

VALERIO ADAMI

Immagine e pensiero

curated by Gianluca Ranzi

February 1 - March 19, 2022



On Tuesday February 1st, 2022, Dep Art Gallery in Milan opens the exhibition "Valerio Adami - Immagine e pensiero", curated by Gianluca Ranzi.

Through 28 works chosen from recent large canvases and works from the Seventies, this exhibition includes a selection of works, travels, portraits, Greek myths, belonging to different stages of Valerio Adami's research, who has been active since the late Fifties within that wide artistic trend called New Figuration (Nouvelle Figuration) which, on the ashes of Informal Art, developed in England and in the United States, and then spread all over Europe assuming different and sometimes even contradictory forms and outcomes.

The international scene of those years can be found in the experiences of Adami himself, who was born in 1935 in Bologna and now lives between Paris, his city of choice, and Lake Maggiore. Graduated from the Accademia di Brera in 1955 and then traveling through Europe, the United States, Latin America and India, Adami combines these influences with a fascination for the painting of Oskar Kokoschka and Francis Bacon, Surrealism and Giorgio De Chirico, drawing on the British and American pop wave and soon developing an original synthetic and fragmented figuration, played on flat blocks of color defined by a sharp sign-drawing. In this way Adami "cuts out" sharp black outlines without chiaroscuro and, like a film editor, puts words and initials into the work.

According to philosopher Jacques Derrida's definition of Valerio Adami's art: "a journey of drawing" presides over the artist's work, characterized by that typical outburst of thought into image, of word into drawing, and vice versa. The title of the exhibition, Immagine e pensiero (Image and thought), refers to this openness to contamination between mental processes and the unconscious, with images of daily life and of high and low culture, through film and photographic procedures. This can be seen in the works exhibited, in the letters and words drifting on canvas, in the dilated images, in the iconic marks, in transfers and repetitions. Adami's integrity of rigor has turned the fertile dispersion of his language into an essential moment of international art.

Biographical note

Valerio Adami was born in Bologna on March 17th 1935. Then moved to Milan, he enrolled in 1952 at the Brera Academy, where he will have as a teacher of drawing Achille Funi. Finished his studies he moved temporarily to Paris and here he met the painters Wilfredo Lam and Roberto Sebastian Matta. Back in Italy, in 1959 he held his first solo exhibition at the Gallery of Naviglio. Since 1960 begin for Adami a series of long stays that will take him to many nations: from Cuba to India, to Israel and Argentina. These journeys will be fundamental because inexhaustible source of friendships, such as the one with the philosopher Jacques Deridda and painters Saul Steinberg and Richard Lindner. Adami worked between London and Paris from 1961 to 1964, the year in which he was present with a personal room at Documenta 3 in Kassel.

His painting is characterized by a chromatism and a marked drawing, which in 1961-1964, the period of his stay in London and also accomplice the comparison with pop art, will be strengthened even more with the use of a color scheme characterized by bright colors and strong contrasts of light. The style is distinguished by the use of a chromatic material in flat drafts, within the sharp black contours of the drawing.

Since 1964 he has used comics as a field of investigation, exploiting the concise and synthetic language, typical of the works of Roy Lichtenstein. Characteristic of his painting are the sharp contours, large backgrounds and the setting in fantastic scenarios or environments of everyday life: bedrooms and living rooms. The techniques used are: oil, watercolor, acrylic and silkscreen.

Numerous over the years the personal exhibitions, such as that held at Studio Marconi in Milan in 1969, at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1970 and the large anthological exhibition held at the Centre Pompidou in 1985. He also participated in the Venice Biennale in 1968 and 1986, and Documenta III in Kassel with a personal room.

Valerio Adami currently lives and works between Paris and Meina, on Lake Maggiore.