



MILANO
GALLERIA 10 A.M. ART
FROM 30 JUNE TO 23 SEPTEMBER 2022
L. BOMBEN, F. DEL CONTE, F. LISSONI, L. LUPI
“WHEN SPACE BECOMES A PLACE
FOR ACTION AND THOUGHT”
Curated by Angela Madesani

When the 10 A.M. ART gallery invited me to develop a group exhibition dedicated to contemporaneity, I suggested we explored a very vast and under some respects complex theme, that of space. We involved four artists: two of them I knew already, one I had previously worked with, and one we discovered for this exhibition.

But why choose such an apparently generic subject like space? That of space is a field that has always attracted me and here, all the more so, the choice has fallen on radically different artists, who have never displayed their works together, but who for this project have succeeded in creating a choral outcome about and in space – place of action and of thought.

The complex exhibition setting displays works dedicated to language and investigations on the chosen subject. This is a *meta-exhibition*, an exhibition about the exhibition, where each one of the artists involved has been chosen especially for the role they would play inside the gallery space, which appears divided in two areas: the upper area with their latest works and the lower area with works representative of their previous phases of research. Since the artists are all rather young, we certainly could not focus on a widely diachronic dimension, therefore we turned our attention to project-related connections that might underline the consistency of their work and their capacity to reach, through one same theme, new proposals and conceptual solutions.

Luca Lupi's works on display belong to some of his recent series, where his research besides being spatial is also temporal. Time leads to cancellation and space welcomes form created by light, and what emerges is a simultaneous coexistence of presence and absence of colour. The artist here works with the four basic printing colours, cyan, magenta, yellow and black. His idea is to empirically create photographic paper: this is the overcoming of the medium itself standing between the artist and the subject, through the elimination of any form of authorship. It is as if Lupi, in this latest work of his, had managed to summarize his previous productions, drawing closer to the concept of limit of the image, which no longer requires a camera to be brought into existence.

He is interested in the reaction specific surfaces have to light. “This is a project that was born in a specific context, that of lockdown. I found myself closed inside a room, without the possibility of going out to photograph subjects and landscape. So I started working on these mental landscapes recalling the dawn of photography, Talbot's photogenic drawings,” and Anna Atkins's talbotypes and cyanotypes – all lines of research where authors did not employ a camera. The sense of Lupi's work is precisely that of returning to the early stages of the history of photography, also to find meaning in the work he produced over the years, mostly dedicated to landscape and so essential, devoid of perspective, and of any specific point of view.

These are works that recall the meaning of the word photography, impression, light writing, that in this case is an electromagnetic radiation and not an ordinary source of light. Lupi's creations are in fact a conceptual operation.

Photographs can be made even without leaving the studio. To go places the artist does not necessarily need to go out with a camera round his neck. In our time of excessive image production, one feels more the need to erase rather than to add something more.

This work by Lupi can be read in three phases, as if it were a sequence of three consecutive moments. The first consists in creating a landscape inside the studio; the second in giving shape to light, creating geometric-like figures; the third is a further evolution: the artist prints a white paper once or twice and intervenes to eliminate the layers of colour to form an image: a successful attempt to materialize what seemingly is not material and that occurs within a definite space, where it essentially becomes a linguistic and conceptual investigation.

Francesco Del Conte displays *Skyglow* composed of nine photographs. This is a project developing on two levels. On the one hand there is the artist's interest in an environmental issue, light pollution. Over relatively few years, humans have in fact succeeded in destroying their visual relation with the universe, the stars, and the constellations. In parallel Del Conte's work is also a reflection on the use of photographic instrumentation. In order for his work to have a scientific validity, the artist had to respect the rules of photographic parameters, taking into account time, exposition, film, lens and even weather conditions, which had to remain constant in order for his project to be successful. Just like in every research with a tendency to typify, for example in the Becher's, and *mutatis mutandis*, in Opalka's, for nine times Del Conte searched for and found the same working conditions. His points of reference were three stars, Vega, Altair, and Deneb, which he photographed in Turin, on the hills near Piacenza and in the Tabernas Desert in Spain.

Even in this case we could say there is some level of authorship cancellation, with the artist acting as a sort of recorder of reality through light, trying to use photography in the most objective and analytical way possible. "The stars that are at the centre of my images are not my subject. It is almost as if there were no subject, they are mere coordinates." In this work as in others by this artist, the subject is only a pretext to explore a conceptual operation connected to photography and to the way this discipline can be used.

