



CRITICAL REVIEWS

FROM: Milleuno-Profiles and Biographies

by Barbara Bertolini - Rita Frattolillo Edizioni Enne

What do movie star Robert De Niro, physician Antonio Cardarelli, singer Fred Buongusto, writer Don De Lillo, argentine minister Guido Di Telia, U.S. ambassador Thomas Foglietta have in common....? Their Molise roots, just like Pardo Mariani. Born in Campobasso, graduated in Law, he devotes himself actively to painting, a passion he's been nurturing ever since his boyhood, along with poetry; he lives in Bologna, he has often exhibited his works - on his own or along with other artists -, hitting the headlines over and over again and meeting with both the public's and the critics' favour.

His favourite technique, the so-called "pitto-scultura", the ground-breaking merger of painting and sculpture which made his name renowned, consists basically in handling soaked cloth as if it were clay, which eventually makes it look like a bas-relief. This is Mariani's peculiar way to voice his concern and reproach against the evil and wrongdoings plaguing today's world. His message is conveyed by means of a manifold and rich symbolism which unveils an outlook on life that is both withering and pessimistic and yet enlivened by hope of a not-so-distant rebirth and renewal.

As the material grew gradually less dense and somewhat lighter, the pictorial images, as they germinated from the combination of "pitto-scultura" and oil painting, were, as a result, endowed by a more profound and passionate lyrical intensity, which touches on a sort of dream-like, poetry-drenched quest.

By Oriano Tassinaro Cio

If we really want to talk about "pitto-scultura", then so be it and let us refer to this term regarding Pardo Mariani's expressive style. Let us be careful, though: this is not a mere technical "ploy", a playful device to broach a different and innovative artistic subject. This is rather a much more complex and significant question. The themes laid bare by and springing out of the "plastic" painted surface of the canvasses, mostly thanks to the crucial recourse to universal symbols that the painter draws on the substratum of the multi-millennial history of human culture, cast themselves from the third dimension - that the canvass acquires thanks to the natural medium of perspective - over to the fourth, where "readers" find themselves seized and overwhelmed, engaged in a genuine participation in which they are not mere lookers-on, but rather play the main role.

Technically speaking, this pitto-scultura can be regarded as a cogent and harmonic blend of "canvass contributions piling up on canvass", until what eventually meets the eye is a surface embellished by splendidly fitting and varyingly emphasized reliefs on whose background the pictorial and chromatic oil-painted tale springs to life. What comes along as the ensuing effect of this effort, well within the boundaries of an all-encompassing meditation originated and ripened on a prolific and lush humanistic and philosophical humus, is the underscoring of the eternal essence of mankind, in the adamant, ever-lastingly unyielding symbiosis of its spirit and its flesh, with all that this union brings about in terms of dignity, sacredness and inviolability; and consequently, in prompt contrast, the highlighting of the inhuman and irrational essence of whatever underlies every violent attitude, every abuse, every injustice perpetrated against mankind.

Pardo Mariani - a degree in Law, a heartfelt poetic disposition, a flair for painting he has nourished and taken care of on his own ever since his childhood, a long, brilliant and engaged career as an artist, often awarded and acknowledged in many personal and collective exhibitions, both in Italy and abroad - eventually accomplished this task after going through an "expressionistic" figurative phase, marked by dense, "full-bodied" atmospheres, which anyway should not be dismissed as old-fashioned and obsolete: adopting this viewpoint clarifies the essence and purpose of his loving portrayal of Bologna, which he brings to completion by falling back on unconventional and yet truthful and revealing - in their transfigured quintessence - images that succeed in outlining Mariani's adopted city in all its both earthly and sunny "full-bodiedness".

Therefore, Mariani sets himself against the great spiritual turmoil and the upsetting of human cohabitation rules - which from time to time results in hideous tragedies such as terrorists' massacres in Piazza Fontana and at Bologna Railway Station — countering them by working out and unfolding, within the whole of his philosophic theory, other all-embracing, universal key questions such as man's everyday life commitment and efforts, politicians' "no-show" and silence in the face of the most pressing social needs, the creative standstill of the present time, mostly filled solely with the presence of knockout models (which we certainly do not mind...).

Pardo Mariani, an artist we ought to keep our eyes on and "listen" to, as if he was our wakeful conscience, silently warning us to rescue all the human values gone lost and, at the same time, presenting us with the shining example of his masterful artistic deftness which pleases our minds as well as our hearts.

DISTINCTION AWARD "GOD PAN" By Laura Carli

...as means of enhancement of the work's value, the technique, through which the artist strains and screens its setting and form, becomes one of the key issues to fully understand Pardo Mariani's whole oeuvre.

