
Beatrice Meoni

Fuoriscena/Offstage

Curated by Marina Dacci

*Fine lines sketch motion back and forth,
Thoughts and footsteps coming and going.
Embodied sensations emerge from domestic walls
to reaffirm them.*

*Paint spreads on the surface, then denies itself,
shifts, and re-coagulates
in constant motion.*

*The palette is one of the dreams
First of restless, then reconciled vision.*

*Everything is given
nothing is given.*

*The body melts and merges in the mark
that outlines things, flowers, trees, places
A mark in which inside and outside
deny the rootedness
of everyday life.*

*The eye daydreams
moving slowly.*

*What, then, is the work
if not the embodiment of this feeling?*

*The artist glides from one place to another
rises up, falls back,
drives a burning energy
that flutters on the canvas, on the board
then returns to wherever it came from:
from the word,
from nature.*

Everything melts and recomposes.

*Accept "making small"
and at the same time, make immense.*

Beatrice Meoni's studio is an organic space that houses her works, objects that accompany her daily life, her gestures that bring back into the world on pictorial surfaces the experiences lived in her "small world".
Offstage indeed.

Her painting absorbs and interiorizes physical movements: the opening of her arms gauging the size of larger canvases, the footsteps she takes stepping back and then reapproaching a painting by two small carpets during its execution, the color samples on the wall left there by the hand that guides the brush, the phrases and quotations she sticks on the walls, the coverings like veils (she likes to call "my rags") that she places over works waiting for their possible progress.

All these gestures continually bring the space in which she works into being, redefining it by proprioception. Her feet, for example, which appear as floating, ghostly forms in many of her works indicate her own presence in the painting (*Alcune parole guidano oltre; Teatrini di verzura*).

"I am a body that rises towards the world. Through the body, we are this very world," affirms Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*.

The artist's body is not the only thing present here, however.

Other bodies-(objects, books) fill the studio's shelves, walls, and tables in apparent disorder. They wait for a call, then move to substantiate visions and experiences in her paintings. (*Passacaglia di oggetti*).

The studio is both lively and silent at the same time, resounds in layers of echo that relate her "being in the world." No routine, but continuous reinvention, the continuous experience of this state of being.

Painting, with its internal rules, drives her to redefine and manifest this experience in a possible and viable "outside". In the work *Coltivare il tempo*, fragments and quotations wander across the canvas creating mental tangencies.

In the world she turns to, time works as an accordion, sometimes fast, sometimes very slow, that provides the painting's inner rhythm. In her creative process, time sometimes freezes, gets suspended in the search for a possible coherence of vision: a coming and going even in apparently finished works. The boundary between finished and unfinished is never unmovable for the artist, who deals with the obstacle and makes the mistake visible.

Beatrice Meoni's practice has recently gained new perspectives. First, the shed, then the treehouse. Both gave her the distance she needed to "see things from outside," or from above, in the almost mystical exercise of "making small," amplifying her listening to every little sound and knowing how to live through her own fragility. It's a way of being present in the world while being absent at the same time. This precarious and essential space is not only a point of observation, a space for quiet reading, but also one in which small-format works germinate that summarise the rediscovery of unison with nature (*Tra gli alberi; Sull'albero*).

Coming and going between home, studio, and shed is an intimate form of nomadism, rich in implicit narratives that Meoni brings alive in her painting. She follows the painting by clearing her mind and letting herself be guided in the process of creation. Her painting is itself a continuous flow between doing and erasing, and is different every time (*Fuoriscena*).

The palette is often soft in her paintings, luminous even in the darkest tones (*Sottobosco*): does this come from her experience in the world of theater? The pictorial signs are fluid, sometimes timid: they suggest, withdraw, subvert and, at times, deny planes and perspectives, welcoming and amplifying the floating of objects in space. There is never disorder, but rather an accumulation of gazes that the viewer can share and in which different narratives that sometimes overlap as collages (*Nel bosco sull'albero*).

Meoni engages in continuously rich dialogue with literature and non-fiction. She herself can't always say which comes first, painting or reading. More than mere pleasure, her reading provides a constant source of thoughts and images that she brings into painting. It's a search for trim, balance. Sometimes it appears in the form of handwritten notes she sticks on the wall she's

working on, as if this were a mental path she was following. Other times it gets into a painting, the title of a work, the choice of a subject. Words and images are bound together by a subtle thread. Among others, the work of Virginia Woolf, with her writing that breaks up temporal sequences in favor of visions born from streams of consciousness (the cover of *Waves* appears in the work *Risacca*) recurs frequently, along with the poetry of Giorgio Caproni, as a paradigm of the artist's way of working. His poem *Errata Corrige*, written in 1979, hanging on her wall

"Errata

Non sai mai dove sei.

Corrige

Non sei mai dove sai."

might be translated as

Corrigendum:

You never know where you are;

You never are where you know.

These many other authors she prefers include Joyce, Celati, Calvino, Ritter, Perec, Davies, Lispector, Meschiari, Martelli, and Zarri.

The show's itinerary starts with *Alcune parole guidano oltre* and continues with *Sull'albero (05)*, a small painting of a woman in a tree (image from the series named *Tra gli alberi*). Further on, the viewer's gaze comes to rest on another window and then breaks out of the shed and into an undefined world outside, before finally settling on *Mattutino domestico* that closes the exhibition. It's an invitation to shift the gaze from the walls of her home elsewhere. It's a constant wandering of the mind without barriers. Always offstage.

Marina Dacci