



VIAGGIO DI LUCE

Claudio Parmiggiani - Abel Herrero

Project by Museo Novecento

Curated by **Sergio Risaliti**

Promoter by Città Metropolitana di Firenze

Organization MUS.E e Associazione Kontainer

Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Galleria delle Carrozze

From 27 October to 21 January 2024

Viaggio di luce - Journey of Light – is the extraordinary project that will exhibit together for the first time the works of **Claudio Parmiggiani** and **Abel Herrero** in the **Galleria delle Carrozze** of **Palazzo Medici Riccardi**.

The exhibition - a project of **Museo Novecento** promoted by the **Metropolitan City of Florence**, curated by **Sergio Risaliti** and organised by **MUS.E** and **Kontainer Association** - displays the works of two artists of distant origins but united by their mutual poetics and sensitivity towards the language of painting.

Palazzo Medici Riccardi will open its doors to the journey which started in 2006, when Abel Herrero decided to 'host' and curate in the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana the installation *Silencio a voz alta* by Claudio Parmiggiani, the largest *Delocazione* ever made by the Italian artist, famous for his works made of ash and smoke exhibited for the first time in 1970. This artistic collaboration, topped off in Cuba, is presented again in Florence, in a more accomplished form and in an unprecedented installation where the works of the two artists are displayed in a single shared space.

In the **Galleria delle Carrozze**, **four large boats** - a strange and estranging twist of fate in the changing of hands from land vehicles to water crafts - glide towards a distant, unreachable destination; or perhaps they are drifting away from their point of departure, in the hope of landing in an unknown, virgin land to begin a new civilisation of art. Like memories of a journey, they are close to becoming shadows of themselves. They travel in stillness. **Parmiggiani's boats** carry a special cargo, made of powders of different colours, miraculous and precious materials, the epitome of a glorious history: pure pigments, the inalienable substance of every pictorial apparition. Red, yellow, blue and green. *"I do not have a nihilistic conception of life because I don't even know what life is. I feel it is a great gift; the gift of being able to observe the world, to observe the eyes of my fellow human beings, the miracle of being able to walk this Earth"* Claudio **Parmiggiani**.

On the walls there are large monochrome canvases of equal chromatic purity by **Abel Herrero**. A sea of luminous and acid green, a blinding and nervous yellow, a blue replete with nocturnal depth, a red like

blood and Dionysian nectar, a black that - while concealing - reveals the origin of light. Large churning surfaces, a sea of colour, still waves riding one after the other, on top of each other, and facing us like colour-saturated walls. **Herrero** makes a contemporary re-appropriation of the classic subject of the seascape, here becoming a depiction of the human condition, "a landscape of mass society and the ideology of produce-consume-produce... A landscape of passive assimilation, of the endurance of the doctrine of alienation and the impossibility of having access to contemplation as an increasingly denied psychological category" **Abel Herrero**.

*"It is true, as shown by the site excavations, that once a river flowed under the area where Palazzo Medici Riccardi now stands - remarks **Letizia Perini**, councillor for Culture of the Metropolitan City of Florence - and thanks to Parmiggiani and Herrero we will bring the sea in the Galleria delle Carrozze where boats will sail, something that has never happened before in the centuries-old history of the building. This is a refined composition and a four-handed installation making the exhibition itinerary more precious, with the additional leap forward of the dialogic aptitude which is typical of our cultural projects".*

*"The exhibition *Viaggio di luce - Journey of Light* - is presented as a true cultural experience: the Galleria delle Carrozze, a unique and imposing space, the architectural backbone of Palazzo Medici Riccardi, becomes a physical and metaphorical itinerary, a luminous pathway through which we may ponder on the great themes of existence and our relationship with the world - remarks **Valentina Zucchi**, curator of the Museum of Palazzo Medici Riccardi. The works of Parmiggiani and Herrero - of great impact not only for the eye but also and foremost for the mind - stand in this sense as precious travel blessings, not stopovers, not guides, not sentinels, but rather elements to contemplate, in order to continue, much richer, our journey".*