In his creative endeavour, he reaches out for lightness, a spiral stretching as far as the eye can go and leading the way towards untrammelled patterns of freedom and fantasy, only one step away from man himself and from the depth and truthfulness of a deeper and more recognizable circle, through a process of soul-searching.

A truer space? An unconstrained flight of energies and lyric tunes? Truths locked away by pressing needs? By hopes and doubts? Or, rather, a deeper-running yearning to track down the roads and patterns of our past and our experience and connect them with an imaginary future?

Pardo Mariani stirs up a whole set of crucial and specific questions, calls for a deeper involvement in today's life, his eyes filling up with light as they stray far ahead in search of a brighter tomorrow.

SCREAMING SILENCE by Rita Frattolillo

From the impossibility of everyday life all the way to the metaphysical painting, from the Fauves to the Impressionists to the Symbolists, the artistic feeling of Pardo Mariani, who has devoted himself to painting and poetry ever since his childhood, appears to be marked by a genuine longing for a soul-searching quest which unfolds in the personal reconsideration of his outlook on the world and its reality.

Lines and squares pervaded with an unwordly silence, bottles and glasses dipped in an outlandish light which lends them a subtle poetic value: all this makes clear how the artist from Molise, who moved a while ago to Bologna, where he works and lives today, has always taken top-notch artists as a reference, which, on the other hand, did not thwart him in his struggle to find his own personal way to even more intimate and mature achievements. Another turning point in his career must have been his stay in Paris, which refined even further his artistic language and style: his anxiety and distress enshroud themselves in warm, soft and flowing colours that manage to convey with deep intensity his anguish and dejection, his hopes, the ruthless harshness of present times that never fails to weigh him down with grief:

manslaughters, all sorts of violence, against kids as well as nature. Therefore, standing as counterpart of the graceful and serene "Maternità" ("Motherhood") emerging.

PARDO MARIANI'S FIRST BOOK "A love hymn in poetry and writing" by Mauro Donini

"Recovering myself": this is the title of the first poems collection published by Pardo Mariani, whom we had known for a long time as a brilliant painter. What a nice surprise for us! Based on the book's title, though, a question arises: has he eventually "recovered himself"? The answer, one would guess, is yes, and that's because such a crystal-clear, powerful and fresh poetry explores the past and by doing so it comes to realize that the present has absorbed all hopes, all feelings, all sadness and joy that have flown through the rivers of time only to join and merge into each other, thus giving shape to the complete text of a whole life, of happy-ending comedy performed on a stage where happiness and nostalgia walk by hand in hand, where we find ourselves involved and charmed by the poet's romantic meditations on human conditions into which Mariani plunges with all the strength of his urgency to side with the others, with his dreams, his love and affection for his family, for his homeland, for his fellowmen, and, to top it all off, with heartfelt feelings - outspoken or disguised - of deep and genuine religiousness.

All in all, poetry of the finest value, that fully deserves to be described as such, a book that stands head and shoulders above an all too packed market survey, where true talent may be found out here and there, but mostly as an exception amidst the sad overcrowding of self-styled literature and poetry, which is actually nothing more than pure and simple amateur practice lacking all kinds of expressive strength and creativity. In Pardo Mariani we also find a principled and rigorous consistency between the emotional world of his poetry and that of his painting, which has often received enthusiastic reviews and judgements (for example, at the latest personal exhibition in the Coburn Town Hall, in Germany). Poetry and painting, we could conclude, take turns in full harmony in maintaining the human and social project, the profound ponderation on love and affection that the "poet and painter" has always tried to carry out.

L'OPERA E L'UOMO by Pol

The pictorial art of this forty-something artist moves us to tears and touches our deepest feelings inasmuch as it suggests the urgency of an untiring soul-searching based on a strictly personal and surprisingly original philosophical elaboration of the reality of man. Pardo Mariani, a.k.a. Dino, shapes his works with the stark elegance of his style that discloses a pressing, unrelenting urgency to put across the gripping, enthralling expressive vigour of his soul. In his pitto-scultura there's always something that sets in motion his peculiar view of the world and its

ways: it is an outlook that is deeply embedded in his soul, as if it had been branded. The artist has been trying for a long, long time to dig out signs of life, to make sense of present times and give a flower to the future.

By Camillo Bria

His pitto-scultura deliberately sets out to denounce and reproach the evils that hold present times in their unrelenting and merciless grip. His works are the ultimate outcome of his creed and ideology based on which he looks at reality with sternly critical eyes, while, at the same time, he voices the man's urgency and desperate need to get rid of all burdens and cross so finally become a better, simpler, peaceful human being.

