

Dancing is like painting

by Guglielmo Gigliotti

The painting story of Flavia BIGI is similar to all painting stories in the world: its deep roots are to be found in figurative art, i.e. in plain reality transcribed in a comprehensible way. Landscapes. Downtown sights. Still - life. Flavia BIGI painted all this during her long stays in France and Turkey.

Flavia's early years works, although they look very different from her today's style, already show, in some way, the determined character of somebody who is willing to explore colours and shapes, searching for tools to handle for telling a personal tale. In such a personal tale, appearances are only an excuse to go beyond reality, beyond the very limits of the visible, towards the inner heart of painting itself.

To make an example, such a figurative approach could be compared to a sea wave breaking down on the rock of imagination. And this rock is made of small pieces, or "tiny feelings", to use Cézanne's words. It's a composition of chromatic emotions that are independent one from the other, but working together to build up the architecture of the pictorial unit.

Therefore, in Flavia's previous works, the abstract dimensions of shapes can already be perceived, even though these dimensions are captured within the cage of naturalistic illusions.

The dramatic change in Flavia's experience takes place in Rome, following the guide of Master Tullio DE FRANCO, outstanding representative of the Rome University of Fine Arts.

Flavia enrolls in the University of Fine Arts, looking for answers. In particular, she wants to meet the needs expressed by her own consciousness, from deep inside the colours. One would say that painting itself spoke to Flavia, requesting her to sever the last wirings still enlacing the wings of free expression. The question, then, was flying. And, in particular, where to fly? Not outside, for sure, but, much better, inside! Inside the secrets of painting itself, looking for possibilities that are hidden under the very skin of colours. Thus, Flavia decided to make colours speak with their own voice/language hence speaking herself with the voice of colours: Flavia speaks of her experience based upon the following algebraic formula: art is life.

As painting, a professional growth in this field always corresponds to a backward travel towards the roots of painting itself, a travel towards the very mysterious

and nameless core of painting, to the middle of the land where names, words and conceptions show their inner limits. In fact, the naked essence of painting means no-limits.

And this is why the Twentieth Century's famous Painters have always defined abstraction, as the only possible reality, as the moving quintessence of what we perceive beyond our brain and beyond our knowledge, following the signs of intuition. Abstraction, then, is like flying without a parachute.

Born from deep inside, Flavia's way of painting discovers new communication opportunities that before were hindered by figurative approach. Now, these opportunities become the natural language of a self-speaking painting, and they consist of winding lines, grains of colours, lights and stains. In particular, colours may be stratified, in the works of Flavia, full of transparencies, carved with graffiti or even spatulated.

The alphabet used by Flavia in her canvas is rich and ever- changing, like a multiform landscape in continuous evolution and ruled by the harmony of turning lines that meet with each other, of stains having a mutual communication, of running colours. The final effect is a choral and dynamic ensemble that is not closed, but, on the contrary, opened to new possibilities that are as stupefying as newborn flowers.

Flavia's painting has a long breath, non only because it utilizes a diversified technique, but also because it reflects widened spaces and reproduces the floating and light dimensions of a world where drama and material weight seem to have no more place, like in a dream.

Therefore, lightness is one of the main qualities of these works! Flavia considers lightness as the hidden face of weight, which makes chromatic contrasts fade away in a diluted, whispered solution, composed by whitening reflexes and transparencies. Colour becomes a thin curtain, falling down like dew, and rustling/whispering like the wind, as light as a pas de dance.

And here it comes the importance of dance for Flavia's creation!

Since her childhood, Flavia has always been dancing through her life, She has never stopped dancing, even when passing through different phases of her life, characterized by more or less intense activity. In this period, especially now, her brushes are dancing upon and across the canvas, following a sort of musical rhythm!

Thus, like real human bodies turning in material space, Flavia's brushes spin around in the virtual space of canvas, and the distance between the two dancing

worlds (material and virtual) is very little. In other words, Flavia, by switching from a physical dance to a painting ballet, seems to renounce to the materiality of movements in favour of spirituality.

But there is a paradox in all this: while any material movement, i.e. real dancing in space, disappears as soon as the dancer stops dancing, on the contrary any virtual ballet, i.e. painting on canvas, lasts for ever! This implies that material becomes virtual, and vice versa!

Everything Flavia paints in her works recalls a sort of choreography, considering the Greek origins of this word: chorus (ballet) and graphic (writing). We could even create a better expression to indicate Flavia's works: that they are "choreo-pictures", or dance- paintings, i.e. the reproduction of the life of movements through colours, shown in their dynamic nature. Also stasis, the dance pause in ancient Greek theatres, finds its place in Flavia's choreo-pictures: stasis is now the white Flavia uses for preparing her canvas. Sometimes, white is left nude (naked?) on purpose, without any embellishment, in order to create a pause in the ballet.

Aurel MILLOSS, the famous Hungarian choreograph of the 20th Century, used to say that dancing is the mother of all arts. For sure, Flavia's painting mother is dancing, or at least of the liberation of her painting style.

In fact, Flavia BIGI once said: "Painting is Freedom". And she added: "In my paintings I like starting from the chance, and then taming the chance. Rationality is necessary and creates order, but I want to give space to instinct, too. I always start from the chance to disclose the door of unconsciousness".

I had asked her how her works were born, and she unveiled this secret to me. The secret was the chance (chance?), an initial uncontrolled application of colours on canvas, to create the rhythm of composition, to ensure a dancing and whirling atmosphere. Chance in Italian is written "caso", that is the anagram of chaos! Such a coincidence is important: chance makes all cultural and psychological schemes disappear, allowing poetical and creative fluids to surface. Probably, caso-chaos is really the fertile ground where all arts grow! From this ground stems her need of dancing, of painting, of choreo-painting. No surprise, then, that Flavia's works draw their energy from this idea of chance, to which rationality gives only an aesthetic channel.

But there is another secret connected with the initial causality of Flavia's works. By doing in this way, the painter becomes at the same time actor and spectator of the genesis of the work, discovering the sudden surfacing of hidden potentials. Through the chance, a dialogue comes out, made of giving and taking, half way between hearing and conscious intervention. One could say that

painting, whatever way of painting it is, lives in this intermediate dimension, suspended between reality and imagination, between earth and sky, where freedom reigns. This freedom is the essence of Flavia's painting.