*"Each of the works exhibited here is like an immersion in painting, in a conflict of the imagination, to the point of shipwrecking in a sea of light and colour, of erasing the passage of time without however denying the experience of life, which is movement, which is being in time - explains **Sergio Risaliti**, curator of the exhibition and director of Museo Novecento. These are paintings, images made by subtraction, to remove, in the same way as Parmiggiani's *Delocazioni* are made. Paintings arising from actions directly practiced on the surfaces. By getting the principle of representation out of the way, there is the stubborn search for mimesis, to the point of no return, when in the instant of the dissolving reality it is the thing that reappears, cleansed of all vacuity and superfluity, in its sacred, pregnant and resounding presence; a presence like an icon, an absolute and therefore inexhaustible immanence that makes no difference between physical and metaphysical worlds. It is the presence of the absence that sheds light on the meaning of painting - pigments for Parmiggiani, monochromes for Herrero - therefore of our gaze, our perception with open eyes, immersed in the epiphany of light and colour. And behind this lurks the experience of death, the original experience of nothingness that never leaves the artist, the most daring of human beings. This is why Parmiggiani's boats conceal in their wombs piles of ash, the shadow of colour that is reborn now out of the consumption of light, and then the experience of black, the colour of the tragedy of life, extreme exhaustion of light and gaze. The immeasurable desire of infinity and eternity seems to want to hold together the thoughts of the two artists who, although anchored in immanence, look to transcendence as the utmost value and goal of art. For Herrero and Parmiggiani there is no other way, no other exercise than the experience of contemplation, without which there is no possibility of casting light, of arriving at the truth of reality; the last attempt to reach the invisible and the unlimited before everything disappears. Proceeding toward nothingness, darkness and void, just to cast light on language, to access the poetic truth of the thing, to open a passage toward *Lichtung*. Parmiggiani and Herrero consider in unison the contemplative immersion in painting as the experience totally opposed to all forms of communication, as a kind of resistance against the dissipation of language into the idle talk Heidegger speaks of."*

With his installations, **Parmiggiani** advances towards the disappearance of the object, penetrating the immaterial world of the idea, to the boundaries of the absolute and unattainable, however entrusting to things the 'incarnation' of the divine into reality, the unveiling of the invisible in the world of things. A pair of worn shoes, a bell, a pile of books, the warmth of a statue, an old oil lamp, boats and pigments. The painting is possible only by entrusting beauty and truth to the objects, and the history and survival of painting to the colour pigments. As when the artist entrusts the real presence of things to shadow and smoke, the presence of past to memory. Likewise, **Herrero** accepts the challenge of abstraction without relinquish-

ing the immanence of painting, the recognizable structure of the naturalistic vision, the only possible way for the painter to imagine the infinite and the unlimited, when everything now has become within reach and every form of life has been digitally consumed. Everything, even the origin of the universe. Every mystery, even that of light and its counterpart, darkness. As in Parmiggiani, in Herrero as well, the wonderment for the miracle of the gaze persists, which consists in the contemplative recognition of the real. The dizzying opening up of the infinite, both in the thing and in the work of art.

An intense dialogue where Parmiggiani's work, as an installation but strongly based on pictorial narrative, undergoes a metamorphosis, thus transforming the horizontal plane of the four sculptures, rich in colour pigments, into a vertical catharsis made of large canvases saturated with pure colour, pure light.

A catalogue with texts by the curator and critical contributions by Andrea Cortellessa and Walter Guadagnini will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

PRESS AND COMMUNICATION OFFICE

Città Metropolitana di Firenze

Michele Brancale

T.+0552760343 | michele.brancale@cittametropolitana.fi.it

Palazzo Medici Riccardi – MUS.E

Ludovica Zarrilli - Tabloid coop

T. +39 393 9577255 | ludovica@tabloidcoop.it

Museo Novecento Firenze

Camilla Fatticcioni

T. +39 055 291014 | pressmuseonovecento@musefirenze.it

INFORMAZIONI

Palazzo Medici Riccardi – Galleria delle carrozze

Tel. +39 055-2760552/ info@palazzomediciriccardi.it

Via Cavour 5, 50121 – Florence

www.palazzomediciriccardi.it

Opening hours:

Everyday 10:00 am - 7:00 pm, Wednesday closed.

[Free Entry](#)