

Mazzoleni Modern Art Gallery

Torino, Italy

Renato Guttuso. Opere 1937-1986 **Renato Guttuso. Works 1937-1986**

12 March 2005 - 11 June 2005

During the last few months particular attention has been dedicated to the extraordinary character of Renato Guttuso, whom Mazzoleni Modern Art honours with an important anthological retrospective from 12 March to 11 June 2005.

There are on display fifty-five important works, of which 45 oil paintings and 10 watercolours, that allow the visitors to retrace the career of this artist, winner of the International Lenin Prize for Strengthening Peace among Peoples in 1972. The exhibition allows the visitors to approach a painting research which conveys the pulsing energy of a language marked by a personal and vibrant interpretation of faces, nudes and objects.

The artistic experiences of Guttuso represented by his works at the exhibition are several; these works define a very interesting and hard lived part of his life and establish an instant comparison with the Milanese period of the Corrente/Current group and the Fronte Nuovo delle Arti/New Front of Arts group - founded together with Renato Birolli, Emilio Vedova and Giuseppe Marchiori -, of the Manifest of neo-cubism and social realism of which stand out the great and evocative paintings, as well as the post-cubist representations to the striking still lifes with fruit and objects, to the expressionist nudes and female faces.

That of Guttuso is an artistic season characterized by the initial attendance at the studio of the futurist painter Pippo Rizzo, the invitations at the Quadriennale Nazionale of Rome (1931) and at the Biennale Internazionale of Venice. He was close to intellectuals like the poet Salvatore Quasimodo, the philosopher Antonio Banfi, the authors Libero De Libero, Alberto Moravia and Antonello Trombadori.

Important works on show stand out, among which: "Natura morta/Still life" 1937, "Gatti/Cats" 1938, "Vaso di fiori/Vase of flowers" 1938-39, "Limoni su drappo nero/Lemons on black drape" 1939, "Gabbia bianca e foglie/White cage and leaves" 1940, "Gabbia Rosa/Pink cage" 1941, "Studio/Study" 1948 and "Caraffa/Decanter" 1947, up to "La bottiglia di Madera/The Bottle of Madera" 1940-41, "La finestra blu/The blue window" 1940-41, "Occupazione delle terre in Sicilia/Occupation of the land in Sicily" 1947, the important "Nudo sdraiato nello studio/Nude laying in the study" 1959, "Pannocchie/Corn cobs" 1963, "La notte di Gibellina/The night of Gibellina" 1969, and the watercolours of the folder published by Maestri Incisori 1983/1987.

Among the most recent exhibitions of the Mazzoleni Gallery to be remembered are: Felice Casorati, Giorgio de Chirico, Alberto Savinio, Afro, Alberto Burri, Enrico Baj, Salvo and Hartung, all exhibitions that gained a great success in regards to the public and the critics.

A **catalogue** completes the exhibition, published by Mazzoleni Arte Contemporanea, with texts by Angelo Mistrangelo.

Regarding the artworks on display Angelo Mistrangelo writes in the catalogue: "The deep sense of Renato Guttuso's painting resides in the extraordinary strength of thought, in the pulsing and never-ending energy of the images, in the encounter between art and culture, between social events and the path of mankind. In every interior with objects, in every persuasive female figure, in every testimonial of the struggles of the workers is the incontrovertible and indisputable dream of an artist who marked the history of the 20th century with his works.

[...] Senator, Lenin Prize for Strengthening Peace among Peoples winner, he is present at the Biennale of Venice in 1950 with the painting "Occupazione delle terre incolte in Sicilia/Occupation of the uncultivated lands of Sicily".

Women's nudes, large still lifes, city views, they all concur to create a sense of art that must have a direct effect on the life of all men, because art addresses them, disclosing for them infinite ways of beauty, of poetic emotion, of civil enthusiasm... In this way his language finds voice in the oil painting "Gatti/Cats" of 1938 and "La gabbia rosa/The pink cage" of 1940/41, in "Bottiglia di Madera/Bottle of Madera" and in the painting "Occupazione delle terre in Sicilia/ Occupation of the land of Sicily" of 1947, with a sharp and strong line, a colour that permeates and pulls out a mix of images from the background, with the strut of the characters-peasants endowed with a powerful verism [...].

And from the "Caraffa/Decanter" (1947) of the neo-cubist period to "La notte di Gibellina/The night of Gibellina" (1969), painted on the second anniversary of the earthquake of the Belice valley, one 'discovers' once more the vibrant expressive range of the Sicilian artist, of his world, of the relation with Picasso and an artistic research where - as Marco Rosci wrote in the catalogue of the exhibition at the gallery in 1997 - 'a breakthrough is evident with Picasso's sharpness of the overturned colour-planes; but it also planned in the materials involved in that sharpness and in its rhythms. They are the materials - widespread - of the daily home routine and work, companions of the thatched chair, the flask, the little cage [...]'.

The concentrated charm of the workshop with paint brushes, cluttered tables, cans, books, colours, canvases and easels, windows opened on reality, used to welcome artist friends such as Achille Perilli, Ugo Attrardi, Pietro Consagra, Giulio Turcato and Pietro Dorazio who remembers: we used to carry all our paintings 'to Guttuso's workshop and look at them together, complimenting and mutually detecting the origins and possible developments of our experiences'. An experience - Renato Guttuso wrote - where it takes form 'an apple, a bottle, a face, men at war or at peace, angels in the sky, ecstasies of Saints, massacres, damned in Hell, crucifixions or concerts, newspapers, cinematographs, museums, streets, countryside, buildings and closed rooms, unmade beds, neglected and dusty objects. Painting is the form of our existence in each one of these elements or in them all together'. So painting becomes story-telling, passion and tale of the human progress in search of an inner truth, a gaze that is life, criticism and poetry".

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