**LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2009 / THE BIENNALE OF VENICE 2009**

*53 Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte / 53th International Art Fair*

**STANZA D'ARTISTA / ARTIST'S ROOM**

curated by Marzia Spatafora and Enzo Dall'Ara

Pavilion of the Syrian Arab Republic, Ca' Zenobio - Dorsoduro - Venice

7 June 2009 - 22 November 2009

The **Syrian Arab Republic** takes part in the "53. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte - La Biennale di Venezia/53th International Art Fair - The Biennale of Venice", with the exhibition **Stanza d'artista/Artist's room**, which underlines the close cultural relationships among the Countries of the Mediterranean area, thanks to the presence of **Syrian and Italian artists**. Next to two big Syrian artists, the realist **Issam Darwich** and the informal **Yasser Hammoud**, there are in fact seven protagonists of Italian and international contemporary art: **Gastone Biggi, Salvatore Emblema, Sergio Lombardo, Hannu Palosuo, Franca Pisani, Concetto Pozzati and Turi Simeti**. In order to represent the Middle-East Republic the curators, Marzia Spatafora and Enzo Dall'Ara, decided to exhibit **paintings, sculptures and installations based on their historical value and how modern and known abroad each artist is.**

**The Syrian Arab Republic, invited for the second time to this important international art fair, is hosted at the prestigious Ca' Zenobio, where the significant exhibition unfolds through the inner rooms and garden. As it is clear from the title, each artist is assigned a specific space, characterized by works which belong to his own personal artistic visions, in order to portray each artist's work, unique and unanimous at the same time. The creations reveal a cultural exchange which respects and highlights every single artistic personality, drawing attention to their characteristic forms and contents. In this way the visitors are open to moments of reflection, of exchange and debate, from which can sprout interesting concurrences and counteractions of themes and artistic vision.**

**Analyzing the works and the poetics of every single artist the curators of the Syrian pavilion, Marzia Spatafora and Enzo Dall'Ara, say: Issam Darwich, refined realist, gives voice to an artistic view of the "presence of the absence", from which his "Stanza/Room" 'Presence of Absence' takes the name, where the absence of the person is substituted by the presence of scattered and laid down clothes, often part of experiences and memories. As a painter, whose creativity is oriented towards a sharp aesthetic depiction, he proposes (through his oils on canvas) the representation of clothes deprived of a real human presence, but which are able to convey the bodily substance of the suggested anatomical traits.**

**"Light generates form when it is connected with my consciousness and individuality, all the way to quench my sight and light up the intuition of seeing in the dark", says Yasser Hammoud describing his own work 'Ishraqat' (Illuminations). Thus the artist paints the soul of abstract matter, the dynamic of introspection, the bond between light and colour in the tremor of the shadow. The operational gesture becomes the supporting theme of an informal abstraction, which (through bent or straight, parallel or overlapping developments) aims at following the inner drive (conscious or unconscious) towards a formal vibrant construction, able to express the hidden contents of the artistic process.**

**Gastone Biggi, present in the Syrian Arab Pavilion with his work 'Datemi un punto d'appoggio e vi dipingerò il mondo/Give me a dot and I will paint you the world', is an artist always consistent with originality often focused on the active poetics of the "dot", as a source of creative and explorative experience. His choice is completely personal, rigour seems to be his axiom, almost solemn, his colours are the colours of the mind: grey, black, white. His "continuous" dots obsessively fill his canvases with an effect that is math-like and musical at the same time. It is so, according to Gastone Biggi's own words about this Biennale, comparing his known 'Continui' with his more recent 'Puntocromie', which are nothing else but the evolution of the same work, seen through a point of view more true to the contemporary reality. This is what the artist says about the essence of his sign: "I don't find, I seek: to look for your own sign is to look for yourself. A research that sometimes is troubled, almost disorganized, and other times more clear and rational, but essentially a research".**

**The work by Salvatore Emblema, 'Detessere la tela/De-weave the web', highlights the discovery of an "other" dimension. The highlighted weave of the fabric and the productive union of light, shade and colour stimulate the spirit to rest on them and reflect on the changing optical results. What comes out is a highly valuable work, so much that in this regard Giulio Carlo Argan said: "We did it! You have been able to bring to life the space behind the painting!". The 'de-weaved' canvases (on display with works from the '70s and the following years) witness the inner conquest reached by the artist.**

