

KIRIL HADZHIEV

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Kiril Hadzhiev returns with a personal exhibition in the *davidepaludetto | artecontemporanea* gallery after six years. This lapse of time is rather interesting, allowing to track the signs of the artist's transition from "conceptual" sculpture to "gestural" painting. As the river that, stemming from the source of the *idea*, slowly and radically changes its shape while flowing downriver, so the sparkle of creation binds with mud and gives origin to the painter's depictions. For the bulgarian artist his figures are shapes emerging from the soul, shivering humanoids that come to life and are incarnate in *bodies/streams, angels/trunks*. Subjects that stand in the middle of the scene and seem to obey secret natural laws. In reality they are *ultra bodies* that the artist moves by means of a research characterized by an impossible *naivete*. If on the one side we discern the riddler using materials at a distance in the same fashion of a puppeteer, on the other side we see the painter whose sensitivity is nocturnal and tormented, passionate, filled with sensual demons dancing on the tip of his brush.

And if his sculpture demanded that the spectator came closer to the works of Kiril Hadzhiev with the sensation of having to solve a mystery, his paintings ask no such questions, but rather invite to surrender to what appears on the canvas in its essence - a magmatic appearance marked by a feeling of urgency. In this feeling of surrender the spectator is always alone, looking for a passageway to another place, to a "fourth wall" and a "fourth dimension" between animal and human, where the animal can come out in the open and finally emerge as a wild beast. The hyena, wise and untamed, like a silent totem, reminds us of times long gone, of reciprocal and profound enmity.

However, the whole complex is also part of a fairy tale, and a metaphor of a initiation ritual. While the *senex* works a spy in a capsized world, the *puer*, sensual demiurge of what is important here and now, asks himself: are we animals?

And by doing this the artist is able to frame the true, undeclared, conflict of our times.

The relationship between the dialectics beastly/human, animate/inanimate, human/insect, male/female, allows us to detect a tension aiming at

solutions of artists such as Romina Bassu, Nicola Samorì, Sergio Ragalzi, Paolo Leonardo or the younger Rosario Vicidomini. All of this side by side with a sense of admiration with regards to the historical vanguard movements.

However - look out - one needs not to interpret this well alive sensitivity for avant-garde artists as an appendix of "classicism", but rather as a feature coming from the mere chronological past of Bulgaria. During the socialist realism regime, as a matter of fact, the "historic" avant-garde was able to find full expression and life only in the 90s. The artist's development is thus marked by this bizarre proxy revolution and its consequent experience in his traineeship.

The pictorial outcome is a sort of cold and metallic *Scapigliatura*, although fluid in its essence. Liquid mercury spread in a vortex of signs. The silhouettes are outlined with chromatic research almost *fauve*, yet at the same time elaborated with an intention different from any other form of stylization, waving between naturalism and *maudit* iconography. One can detect timeless fragments of late nineteenth century and northern European DNA, recalling mining and luddite elements. Yet the current context is today very different: technology roars forward, and the beings are completely enveloped by it as a sort of invisible smoke. They are colored in a uniform fashion, in coal and silent terror. The artist becomes demiurge / iron smith / webmaster. Technician and poet. Worker and idle contemplator of uncertain futures. The limbs (dis)assembled and appearing as wrapped by a sort of protective film, run along the technological *cyber-insert*. Art becomes an intoxicating event, as immersion of the whole into one, and inebriating element when the *one* emerges to the *outside* world. In the exasperation of the elements, shyness becomes an aggregating biological value, as if reluctance were the answer to the dispersing nature of the individual particles. We are once again facing the disintegration of the Ego, the combination of an expressionism at times sweetened by an occasional manga, by a Bacon veiled by *saudade*, by a Lucien Freud still not perfectly adult, by a Cecily Brown deprived of everything but "the catching" of the shape in the very act of being shaped.

Kiril Hadzhiev is born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1990. He studies at the artistic lyceum "Ilia Petrov" of Sofia, with particular interest in engraving and graphics. In 2009 he moves to Turin and enrolls in the *Accademia Albertina*, with specialization in sculpture. He studies with artists such as Luciano Massari, Fabio Viale and Mario Airò. He continues his studies and specializes in sculpting marble, turning his artistic work in a conceptual direction. 2015 first personal exhibition in the *daidepaludetto | artecontemporanea* gallery. 2018 he obtains a specialist degree, however a little later he loses interest in sculpture. In the search for a more personal, emotive and immediate means of

expression, he begins to paint and soon fully dedicates himself to figurative painting. This exhibition is a premiere of his collection of paintings.