**PAC Contemporary Art Pavilion**

Milan, Italy

**Edoardo Persico e gli artisti (1928-1936).**

*Il percorso di un critico dall'Impressionismo al Primitivismo*

**Edoardo Persico and the artists (1928-1936).**

*The journey of a critic from Impressionism to Primitivism*

curated by Elena Pontiggia

11 June 1998 - 13 September 1998

The exhibition "Edoardo Persico e gli artisti (1928-1936). Un percorso dall'Impressionismo al Primitivismo/Edoardo Persico and the artists (1928-1936)". A journey from Impressionism to Primitivism" (promoted by the Council of Milan, Culture and Museums Department and organized by the Contemporary Art Pavilion) is the first solo exhibition of the art critic Edoardo Persico (Napoli 1900-Milano 1936) who was one of the main intellectuals of the '30s and was especially known as an architect and critic of architecture and who died when he was only 35 years old.

The exhibition holds about a hundred works. It retraces the whole itinerary of Persico's critical choices in the fields of painting and sculpture and it is divided into three parts:

1. The European Impressionist and post-Impressionist art which Persico considers the basis of modern art.

2. Persico's period in Turin (1927-1929)

3. Persico's period in Milan (1929-1936): his activity of art critic at "Belvedere" at the Bardi gallery, at "Il Milione" gallery, at "Casabella" and the circle of young artists that he supported.

In Italy in the '30s Persico theorized an anti-20th Century art which could take inspiration from the European modern painting: an art that can substitute the classical rules for a primitivism (intended as an anti-academic "naive" and direct language) charged with sacredness, able to express the pettiness of man compared to the infinite.

In the first section of the exhibition we can find, among others, two works by Daumier for the "Le Charivari" (1846); Il colpo di vento/The gust of wind by Corot (1865); the monumental (255x154cm) Il Signor Arnaud a cavallo/Mr. Arnaud on a horse by Manet of 1875, as well as paintings by Millet, Daubigny, Sisley, Zandomeneghi. After these there are works from the School of Paris (from the Rosa porporina/the Crimson Rose by Modigliani to Chagall, from the Odalisque by Matisse to Marqet, from Il Cristo degli oltraggi/The Christ of injuries and the Crocifisso/Cross by Rouault to the Rue de Mont-Cenis by Utrillo); the Pavillon by the customs officer Rousseau (evocative drawing of 1901 that belonged to Soffici) and from the Belgian School (Ensor, Learmans, Permeke).

In the second section there are works by Casorati (April, 1930) and by the Sei di Torino/Six of Turin, the Group founded by Persico (Boswell, Chessa, Galante, Levi, Menzio, Paulucci).

The third section hosts works by Rosai, among which those present in the exhibition that Persico organized for him in 1930 such as i Filosofi/the Philosophers (1920), and other paintings of his such as the pivotal Villa Toscanella. By Arturo Martini, very much loved by Persico, there are on show the poetical ceramics presented to the Triennale in 1930 and the majestic La lupa/The she-wolf: all works which were promptly praised by the critic in the magazine "Casabella". Garbari is on display with, among others, the monumental Trionfo di San Tommaso/Trimph of Saint Thomas of 1931 (lended by the MART of Trento and Rovereto) which Persico considered the masterpiece of the artist. And moreover there are works by Carrà, the futurist Soffici and Oppi. After these there are the "young ones": from Birolli (among whose works are on display the great San Zeno Pescatore/Saint Zeno Shepherd and the Taxi Rosso/Red Taxi of 1931), to Lucio Fontana; from Sassu to Broggini, Tomea, Manzù, from the Chiarismo movement (Del Bon, De Rocchi, Lilloni, De Amicis and Spilimbergo) to many artists that were discovered by Persico in the early '30s. In all these works what emerges is a common mood: a lyricism pervaded by emotional spirituality that marked a unique moment of Italian art.

A series of Persico's portraits, letters, books and documents of the period (among which the magazine "Casabella" of 1931-1933, the years when Persico was most active as an art critic) completes the exhibition.

The display is also accompanied by a catalogue with texts by Elena Pontiggia, Mirella Bandini, Luigi Cavallo, Maurizio Cecchetti and Claudia Gian Ferrari, as well as critical essays by Lorella Giudici and never seen before Garbari-Persico correspondence, published by Fabrizio Lanza.

The outfitting is paid for and made by "Progetto Lissone", a limited company with public-private shared capital, which was founded in 1997, made up of freelancers, industrialists, artisans and retailers, with the Council of Lissone, aiming at promoting and spreading the culture of a territory, the Lissone area, which is a world leader in wood workmanship.

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