

An outstanding landscape in nostalgia

by Luciano Caprile

In our days crossed by doubts, by uncertainties, by further loss of thought and at the same time characterised by the triumph of appearance, exhibited as a mirror in which to cancel each value of reality, an important reference point can be researched in a landscape that it still identifies us or where we can at least partially recognize us. But this is not easy to achieve because such a place, if indeed it is, is likely to be continually attacked and nullified by the daily contamination of ephemeral.

Ernesto Morales seems to have achieved successfully this goal: he in fact has chosen to deal with a mental landscape that erases purposely any possible real landscape because, Gerard Richter taught us, the real (in the case of Richter given by a pictorially cancelled photo) can be won over each appearance or, if we prefer to rely on Jorge Luis Borges, the fiction nourishes all the truths.

Subject to these conditions, we can see how the works of the Argentine artist grows on canvas for following tonal overlays even starting from an initial informal approach where the ample brushstrokes, sipped by the monochrome, prepare the next interior investigation. In fact, his places doesn't seem to be fed by the gaze but from the feeling or from a memory that it goes to dig dense furrows in the common desire of a consolatory pretext. The perception and the emotion are the necessary tools of knowledge not so much of the truth as much as of the hazy path to reach it, each one according to his own merits and an appropriate desire. So we are going to touch another topic closely linked at his act: the nostalgia and the consequent migration of thought capable to put every time the intangibility of a constant mirage in a ideal place rooted in the soul.

The exhibition at the Commenda of Prè connects these narrative and evocative items to the place that receives it and to the event that it intends to commemorate in this occasion. In fact, if we put together the history of this medieval environment of refuge of pilgrims in the Holy Land, the harbour front (that between the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century have seen to embark many legions of emigrants to the Americas), and if we add to this the celebrations for the 200th anniversary of the independence of Argentina, a landing of hope for many of these people, we can see how the compositions of Morales are enriched of presences able to fit harmonically in his landscape to activate an evocative interview with it. The paintings are specifically created for this event and are characterized by the appearance of performers who feed on metaphysical suggestions and further dreamlike variants the ethereal scenes of which we have referred. So we can meet some protagonists that expand enormously the allegorical speculation activated by the artist to instil in the observer parallel comparison of attention. From uneven flight of migratory birds looking for a saving route, from the presence of winging cows bearers of a promise of feed and of slight boats like twigs come suggestions of lightness and of dream argued by the muffled space that welcomes them but it does not absorb them never fully. These figures appear to be a fragmented memory notes to insert into the sea of common memory, indefinite and cosmic because it contains us and it sometimes comforts us without establish itself as a definitive seal of a destiny.

The trip, ideal or concrete, constitutes therefore the common topic of the latest frameworks of Morales to be read as stations of a poignant, intriguing, mysterious story. It is also a necessary link that unites inextricably Genoa to Buenos Aires, the arches of the Commenda or the ships in the port at La Boca, to the desire to go and to return, always, without stops: a torture or a recurrent release of anguish. We can perceive this environment in the sequence of paintings entitled *Golondrinas* where hints of birds are lost on the horizon along a flight of poles that measure, with the linear assistance of the shadow, the sense of a progressive distance from the gaze.

In *Golondrinas* two boats (boats land or sea boat doesn't matter) measure instead the sinking of any hope into oblivion or again invite to leave following the route of birds rewarded by the instinct. In this respect in *El viaje* two cows are placed on a boat linked by a very long wire to a bird that is chasing the

light promised by a boundless avenue. The concept of the trip and its wait will expand in the diptych entitled *Partir, el día y la noche* where the disproportionate expanse of the Earth-Sea, scanned in nighttimes and variable shades of blue, is translated into a poignant ode to the regret and reminds us that start of *El sueño* of Borges that says: "the night imposes on us its tiredness/magic". The monochromatic, which characterizes all Morales's works, emphasizes the psychological discomfort of those who plunge into such a rarefied atmosphere of temporal suspension, of perpetual waiting. It is this expectation that becomes palpable in the stony immobility of interpreters of *Vacas migrantes* to the presence of an essential, peripheral urban deprived of any other sign of life. In such a world, distilled by the symbols and seemingly deprived of the human presence, Ernesto Morales leads us to a refined survey of our destiny and that of our time in perpetual labor.