CRITICS IN THE ARCADE

by Antonio Moro

Pardo Mariani's "pitto-scultura" aims at lifting the anguish and distress of daily life up into higher dimensions. All characters and subjects depicted in his works strike fear and at the same time lead us to a critical meditation on the ills and evils of society. The eagle with the fierce talons, the predacity which is its trademark, these are all representations of a violence that seems to hit us in an utterly careless and unaware fashion. This is the political and social message that we can find in Pardo Mariani's works. His is an instinctive, spontaneous, off-the-cuff and free-spirited painting, splendidly unencumbered by foolish and unfounded ambitions and unfettered by seemingly intellectual mythicizations. The style, the colours, the shapes, these are the key features that convey with such moving brilliance the image of the artist who falls prey to a harrowing pain and agonizing in its grip, but still won't stop fighting to claw his way out of it and recover that inward serenity no man could ever do without.

THE PAINTER'S STUDY by Prof. Serenella Gatti

if we watch closely Pardo Mariani's works, we can learn a valuable lesson regarding today's painting: more specifically, it is not a mere photographic reproduction, but rather a thorough observation and at the same time, as a result of this observation, a personal interpretation of reality. In this case, we have a kind of figurative expressionism that outlines the depicted character resorting to strokes which are concrete and realistic and, at the same time, shaded and indistinct. Pardo is the painter of the two, everlasting and imperishable, masks of life: laughter and cry. They are easily found in the painter's favourite subjects: still lives,

landscapes, old Bologna, human figures and, most of all, women. That explains also the purpose and the very essence of his favourite techniques, the "pitto-scultura", a kind of bas-relief, and the use of sunny colours: that warm yellow of his, the bright ochre, the crystal-clear blue, the ancient, fresh reddish.... If we dwell a little while longer upon his female characters, they appear naked, with quite realistic details, but never coarse, printed on canvass with stark strokes which serve splendidly the purpose of reproducing the characters' movements, both the external and the spiritual ones. These figures present us with an almost obsessive reoccurrence of the same kind of woman, seen through the screen of a contradictory male attitude, torn between a conservative conception and a more open-minded and unbiased one. What we have here is the pictorial rendering of inborn emotions stirred up by the sight of a woman, and also in the other paintings it's easy to find love for the various forms of life: it is a straight-from-the-heart language, simple and complex at the same time, made warm not just by the use of colour, but also, and most of all, by the underlying emotions and feeling. In all paintings we can "read" the genuine and candid expression of emotions; there is a yearning poetic atmosphere, somewhat melancholy, and there is also an original and noteworthy lyrical message.... Pardo's painting, provided that one is able to "read" it, ends up urging us to respect our fellowmen (respect in the most authentic meaning of the word), in a difficult moment of our present history, socially and politically speaking, and it achieves this crucial result by speaking both to our hearts and to our rational minds. This is, so to speak, the most suitable background that could serve the purpose of the proper reproduction of Pardo's world which, in turn, mirrors splendidly the feelings and attitudes of most of us and has received the gift and good will to speak to each and every one.

by Camillo Bria

...his "pitto-scultura" vigorously denounces the evils that haunt and afflict our society. His works are the ultimate outcome of his ideology based on which he looks on reality in a strongly critical way; they symbolize the artist's will and hope to get men rid of all burdens and dross and eventually turn them into better, simpler, peaceful human beings who loathe every form and display of violence.

by Franco Bea

... Pardo Mariani's "pitto-scultura" takes shape as an extremely personal and original expressive choice that crosses the traditionally accepted boundaries of sculpture and painting by blending them in a single, charmingly captivating combination which is abreast of the most innovative tendencies at work in today's art backdrop...

by Gregorio Viglialoro

...he is a painter who, blessed with that pure and articulate artistic language which is the distinctive feature of all self-taught artists, utters his worry and anguish over the existential rubbish today's world is swamped in by bringing into play chromatic outbursts that glorify the poetic virtues of his pictorial tales. The terror, the distressing fears, the meanness and selfishness, the whole wide variety of violent acts we are faced with day in and day out, all these are key topics of Mariani's existential and philosophical quest and he brilliantly ennobles and dignifies them thanks to his inborn sensitivity and the smoothness of his stroke: what eventually meets the eye is an astonishing harmony of shapes and colours which never fails to strike as miraculously sober and disciplined and yet, at the same time, compelling, insightful and perceptive. It is the "man-poet" who pledges to rescue his own lost peace of mind and gives utterance to his pain in depictions gifted with an out-of-the-ordinary expressive punch.

from the water - a symbol of life - , other female figures look as if they are grieving and sad, possibly aware of the critical and delicate role of social balance that they are expected to take upon themselves.

