

Day Dreamer (or Renzi you're Chinese) as when, if elsewhere is here, stereotyping is a key element in this exercise of symbolic violence¹ : losing the geographical coordinates of weapons, metal and disease² means the recovery of trajectories (all around you) more than places. "E quando notte sarà, Africanella, in romanesco parlà te sentirò"³ ; 55 m2 - darling - your home! "Fifty-five square metres are your home". Here, or on the other side of the world, which actually is much the same. The slogan, 55 m2 it's our home (title of the exhibition), was used by the highly popular and much-loved Ikea on its recent arrival in the Far East; the call of the Swedish reindeer has won over Mao's citizens thanks to the standard arrogance of slogan writers who exploit customs – both cultural and social - to topple them and insinuate themselves, by involving the public being addressed. Is fifty-five square meters your home? Yes. The domestic walls of the era 2.0 comprise an area little larger than a studio apartment, fully furnished in copyrighted "Billy" style, the versatile and timeless home design module: "your" things will no longer be yours alone, you'll find them in my home, in his, or in many other homes, all branded with the blue and yellow logo of the multinational that has conquered the world. Uniqueness belongs to the past. But, while we may have been amazed to find the same furniture and the same mugs in Berlin and in Paris, cities that may actually have shared some neighbourly characteristics, coming across the same, identical objects in Shanghai, Beijing, New York or Ravenna, has a certain impact. Not that today's typical globe-trotter is still searching for two-legged exoticism (even if, deep down, maybe they would like it), but thanks to this magnificent digital revolution distances have been eliminated, to the extent that determining what is different is no longer related to geography or, perhaps, even cultural coordinates. We are all animals (or products) of global groups that share trajectories, no longer countries, nor provinces, nor cities or states, but more part of virtual communities than real ones. Taste, standardized and widespread, now comes down to the number of views and users, and aesthetics in the post-internet age is determined by web democracy. Walter Benjamin argued that, in the age of technical reproducibility⁴ (this was back in 1935), works of art would undergo such a process of desecration that they would eventually drop the mask of their nineteenth-century aura and become less mythical and more popular. The power of representation or the politics of representation. The German philosopher, before killing himself with a dose of morphine at the French-Spanish border while fleeing to the United States, somehow prophesied the theme of distance - in design, manufacture, and hence in the use of the work of art - and anticipated the terms "public" and "consumption" replacing those of "spectator" and "enjoyment". The natural, theoretical evolution took place with the definitions of mass-media culture and extended communities, that are without borders. Then the theme of the so-called global village introduced by our Anglo-Saxon companion Marshall McLuhan who, a few decades later (between the Sixties and Eighties, in what many refer to as the third Industrial Revolution of telecommunications and information technology) led us to the inevitable conclusion – as valid today as it was then - that the medium is the message⁵.

The contemporary age is a cultural complexity that – in art - defines itself in the postcolonial critique that can dispassionately combine the languages of visual expression with mass community (global) ones, contaminating differences so there is no longer any clear distinction between high and low, between real occurrences or digital performances, between the public and the private sphere. There is a new diaspora space according to some, surprising for others, that emphasizes

¹ Hall, Stuart, ed. Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. London; Sage, 2003

² Diamond, Jared, Guns, Germs and Steel (Armi, metallo e malattie. Breve storia del mondo negli ultimi tredicimila anni. Giulio Einaudi editore s.p.a., Torino, 1998)

³ Miscel, AFRICANELLA, with chorus; di Martelli - Neri - Simi; 1935; Durium La voce dell'Impero I 5076. Trad.: [And at nighttime, little African girl, I'll hear you talk in Roman dialect]

⁴ Benjamin, Walter, The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction (L'opera d'arte nell'epoca della sua riproducibilità tecnica. Arte e società di massa. Giulio Einaudi editore s.p.a., Torino, 1996)

⁵ McLuhan, Marshal, TheMedium is the Message co-authored with Quentin Fiore, Feltrinelli, Milano

diversity but absorbs it into a single trans-cultural whole, a crossover of styles, eras and theories of the global Community model. In this landscape, the categories of home, group, boundary, location, interaction and transit, become visible in universal poetics that do not involve just one planet or one community, but expand everywhere, and replace the “here” as a space-time category in which you can find “somewhere else”. Within this dispersion of geographical coordinates, Cristiano Tassinari captures the presence of trajectories, unveils stereotypes and proposes exercises of accumulation that actually exclude nothing. Advancing like a “pilgrim”, he enters and exits the landscape that surrounds him in a process of self-dispersion and a collection of tracks. He combines memory and fiction, a personal travel diary - with a history that is universal. He consciously cites the prose of the German Winfried Georg Sebald, whose works are interspersed with glimpses of ancient and contemporary history, with a punctuation of geopolitical and environmental events (earthquakes, floods, natural catastrophes and those caused by the rapacious human economy), that are useful in reminding us that history is a process of cause and effect, which should always be interpreted in an “oblique” or cross-sectional way. His admiration for a master who writes with delicacy, leading readers through labyrinths and backstreets that permit them to address the errors or the horrors of a cultural and social transformation, produces an emulation in the artist that allows him to “surf” freely between fact and fiction. Cristiano Tassinari’s curiosity can thus be defined as pop, in the English style as epitomized by David Hockney and Richard Hamilton, that never fails to have a hint of irony and that typical “sense of humor” that lightens the mutual relationship between the artist and the world that surrounds him. He does not inhabit criticism, but rather is fueled by his omnivorous curiosity for everything that concerns contamination. And emulating a practice in use in digital culture, to unite mythology and trash, the “pilgrim-artist” introduces, mixes, recovers, acquires and restores the iconography of advertising along with that of art history, including and citing, with a continuous stream of ready-made, that may sometimes be obvious and, other times, subliminal. This is what happens in the exhibition 55m2 it’s our home! where Italy’s most recent history plunges into the past and then into the future, spreading beyond national and domestic perimeters; from the song Africanella (the title is taken from a Italian song of 1935, the same year that Benjamin’s text was published), a neon light that redesigns a late Fascist era logo with the typical iconography of the post-war age and that of the Christian trinity, to metal copies of distant family memories: the birds-call, used by his father for hunting trips, that have been re-crafted at length and translated into their sculptural crystallization. Cristiano Tassinari adds and then takes away, images and the ready-made, sometimes sculptural sometimes photographic (or a light-hearted expression of self-citation) of customs and traditions coming from fashion (street), design (industrial) and graphics (advertising), with a language that spans the European figuration of the 90s to the minimalism of the American school to the use of recovered materials - with the progressive series of sculptures that are object oriented objects – and finishing with the contemporary digital and post internet influence, with a flow of “smart” images and aesthetic rules dictated by advertising. Cristiano Tassinari is a serial hoarder of symbols and subjects, in his archive the stereotype is the new icon that can foster a sense of global community, in the same way as an advertising slogan that can make you feel at home here, in Shanghai or anywhere else in the world.

Roberta Pagani