

Signs and drawings

When I first got to Vasco's studio in Bologna, via San Felice 77, in 1971, I was welcomed by light, transparent plastic hands, waiving in the gentle breeze of the corridor overlooking a secluded uncultivated garden, surrounded by high walls. The dancing hands were hanging in a structure of white unstable wood cubes, empty inside, one adhering to the other in a precarious and wobbly manner. A flock of light hands swirling inside that odd, ironic sculpture that Vasco called Parellelo and Pipedo. Today, that work no longer exists. Once you arrived into the large laboratory room surrounded by high French doors overlooking the garden, you could see the Sudaria of the very early 1970s, subsequently exposed at the 1972 Venice Biennale. Bedsheets and pillows, glued onto the canvases, witnesses of heart wrenching burned memories, at this point scorched and incinerated by time.

In the other room, where Vasco used to receive visitors, there were works dating back to the late 1960s and 1970s. I remember the silver and gold-plated nudes on the old Becchi stove and the large "paddings" made out of fluff, expanded and manipulated, with oil and colors, therefore becoming a great landscape of the soul, reminding me of the great frescoes of a nineteenth century so alive and present.

In between all the great works, you could discover the small drawings of the early fifties. Drawings that Vasco used to love: short filamentous traces, quick signs that traced a face with just a few lines, a nasal septum, an alarmed eye, a hand with fingers spread out like prehistoric imprints excavated in a rock; a feminine body just outlined through the sweetness of a breast, round lively hips, an erotic seminal flow, sperm drops that looked like rain or dew, vibrating bodies, sometimes a glimpse of a carnal embrace.

Some drawings were framed. Others stored in folders. Vasco reserved a special attention to all of them because they were the result of a fierce selection, following the joy of experimentation and immediacy. Only some of them, a few, though, had the privilege of "visiting" the folders. And it was a further confirmation of the confidence he used to grant to those who came to look at his most secretive world.

Vasco has always drawn throughout the years. It was an exercise he loved until the very end of his days. He did not draw constantly but in those moments of pause and reflection, seeking forms of freedom from canvases and colors.

In the eighties and nineties, in Rome, he filled full-size folders of Fabriano's paper with quick signs. Here on display are some of these works: light traces that sometimes become music writing, zen alphabet, an intrigue free from lines, traits, light marks. Light and happy like Vasco's artistic soul.

Rome, August 2017

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