

MAGAZZINO

Francesca Leone

Si può illuminare un cielo melmoso e nero?

Curated by Danilo Eccher

16 September 16 – 24 October 2020

Opening: Wednesday 16 September, 2020

Magazzino is pleased to open its new exhibition season with the first solo show by **Francesca Leone** at the gallery. The exhibition, curated by Danilo Eccher and titled *Si può illuminare un cielo melmoso e nero?*, will open on Wednesday, September 16th and will be on view until October 24th 2020.

The title, taken from *L'Irreparable* by Charles Baudelaire, suggests the main theme of the exhibition developing around the large-scale installation that will occupy the main gallery space. *Si può illuminare un cielo melmoso e nero?* (*Can one illuminate a dark and mirky sky?*) is an assumption of disorientation, suggesting the lack of clear landmarks and points of reference. In her series *Carte*, Francesca Leone precisely works on this absence and on a universe tied by opposites; the artist intervenes on a series of reclaimed metal sheets, through the application of layers of paint following a traditional approach, obtaining the restoration of a memory that seems to be already written in the found objects. This operation provides a light but robust painting, dense with references and stratifications, not only material.

For the exhibition at Magazzino, the artist has realized an installation that will entirely pervade the main gallery space. The ceiling subtracts the traditional view of painting and its natural vertical dimension, while transforming it into a dark sky that people can look up to. The iron sheets, deformed by their own memory and the artist's subsequent intervention, become soft, light surfaces, over which Francesca Leone writes a page that time seems to have omitted.

Francesca Leone was born in Rome in 1964, and lives and works between Rome and Miami. His works have been exhibited, among others, at the Capitoline Museums (2007), at the Loggiato di San Bartolomeo in Palermo (2008), Palazzo Venezia, Rome (2008) and Castel dell'Ovo, Naples (2009); also in 2009 he exhibited at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMOMA) in Moscow and received the honor of Honorary Member of the Russian Academy of Arts. He participated in the Venice Biennale in 2011 (in the Italian Pavilion) and in 2013 (Pavilion of the Republica de Cuba). In 2014, he had solo exhibitions at the MAC in Santiago de Chile, at the MACBA in Buenos Aires and at the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg, in addition to that at the PAN - Palazzo delle Arti in Naples. In recent years, he has had solo exhibitions at the Milan Triennale (2015), MACRO in Rome (2017), Real Albergo dei Poveri in Palermo and Palacio de Gaviria in Madrid (2018).

IS IT POSSIBLE TO LIGHT UP A MUDDY AND BLACK SKY?

Why lighten it? A sky which is “muddy and black” is already filled with dark lights, with shadows that gather, with obscure depths, it is a very present sky, looming, raw and tactile. It already has, within it, all the lights and all the shadows, it catches the colours in the swamp of its greys, it lays its gaze in the depth of its blacks. Such a sky is already bright, it turns on with a whispered light, forcing the eyes to close, the thought to concentrate, and the image to show its physical sensibility. Everything merges and boils in the incombent mud above our heads. A “muddy and black” sky is a large, opaque mirror that reflects all the things. Only in these overturned lands, on these suspended metal sheets, one can grasp the flashes of a sharp colour, a recall of an antique painting, one which is cultivated, sophisticated and elegant. It is inside the creases of these metal sheets that Francesca Leone hides her colours, it is in the darkness of the *Carte* that the artist lays the lights of her painting. It is here, in this rusty sky, that Francesca Leone brings the characters of her narrative: the greens, the blues, the reds and the yellows, are the enlightened pictorial characters that draw a new story, discover new tales under the grey of the ashes. It is a tale in which the memory of the painting emerges, in which the emotion of the colour vibrates, where it is possible to recognise the art of Francesca Leone, a story able to lacerate even that “*darkness denser than pitch*”.

Danilo Eccher