In *Skyglow*, however, we believe we can also detect a poetic, contemplative, and under some respects romantic and definitely silent context. The fulcrum of the work is photographic instrumentation as in the rest of his practice. The great photographs of milling machines displayed in the lower part of the gallery come to mind, whose projections have been the subject of another exhibition I curated in the Basilica di San Celso in Milan. Del Conte uses photographic instrumentation in the most analytical and objective way possible, almost completely eliminating authorship, as mentioned above. His choice in this context becomes a sort of veiled critique to the hyper-subjective use of photography in contemporary society. "By doing so, the concepts of narrative, composition, space, that are normally fundamental aspects of a photographic practice, are cast aside since these photographs could be placed horizontally, diagonally, vertically. There is no order, there is no aesthetic logic."

Placed in the upper part of the gallery, **Ludovico Bomben's** installation is a large black compass, interacting with what is a clear formal reference to antique art, a white moulded panel. On the lower level of the exhibition space is another panel whose presence interrelates with that of other works.

Bomben is fascinated by instruments per se, in this case a triangular compass as those used for navigation or sculpting in times past. "Inside that object there is an array of information that I find in all my work. The concept of precision, an instrument used to calculate the golden ratio, and the notions of geometric, perfect, and spotless drawing." The compass is an eloquent piece, retaining the idea of journey, an instrument once used to calculate routes and draw sky charts, an object that finds its ontological meaning within itself.

Almost all of Ludovico Bomben's works are actual instruments that he himself builds to modulate, as he maintains, certain motions of his soul.

The panels he displays are white. In one the relief is marked by a golden contour delivering a sort of contemporary interpretation of the ultimate sacred object of western religious painting: a silent object through which the artist investigates the concept of limit, even in the sacred connotation of the word. It is as if matter wanted to show how it bears a preciousness within, a value that must be treasured. The exterior becomes a sort of cage, as in Neoplatonic philosophy where the soul and truth are preserved, enshrined and withheld by matter.

The underlying idea is that the work in its essence has the need to show itself.

There is also another and not least important linguistic aspect. In Ancient Greek the word for white was *λευκος*, *leukos*. White like purity. The Italian word *luce* (light) derives from the Latin *lux*, which in turn comes from the Indo-European root *leuk*. Therefore there is a common etymological origin. White as light

and light as beauty, parallelisms with a clear reference to the world of the Abbot Suger whom we have known through Erwin Panofsky's valuable studies. Therefore we are talking about light in a spiritual sense, that Bomben quotes and transfers onto his white and golden panels.

His other work on display features a golden parallelepiped placed on a white panel creating a highly impactful piece where I sense a reference to the canon proposed by Andrei Tarkovsky in his film about the Russian icon painter Andrei Rublev, once again an exploration of the idea of the relation between art and the instrument used to forge it.

"The canon is the limit from where we can start to be free" to sculpt time in incessant research for truth.

All of **Federico Lissoni's** works do not stem from a specific project idea, but on the contrary, they express a *modus operandi* common in all his production, which is developed during the process, also taking error into account, which rather than a mistake could be read as a stage of the process. "The finished work is the result of a series of actions, mistakes, circumstances, things I think and do, which eventually come to an end, the moment I decide the process should stop." The raw paper work, which is then applied to canvas, undergoes a number of continuous processes, more or less violent actions, tears, and gluing of various elements.

The painting is a working space where Lissoni identifies different spatial phases.

If at first the artist was interested in creating balance and harmony, now he is more fascinated by an unbalanced situation between the different parts of the work, a condition that could be compared to a particular existential dimension, where a sort of balance-shattering accent is brought to the fore.

The artist's curious gaze has always journeyed to examine his surroundings, to walls with overpainted writings, billboards, to the unfinished, to gaps large and small.

He is fascinated by erasures that in turn become signs themselves. His are mute spaces, made of pauses, of waiting for what is yet to come.

In one of the works from the 2016-2017 exhibition there is the image of a capital. At that time the artist was using several images of classical architectural elements unfolding in a sort of cyclical history, which in turn becomes a memory of itself, where the space of art is also the space of existence.

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Milan, Galleria 10 A.M. ART (Corso San Gottardo, 5)
30 June - 23 September 2022

Opening: Thursday 30 June 2022 at 5 p.m.

Opening hours: from Tuesday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., and from 2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m.
On other days by appointment only

Free entry

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