**'Mappe stocastiche/Stochastic maps' is the title given by Sergio Lombardo to his "Stanza/Room". In this regard the artist explains that: "They are toroidal maps: complex forms with no connection, made from unique mathematical procedures". Psychologist, artist and mathematician, Sergio Lombardo conducts a deep and thoughtful investigation of the architectural structure of the painting surface and of the composite structures which balance the geometric and chromatic scans of apparently abstract intarsia. In fact the unpredictability of the artistic event rests on solid mathematical algorithms, pervaded by the poetical knowledge of the tonal balance, dynamically and formally labelled by "stochastic painting", fundamental parameter of the artist's creative, psychological and perceptive action. To his big corpus of works is entrusted the eloquence of an original and very trenchant way of expression.**

**On the occasion of the Biennale of Venice Hannu Palosuo (Finnish-born, but of Italian culture and education) made 'None of them is the truth', a painting installation which covers the whole space dedicated to him with the aim of "engulfing" the visitor within the work itself. So he becomes the creator of a modern representation which reveals how a recurring theme, the flower arrangement, can become absolutely up-to-date. In evoking memories and remembrances, the artist makes the flower the protagonist of the paintings, thought of in two chromatic tones, opposed but harmonious, in order to underline the positive and the negative of the image, its presence and its absence. In this regard a modular installation is born, where the sequence of the canvases enhances the meaning of the covert artistic projection.**

**"Il Giardino delle Forme/The Garden of Shapes" by Franca Pisani is made up of a bronze sculpture, 'Anima primitiva/Primitive soul', and by a mixed-media installation, 'La macchina del tempo/The time machine'. These works find the ideal placement in the charming garden of Ca' Zenobio, perfectly fitting in the lush nature of the location. Eclectic and poetically meticulous, the artist Franca Pisani skillfully uses different materials, tuning them with the breath of the inner being and nature as well as with the investigation of the individual's and social core. This is a sensitivity aimed at the analysis of the primitive and pre-historical archetypes which asserts itself in monumental sculptures, where culture, instinct and rationality seep through each other in a temporal process of action which sprouts from deep knowledge and enhances the universal meaning of life. In 2008 she was the protagonist of many exhibitions, which were essential for her artistic acknowledgement: the Sea Museum of Genoa, Casa del Pane in Milan, Palazzo Cerretani and the Marino Marini Museum of Florence.**

**Concetto Pozzati, eclectic artist who for the fifth time takes part in the Biennale of Venice, establishes a deep physical and mental contact with the parameter *Time* and with the inner listening of 'Tempo sospeso/Suspended time', title of the series of paintings exhibited in the Syrian Arab Pavilion. Here the artist nullifies the usual passing of time, projecting himself in an a-temporal dimension of the present. Resting on the "here", the creating spirit vibrates according to the rhythm of memory, the soul of time and the perception of the voice of a stopped clock. An inner idea of "still life" thus pervades the time of painting, imprinting into the exhibited paintings, united by a planned sequence of small collages, proclaimed explanatory preparatory works.**

**The name of the room "Ritmi, accordi e sequenze per una 'pittura' dello spazio/Rhythms, harmonies and sequences for a 'painting' of the space" by Turi Simeti perfectly catches the meaning of the works on display: simple and extremely explanatory words of a conceptual reality made up of a light and shade harmony and spatial-temporal relations. Recent paintings based on red shades, from which comes out the perception of existence, are side by side with a historical work from the '70s, where the light of the white colour enhances the concept of purity. The surface painted by Turi Simeti is startled by the minimal touch of light on homogeneous chromatism, often vivid in its mono-tonal outcome. Planned shaped "estroflessioni/extroversions" convey tactile and optical vibrations which skillfully interact with the source of light.**

A thorough Arabic and Italian **catalogue** completes the exhibition, published by Christian Maretti Editore, with texts by Marzia Spatafora and Enzo Dall'Ara.

The historical **Palazzo Ca' Zenobio**, located in the district of Dorsoduro, a place imbued with poetical atmospheres, is a huge noble building built between the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century for the noble Venetian family Zenobio. During the 19th century the Loggia, neo-classical in style, was added to the original Baroque structure in the garden. The inside of the main 17th century building is characterized by environments rich in plaster ornaments and frescos, among which there is the Sala degli Specchi (Room of Mirrors), with paintings by **Giambattista Tiepolo**.