**Renato Mambor. In prestito dall'infinito/Renato Mambor. Borrowing from the infinite**

curated by Achille Bonito Oliva

Sant'Elmo Castle - Naples

14 February 2009 - 30 March 2009

The evocative setting of Sant'Elmo Castle hosts the great **anthological** exhibition 'Renato Mambor. In prestito dall'infinito/'Renato Mambor. Borrowing from the infinite' **curated by Achille Bonito Oliva**, from 14 February to 30 March 2009. On display there are seventy works from the '50s to today, among which several never seen before pieces made especially for this occasion.

**The recurring theme of the exhibition** is the link between the extraordinary "Diario degli Amici/Diary of friends" of 1967 and the never seen before "Diario/Diary" of 2007 to which is dedicated a room. The first piece is made up of twenty boards which Mambor had his artist friends make - among them there were Mattiacci, Boetti, Pascali, Lombardo, Tacchi, Ceroli, Mauri, Icaro and Marotta - in order to represent the components of the language of painting: shape, colour, matter, movement, time. The series represents a view on the figurative culture of the end of the Sixties and proposes a cataloguing of the ways of expression of the artists involved in the project.

The panels of "Diario/Diary" of 2007 offer a meaningful summary of the artistic research of the last years and concentrate on the human figure, represented through the tracing, the cutout or the stencil, which reproduce the profile of the artist and relate to all the other painting elements. Since the beginning of his artistic career at the end of the Fifties, Renato Mambor uses an "a-subjective" form of expression which aims, according to the artist's own words, to "take the 'I' off the painting", and thus he outdoes the exasperated subjectivism of Informal art, devising repeated modules which, however, vary through different techniques, themes and subjects. This theme recurs through the whole exhibition which presents works related to each other in a constant research on the ways of perception, finding out the disrupting variable inside consistent patterns.

**Achille Bonito Oliva** says: "drawn by the anonymous variety of images, Mambor arrives at the "samplings" of "statistic" men, reducing the matrix of the figures to the tone, to get then at depictions of actions and elementary verbs (to walk, to hug, to dry oneself, to close the door) with the subsequent re-conquest of their meanings, where art produces a renewed and innocent learning, however through a shown neutrality of execution, which comes from the refusal to consider the artist as a privileged member of society". Renato Mambor, interviewed by **Gianluca Ranzi**, states: "I think that art helps to cleanse the vision. The senses are dulled by habits and all that is done and thought becomes image, filter and stereotype in front of the eyes. Art embeds a wedge in this depersonalizing mechanism and has the power to overturn it, and, after all, it is a small effort to move thought".

**The Exhibition**

The expository set-up creates a harmony between the space of the Castle and the works on display. The hexagonal entrance hall is set by the 'Osservatori bianchi/White observers' (painted wood, 1996), each one of them is an identical cutout placed in a corner to form a circle which welcomes the visitor in the centre. The wide consecutive hallway opens up into four wide recesses where four wooden sculptures are placed, named 'Portatori/ Bearers' (painted wood, 2008): profiles looking like the author which are put next to wooden boxes filled with bricks, shoes, mirrors and flour. A room holds 'Ombra immutabile/Changeless shadow', a sequence of sculptures made up of a white cutout and a black one, placed next to it but inclined as it were its shadow. On display one can admire the big installation 'Separé' (painted wood and mixed-media, 2006-2007) made up of twenty-four object-sculptures placed in pairs: twelve elements are panels where in the centre the human shape is cut out and empty, while the other twelve, all different, vary in materials, volumes, colours and techniques. The piece is accomplished under the eye of the beholder, in the relations that his/her gaze intertwines among the different parts. Among the works on display stands out 'Sprint' (mixed techniques, 2008): some unstructured bicycles blocked by wooden boards and placed one next to the other; only one bicycle is placed more forward and breaks the symmetry, hinting at a phase of transition, a movement, an action. Talking about the artist Achille Bonito Oliva says: "after all, Mambor broadens the notion of a museum outside its physical location and expands it, affirming its existence in every moment when man acquires a strengthening of awareness".

A thorough **catalogue** completes the exhibition, published by Christian Maretti Editore with a foreword by Angela Tecce, a critical essay by Achille Bonito Oliva, an interview with the artist by Gianluca Ranzi and a text by Renato Mambor.

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