

Prompts of young Italian art
Corrado Levi in catalog, 1989

The raw and the cooked in Gennaro Castellano's art

Among the new generation of Italian artists of the latest years, composed by about twenty or thirty artists scattered in various Italian cities or provinces, Gennaro Castellano, from Naples, is engaged to offering us recycled products of raw images, apparently without processing, collected from history, science, museums, advertising, and so on. This aspect seems to remind us that before and after any ideology we must find in it the metaphysics of matter and the present of images. Even the ways and means finding concrete expression on his canvases quote from inherited modes: the lucid and compact matter of "objective" painting and the makeup of graphics, so that the means becomes a quotation as well. It is as though the world of facts continually recurring in art has remained raw while their recycled results retain their technicality. Yet one could say that the images, once reprocessed, shun the corroding effect of time and life to be cooked in the temple of art. Therefore, these works find their own place in the present time by virtue of the anguished ambivalence, described by one critic in one of his writings, between a series of curious events and a zeal for the form, between the exuberance of life and the museum cataloguing, between visual flashes and ecstatic projections. The attraction they exert on us may be said to be at the same time lapidarily restless and, as I foresee it, unforgettable.