

Marta Sforzi is an assiduous, obstinate painter.

It moves driven by the urgency of doing; a careful, precise and accurate approach.

His field of research and source of inspiration, his refuge and his pleasure is the inventory of constituent elements of the decorative alphabet on which human imagination has been practiced for millennia; an infinitely rich repertoire, made of geometric patterns and flowers, leaves, racemes, scrolls and arabesques; reasons that, generated by decantations and influences, over time have populated rooms and living rooms, coating objects and surfaces of all kinds.

In particular, Marta Sforzi is attracted by the decorative forms developed in Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries: from curtains to drapery, from the details of the fabrics in Tiepolo's paintings to the splendid robes that appear in the portraits of Bronzino, to the chinoiserie of 18th-century European furniture, to Fortuny's fabrics, which recover and condense centuries of tradition; to the glass chandeliers, above all, that we can still find if we penetrate inside the Venetian palaces. The latter, in particular, attract her with their fragility, with their diaphanous transparencies.

Suspended objects, silent, the artist has recorded the presence in the penumbra of reserved microcosms; he observed them from unusual perspectives. His eye has focused on the shapes of blown glass flowers and on the lines of the arms that just appear; he caught them while, just before being sucked into the darkness, they still managed to capture the little light present, to reflect it and to radiate it. Then, inside his Berlin studio, he made it the subject of numerous works.

Accompanied by the gloom of the northern climate, the chandeliers appear to us as real forms of a desire fueled by distance in time and space: evanescent ectoplasms like the breath that generated them. It is manifested in these works, as in many of those that came later, a set of present and past, with a reference to the beloved city, Venice, and in particular to that moment which saw the summit of an unparalleled splendor and the beginning of an irreversible decline.

But there is also the impression that, in representing those chandeliers, Sforzi is staging a broader theme, that of the struggle between light and shadow, between presence and forgetfulness.

The same ambivalence applies to the motifs that appear in his other works: fragments of ornamental themes whose unity has been lost; sections of those decorative shapes that originally ringed without interruption, while today, reduced to fluctuating curls on a monochrome background, they represent a sort of multi-universe animated by a vague sensation of movement. It is impossible to grasp the overall picture without going back, starting from these fragments, the path backwards.

The point is that that overall picture no longer exists. That of Sforzi is a journey through time, in a deeply rooted memory; in a past whose opulence proved to be dramatically illusory and of which fragments emerge today, in a phase of overt precariousness, but we do not grasp its meaning.

In the subsequent series of variations on the theme, the forms disintegrate further; missing connections, vanished contexts. The background from which the elements emerge is always darker and the atmosphere increasingly muffled and introverted; while the application of different layers of veils expresses a reality filtered by time.

Through his archives of shapes Sforzi speaks of an extinct equilibrium, of absence and its presence, and stages a condition of isolation in a polycentric present. Of course, it is the chronicle of a crisis; but it is also a new possible arrangement, in which elements returning from the past, finally devoid of constraints and hierarchies, are projected into innumerable forms giving life to different panoramas, decomposed, deconstructed, only apparently repetitive; in reality impermanent, always new, in constant evolution. The sense of an indissoluble completeness has given way to multiplication and a new compositional freedom.

The motif of the mirror emerges among others, albeit with discretion: evoked in the Monotype where it acts as background, or in Venus which takes Titian's Venus in the mirror, but in which the figure of Venus leaves room for a phantasmal halo. The use of this device, so full of meaning in traditional painting, introduces the great themes of reflection, of the filtered and elusive nature of the image, of the artist's reflection with respect to his position in the world. Dense themes, elaborated in a game of continuous references.

The works of Marta Sforzi are becoming increasingly dense psychological spaces.

Gabi Scardi