The numerous exhibitions of Pardo Mariani's works, in Italy and abroad, often rewarded by success and acknowledgments of all sorts, also represent a vantage point where one can stand and

look at all the settled technical experiences what strikes the most, in some of the canvasses, is

the intricacy of symbolism which the artist entrusts with his message: the tableau "Le stagioni della storia" ("Seasons of history") pictures a huge marble that shatters the trees - i.e., nature - with its weight. The statue of a woman in the foreground symbolizes the past, unvarying and irreversible, but also our society that remains bound to its conventions. Nevertheless, somewhere on her body arboreal roots sprout, thus suggesting the author's hope that the longed-for renewal is about to come along. In the background, a temple combines the ideas of worship and art, which seem to be regarded as mankind's permanent, eternal, crucial points of reference, yesterday as well as nowadays.

POET AND PAINTER

by Anna Vittoria Arace D'Amaro

Among the many poems collections I happened to read lately, I could surely appreciate Pardo Mariani's as one of the most interesting, thanks to its wealth of themes and intensity of feelings. Unfortunately, reviewing a book calls for a terse and concise style that usually ends up not doing justice to the most subtle details and nuances. Still, we can't help but dwell upon this poetry work to highlight - even though only to a certain extent - the thriving profusion of motives

enlivening these pages, in which the world around us is always depicted as a lush landscape, blessed with plenty of values and set in a spectrum of chromatic hues and rhythms that never fail to hold the reader spellbound: "I take it in ever changing, every moment; I grasp it transmuted out in the open, in movements that augment our wellbeing". And more: "I am in the breadth of happiness that is all-embracing breadth, too, true ways of our people". Just like those journeys conveying the feeling of a dizzy compound of all distinctive features of the farthest and most different places in the world.

Let us linger a little while upon the poem "*Ave Maria*" ("*Hail Mary*"), where the poet's grieving humanity finds consolation in raising a hymn of filial love to the Virgin, to whose loving Mother's heart he entrusts his sorrow:

"Listen to my crying, sanctify it in days of anguish!" resting assured in his faith that: *"Angels carry bitter tears of sorrow high above"*

Yes, this whole collection is resonant with feelings of love and solidarity, and the reader, as he follows the poet's lead, catches himself experiencing moments of sheer inner peace, a sort of premonition of a better world, far away from the anxiety and the restlessness that keep haunting and afflicting the human heart.

And who else but a true artist such as Pardo Mariani could attempt to portray visions of which now the magic of his paintbrush, now the poet's pen, are so wonderfully good at granting us signs, figures and rhythms that thrill our souls? Let us listen once more to a few more lines: "You are not time, you are eternity and to me you are life!"

In times like these, when we are swamped in poor and colourless displays of self-styled art (in all its various branches); when genuine and authentic inspiration seems to be either lacking or drifting further and further away from moral principles; when moral principles of nowadays seem to show less and less respect and consideration for human nature, which in turn appears to be no more than a faded and dull image of what it used to be; then we must cling with deeply felt thankfulness to this priceless jewel of artistic and human values, the poems collection of Pardo Mariani, poet and painter.

THE MYSTERY OF PARDO MARIANI'S PAINTING by Anna Vittoria Arace D'Amato

As I was in Naples visiting a friend of mine, Prof. Elvira Astolfo, I had a chance to enjoy a few paintings by the Bolognese painter Pardo Mariani.... this friend of mine has a few of his paintings hanging in her living room and they're all works of the greatest value, which reveal the undisputable influences that the city of Bologna, its environment and lifestyle exerted on

Mariani (and that are easy to spot here and there in particular stylistic elements), who, on the other hand, proved able to give birth to his paintings by resorting to lines and colour that are entirely personal and unique and mirror his inner universe, in which reality and mystery seem to be speaking an intensely colourful and variegated language reminiscent of inmost feelings, all steeped in an incurable melancholy that covers and enhances every single image. I think of "Portici a Bologna" ("Arcades in Bologna") and "La chiesa dei frati di Bologna" ("The church of Bologna friars"), works completed in "pitto-scultura"; I have in mind images inspired by old Bologna, with its silent lanes and endless arcades, where the peculiar "rosso bolognese" (the shade of red so typical of this city) echoes the throbbing pulse of centuries gone by. But beside this magic rendering of the environment there are also very intriguing proposals of a figurative art that is capable of manifold expressions and with which Mariani drew the critics' attention after having been awarded prestigious prizes and acknowledgements by some of the most important and influential art institutions. We cannot help to mention, for instance (to name but a few), "Maternita".

by Gregorio Viglialoro

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