



GALLERIACONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS

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SERSE

L'esperienza del paesaggio *The experience of landscape*

Opening: Saturday May 2nd 2015, Via del Castello 11, 6pm-midnight
Until 05.09.2015, Monday-Saturday, 10am-1pm, 2-7pm

Galleria Continua is pleased to present a new solo show by Serse, one of the most interesting figures in the Italian art world. Entitled *The experience of landscape*, the exhibition conceived by the artist for San Gimignano brings together a new body of drawings from the *A fior d'acqua* series and some works produced in previous years. It is an ideal continuation of the extensive monographic show curated by Lóránd Hegyi, currently running at the Musée d'art moderne et contemporaine de Saint-Etienne Métropole

For over twenty years, renouncing colour, Serse has coherently pursued a line of inquiry based on the patient and primary practice of graphite drawing. As the artist says: *"Graphite is the medium which enables me to emphasize the tautological gesture of drawing and producing a work that does not lie about its nature as pure drawing. This is the perspective within which the physical structure of the work should be inscribed: no thickness, no frame, no protective glass. It is drawing alone that shows itself. It is the open window on the world."*

As Costantino D'Orazio points out in a recent critical essay, Serse starts from reality and, through drawing, meditates on the nature of the gaze and of representation. He creates forms that do not remain confined within the perimeter of the sheet of paper, but evoke a much broader dimension, a full-blown philosophy: *"Thanks to the constant gesture of Serse the paper becomes almost transparent and receptive to the light, which crosses it with affable elegance. While photographic paper absorbs light and traps reality onto its opaque surface, Serse's works achieve the opposite effect. After his intervention, the paper loses consistency and becomes liquid, in the case of water, and soft, in the case of clouds, or pure breath."*

Serse's graphite work has given rise to one of the most intense re-readings of the theme of the landscape in contemporary art: seas, cloudy skies, high mountains, snow-clad woods, natural spaces with no trace of human presence, transfigured by light and shadow. Almost as if it were possible to fathom, through the concrete materiality of the graphite, the mineral core of the earth, the transformations of which take place on a non-human temporal scale. His landscapes are visions suspended in time, and soundless. Serse recounts

every aspect of nature; the drawing is analytic, detailed, stretching to the most extreme limit of representativeness, to the extent that it reaches the opposite extreme, thus becoming impassable and paradoxically unreal. In this way, Serse manages to move beyond the objective datum; the subject, stripped of all dynamism, alienated from the context, is projected into "another" dimension.

The images the artists offers us in this show are experiences of the gaze, a representation of the idea of the Sublime. As regards the sublime, Lóránd Hegyi writes: "... examination of the – possible – sublime thus also receives a critical, sceptical meaning that partially relativizes the power and competence of the sublime. Questioning the possibility of experience of the sublime, or the possibility of the sublime at all, becomes simultaneously the question of the competence of the drawing, the critical examination of the reliability of the visual image realities. The precise formulation of this dual question determines the artistic work of Serse, which tolerates neither arbitrary nor anecdotal, literary detours, but rather conveys with an unusual acuteness the fundamental problems of observing image realities."

Serse's landscapes are landscapes of the soul, drawn ideally with eyes closed. The artist looks to the sublime of nature, as a stance against the current uncontrolled turnover of images, remaining an artist of ancient contemporaneity. "The 'point of view' I go looking for," says Serse, "is found in the practice of immersing oneself in our own depths; a point of view that brings you into contact with a new reality, totally 'qualitative, mobile, undivided'

(Bergson), which eludes the quantification of number and measurement. It is the 'reality' expressed by the sublimity of nature, by the immeasurability that distinguishes it and traverses us, leaving in us the indelible signs of its immensity. It is the hugeness that does not regard the open eye, but the closed eye. I found dizziness by erasing perspective with the metaphorical gesture of 'tearing the eyelids', or 'reversing one's eyes' (G. Penone, 1970), so as to embrace the vision of the world in its maximum extension."

Serse was born in San Polo di Piave in 1952, and lives and works in Trieste. Over the years he has produced an extraordinary series of images, which have earned him a place in *Drawing*, published by the Phaidon Press. He has shown in many important national and international galleries, including: Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France (2013); Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rimini (2012); Musée des beaux-arts et d'archéologie de Besançon, France (2010); Palazzo Reale, Milan (2007); De Garage Cultuurcentrum, Mechelen, Belgium (2006); 3rd Valencia Biennale, Spain (2005); Villa Manin-Centro d'Arte Contemporanea, Codroipo (2004); S.M.A.K., Gent, Belgium (2004); Het Domein, Sittard, Holland (2003); Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico (2002); Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato (2002); Centro Difusor de Arte, Lisbon, Portugal (2000); Kunstverein Augsburg, Germany (2000); Musée de Beaux Arts, Gent, Belgium (1999); Gian Ferrari Arte Contemporanea, Milan (1998); Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice (1997); Museo Revoltella, Trieste (1995). Running until May at the Musée d'art moderne et contemporaine de Saint-Etienne Métropole is a show entitled *Paysage analogue*, featuring some seventy works realized by the artist between 1994 and 2014. Of these, the series on water is being partly presented for the first time, while the remainder come prevalently from museum and private collections around the world. The show is accompanied by a catalogue with essays by Lóránd Hegyi and Costantino D'Orazio.

For further information about the exhibition and for photographs:
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