

"The Gold of the Mediterranean"
(by Loredana Finicelli)
(from the catalog of "The Gold of the Mediterranean",
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It is the gold of the Mediterranean, a texture woven of light and desert, the one that Isabelle Eberhardt, a traveler and writer born in Geneva but of Russian origin, sings with her lyric prose and Francesca Bonanni captures, crystallizing it, on her airy canvases. Space and land of the Maghreb, geographically and precisely characterized, but simultaneously absolute and universal, where time is suspended and light acquires a generative vis, a primordial power capable of imparting vital spirit to the parched and boundless views. Francesca Bonanni ideally follows the traces suggested by Eberhardt: she prefers painting to the word, but the suggestions are identical, because it is light, powerful and fascinating, that constitutes the intrinsic theme of her recent work. A clear, limpid and shining light, but also peremptory and ready, capable of constructing and modeling synthesized, essentialized images that live by virtue of apparitions rather than real concreteness. Francesca Bonanni has always placed archetypal motifs, recurring symbols of a Mediterranean tradition shared by several cultures and populations - towers, columns and architectures of an ancient and archaic past - caught in the vivid fragment of their history lived and remodulated, recomposed according to meanings and allusions always original and unpublished. These are emblems with complex symbologies that, narrow in their isolation, appear as remote and mythical presences, capable, however, of infusing the idea of history, of the process of history. If Isabella Eberhardt escapes from civilized and colonial Europe, in search of narrative itineraries, marked by the exoticism in vogue, Bonanni does not flee: she explores. It takes "the way of the desert", follows "the way of spices" and comes to conceive a dimension of elsewhere, where contemplation and meditation dominate everything. Francesca Bonanni's painting lives in the space of an ancient wisdom: care in the preparation of the funds, harmonious agreement of unusual colors, disciplined and rigorous formal value. The design is slow, reflected, clear and yet very light in observation and touch; drawn in thin tip of steel brush, clear yet diaphanous, deliberately not invasive, but evocative.

Everything, in the work of the Roman artist, takes on the features of an indispensable tribute to the craft. Artist craft, stratified by the skill and wisdom of the time and yet very modern in its dramatic tensions, held back by a vaguely aesthetic inclination. In the

recovery of the canon and the trade, Bonanni engages with the human figure and rivals it: he faces it in a duel and wins. Again, he is confronted with that "man animal more formidable than ever", that "animal man" which for De Chirico constituted the real problem of a painting that, after the avant-garde experiments and the overcoming of objective representation, returned to the space of being and of primordial existence. The human figure, in the new painting of Bonanni, is central and decisive. But often, and necessarily, from behind. It avoids the mundane and the spectacle, calls into thought the collection and, not infrequently, speculation. He is a human figure who, in the sacredness of the meditative experience, finally becomes a man. Man-bridge, man-tolerance, all intent on composing the canvas of a new humanism that recovers the space of stillness and reflection. The time conceived by the humanity of Bonanni is the time of silence. Bonanni does not paint man, much less the human figure. It transcends both. The Bonanni man, who so often inhabits his landscapes, lives in his views, enjoys the water of his springs, is an ultra-man who prevails for his inner dimension, contemplates the absence with his eyes, and the complete with imagination.

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