

## Gal Weinstein

The exhibition *Beside, Each, Other* has a coherent and unified layout made up of works that have for the most part been created specifically for the occasion: installations of a sculptural character and on an environmental scale, two-dimensional works and videos.

The subject of the exhibition is the complex and ambivalent nature of any public demonstration, as well as the ubiquity of our attitudes and even our sense of identity.

The lower floor of the gallery is dominated by a large sculpture whose subject is a number of burning tires that produce dense black smoke. Several large blow-ups of fingerprints act as a counterpoint. Endowed with an iconic force that makes it universally recognizable, but at the same time turns it into a *cliché*, the image of the tyres in flames evokes the need to attract attention in situations of dissidence and the uncontrolled reactions linked to the impulse to demonstrate 'against' something; with the semantic value of a logo, the image refers to states of political discontent, of collective chaos, of social anger that can be found in the most varied contexts. The fingerprints, on the other hand, are an unequivocal allusion to the biological uniqueness of every human being; their main characteristics are persistence in time and individuality. Yet Gal Weinstein's serial representation of them contradicts their individuality, generating the impression of a close-knit whole, but one made up of diversity, and thus susceptible to friction and tension.

On the upper floor of the gallery, in the central room, a long foosball table speaks of uniformity within a system that, based on the power of aggregation and involvement, tends to homogenize; but the shapes of the players, made out of fragile porcelain, express the vulnerability of the system itself. Around it are installed a series of self-portraits made out of steel wool.

In the other room there is a video in which we see the moon going through its phases, in a cycle that never alters but is made up of continual changes of state, while several two-dimensional works represent a forest fire. The artist obtains this effect by means of a small but real fire lit on the work's support; it is a controlled fire, that spreads in a linear fashion.

Thus, between individual and collective aspirations, between order and chaos, between control and explosion, between revolt and acquiescence, the image emerges of a human being at grips with subjective desires, with a sense of responsibility towards his or her surroundings, with the difficulty of maintaining an independent position within a social organism that tends to conformity.

If revolt is a necessary impulse, is hope and nihilism at one and the same time, cohesion is solidarity; within it, however, also lurks the temptation of an expedient alignment and the danger of homogenisation.

This is the meaning of the works that Gal Weinstein has realized with great skill, although using heterogeneous materials that are often of little value, from wood to porcelain, from wax to polystyrene and steel filaments.

The latter, in particular, have been his favourite material in recent years. The steel wool is spread over the surfaces, acquiring greater or lesser density, almost as it were graphite, and is only recognizable when examined at close quarters.

One of the principal challenges of the exhibition is the large sculpture representing burning tyres, a virtuoso attempt to 'give form' to one of the most elusive things in existence, smoke. The simplicity of the materials from which the work is made contrasts with the significance of the themes and the images selected and with the rigor discernible in the design and realization. The discrepancy gives rise, in Weinstein's work, to short-circuits of meaning and raises questions about the relations that can exist 'between interpretation and experience, between expression and opinion'. Only by dealing with the complexity of the present and taking responsibility for the problems, the uncertainties, the diverging expectations and the dilemmas that society presents to each one of us is it possible, according to Gal Weinstein, to avoid cultural catastrophe. It is necessary to be actively involved and to assert one's own individuality, without forgetting that the social network to which we belong is a constraint, a necessity and an opportunity.

