shadow, but it does not, for this reason, neglect the paint itself, its body... on the contrary, it depends on it... its vision and salvation depend on it. In this evolutive continuity, Pinelli has found a new space that, proceeding from the dissemination, reaches perception regarded as the greatest involvement of the senses and a serene request for attention to be given to "painting". The shadow seems to receive our thoughts as visitors, and guide us through the first visual dispersal... the shadow guides us so as to make this easier... moving in the colour with our senses.... 'Drowning in this body of painting-light'.