

The tangible in the spherical and the ephemeral

The Sicilian abstract painter Elio Rosolino Cassarà explores the balance between spherical fields of colour and shapes using a purely painterly technique.

Applying different tones and layers of colour with virtuosity, the artist creates melodious, painterly compositions. These draw the viewer into a profound atmosphere of colour, imbued with blues and greens, whose structure evokes ever-changing hints of landscape through varying shades and accents of form.

This is not surprising, when one considers the artist's residence in recent years: the idyllic hills of Monreale in Sicily, overlooking the rooftops of Palermo.

As the colours in his paintings shift from hazy day on the coast to the bright azure of the Mediterranean, blue is apparent in all its myriad nuances. Oxide red, rosé and gold-ochre tones, the colours of Venice, accented against blue, permeate the works. Berlin is there as well: In the heavier brown and blue-grey shades, the fine, shrill accents of the city are reflected in his lined paintings. These not only stand out in their beautiful, light-permeated palette, but also in their expression of a struggle for balance between spherical fields of colour and more definite form.

Some works condense many translucent layers of paint into a haze of colour, calling to mind eternity and transcendence, like in the work of Mark Rothko, an artist Cassarà has drawn on for inspiration. In his own work, however Cassarà employs mostly firmer forms, a density that penetrates through coloured spheres. Mainly in red or yellow tones, sometimes in dense ultramarine, these paintings suggest the image of blazing tile roofs or vivid flowers that flash in passing on a hazy afternoon.

The artist himself says: "I give value or form to something that exists, but has no weight and cannot be possessed, knowing that this could be a false or unfulfilled definition of creation right up to the moment of actual recognition."

This dynamic, ephemeral experience also permeates the works in which elements in muted tones are woven or patchworked together. Strands of colour swing from left to right throughout the composition, creating a point of departure as well as a dynamic track that changes according to perspective. As with the German Expressionists, this order is achieved simply through painterly methods like thickly applied paint or contrasting colours.

The painter finds a kind of solution for the balance between structure and transcendental release in his striped paintings, which he created in Berlin. The free play of light and shade is ordered into straight lines of colour drawn across the canvas.

This rigid structure is enlivened through subtly synchronized hues, which create harmony and rhythm that changes with varying light and perspective. In some of these works, the artist draws a counter brush stroke, perpendicular to the main direction and reminiscent of the raked paintings of Gerhard Richter, much admired

by Cassarà.

Through the many nuances of colour that shift in intensity and subtlety, these works are the expression of absolute concentration, like the exacting stripes in a freshly raked Zen garden.

Elio Rosolino Cassarà's paintings simultaneously reflect the mystical, earnest severity of the north, which have in the form of Norse mythology profoundly fascinated him, especially as a nomad between the Mediterranean and Northern Europe.

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