**Text by Flavio Caroli**

Il mondo in una stanza/The world in a room

Almost thirty years ago Omar Galliani was a very gifted boy, maybe with too many overambitious ideas (thirty years ago everybody was full of too many overambitious ideas), but with a goal so sharp that I am still amazed: seduction. Or charm. Anyway, it was the idea that everything is always at stake in one work, in a single work: that one is and must be the focus of the world, of the poetry of the world. I don't want to state the obvious, I know very well that whoever dealt with art (any form of art) sooner or later claimed that his or her generation was the last in facing the Chief World Systems. In this case though I have got the impression that it is indeed so. I am not saying that our generation has been the last considering the art work (that apocalyptic concatenation of charms called style) an engrossing event, but I am saying that in that moment (during the early 1980s) two ways opened up, both fertile and honest. On one side, the description, a bit perplexed and a bit distressed, often touching, of the modesty of what is our life. Many young people from the latest generation follow it and I can understand them. I indeed believe that when mankind will sink again in mud (if that is what is going to happen, and I don't think it will) the last thought that man will turn to is a way to express, or tell of the indescribable taste of that mud.

On the other side, there is the concentration of a language, the all-absorbing ambition of style, the attempt to put the world into a room or on a page. There are young people who are also obsessing with this other approach. These people start from Galliani's ideas. And of Wim Wenders in the cinema. And of Fabio Vacchi in music. And also of Anselm Kiefer in painting. From ideas, or it is much better to say, from the gamble of my generation: the bet of who (like Galliani) thinks that through art the world (maybe bitten, shredded, in order to get to the physical truth) could be shut into a room; or on a page.

If there is someone who believes that art is born from life, that is Galliani. I know it because I know him very well. And that is why he never ceases to amaze me. Because this triggers the second decisive line of reasoning: how is it possible to bite off a piece of truth (the physical truth) through art, if one disregards the huge fruit of truth that art was able to create in the history of mankind? How is it possible to convey an afternoon of spleen, if no one knows that Dante Alighieri, Leopardi, Keats, and Baudelaire have already tried? How is it possible to express life without assessing art?

There is no way out. At this point, one is already too deep into the problem of style. At this point, the bet has already been placed and the ball rolls on a roulette wheel that could save us or prove to be fatal. At this point, the bite of truth (the physical truth) has either left us hungry or with something to chew on. At this point, Galliani has once again already thrown on the table the entire stake. It is a face, and a face is a soul, as I tried to prove my entire life. I did it trying to follow the directions of an immeasurable genius, Leonardo da Vinci, a genius who has always been in Galliani's chromosomes, whom he was destined to meet as humbly as it is expected in front of art. It seems impossible, but up to forty years ago, the history of art had never considered the staggering significance of the following words by Leonardo: ‟Represent your figures in such a way as to be able to express what is in their soul; otherwise your art will not be praiseworthy”. Modern Western painting was born from there, from that thought. Galliani knows that a face is soul and seduction. Seduction, true seduction, comes from the soul. Then it must be put on a canvas, so that the indescribable female face can also have closed eyes, because the light that illuminates it, caresses it and kisses it is the light of the soul. The focus is on the large swollen lips that will give back the kisses lured by the light. The nobility of the Attican nose now tense at the culminating moment of a thought, that thought of seduction. The infinite wideness of the eyes that don't want to see the world, but be touched by light and focus on a desire, a pleasure, a memory. What is the substance of that thought? It is irrelevant. An embrace or a scent, what is the difference? As Hofmannsthal used to say, the deepest truths are hidden under the surface. What makes the difference is the sign or the drawing. I'll tell you why: because for Galliani the gamble is to maul the world in a room or on a page. The sign that whirls, bites, chases and catches. The sign that leaves dim lights next to an ear, and strokes a spot of full light on the brow, and touches the closed eyelids and eventually brushes millimeter by millimeter that firm and distant mouth, that mouth that will be able to give back all the love received by graphite and art. The magic is complete, the impulse is primary. I am sorry, I fell back to the two words that, almost thirty years ago, looked perfect to me to convey Galliani's gamble. Never mind. I am glad I went back there, where we started from.