

Vittorio Brauner - 1997

“Since always, I have had a liking for abstraction, perhaps with slightly partisan outcomes. To tell the truth, art, even when it is synthesis, copy or understanding of reality, usually presents itself as *abs-trahere* (to separate, to withdraw something from something). Anyhow, the deeper the artist’s awareness, the greater his formal dignity. Giotto, for instance, cuts and shortens dresses, eliminates the superfluous, to show at his best the miraculous Francesco performance. Canova uses pure, faultless forms, to describe the apology of the sacred in “The Three Graces”, stressing the triangle composition as the most famous symbol of God.

The twentieth century, driven by industrial frenzy, is seeking forms that match as well as possible: once again, geometry is the secret of the mechanism. As they say, art followed economy always at a distance: wrong! Art wants to be geometric (and given all the geometries we know, it named itself abstract) trying to comply its own wish for perfection, conceptual rectitude and strength. It’s not by chance, if the adventures most hostile to modernity are to be found in our mystical, honored old people, whose names are Kandinskij, Klee and above all Malevic: square upon square!

Now, the feeling of religious economy, the postulate that the essence of reality corresponds to our right thinking, belongs to Giustino De Santis. Painting may and must be a means of knowledge, its object must be the true. The good exercise of painting requires moral rigour, integrity of judgement.”

“Picture is life, because there is no way to perform it, without carrying it on to the end. And here, two paths open, and De Santis is running both of them. Picture as science, as interpretation of natural images on the Tables of Francis Bacon, picture is lavish in researching animal species or chromatic combinations, or the tricks of the prism. Otherwise, picture as inspiration, divination, prophecy. To speak or better to sketch on the drawing sheet what, beyond the instinct, a secret power commands. The same power to which the artist is appealing, to lead a life free from error, tireless until the extreme precision. Here the circle closes, like plus and minus signs driven to infinity, where the extremes of the straight-line meet. On one hand, the religious zeal, on the other hand, the mathematical accuracy. And then *Mimosa* can appear as a chromatic and formal play of extreme effect, where all natural elements are reduced to their own scanty essence, coloured, lined, so to say, by fantasy, apparition in front of which the artist can’t but bend, submit. Memories from between Dante and Linnaeus can be found in *Triregno*, with a more solemn tone, but with the same sustained, tireless rhythm. I could say after all that module is the repetition of a constant sign. And yet De Santis paints with contour lines that are flames, he fills surfaces, merciless to rigours that don’t belong to his pictorial vision. For instance, *Il dialogo dei primari*, strikes in definite cultural values a structure that is upset, intentionally out of balance. But the sign, the meaning of that lack of balance is to be found in *Nascenza*, where the seed discloses new powers and the growth reveals an organic geometry, the real perfection, that takes part in the full development of cosmos.

De Santis aims at presenting at the same time the whole idea and the detail, showing how the utmost perfection belongs to both of them, in a wedlock at the end of the straight line.”