

de The presence of forceful symbols, solid figures, and highly representative images appears to have become rather subdued in the most contemporary art research. Indeed, it would seem that the key aspects of the latest experiments have become gradually more blurred and marginal, and more mundane. The subjects of the latest narratives tend to prefer very sharply defined perspectives, very often within a very personal sphere, in areas that are familiar and easy to control, and even in explicitly local geographical contexts. We are led along clearly demarcated and known paths, which may often be intimate, where the artist takes on the tasks of meticulous annotation and documentation. Your work, however, has no fear or tackling extremely significant symbolic figures, with images that may be controversial but that are also resolute, as in the case of the work dedicated to Tupac. Here at MACRO exhibition, you have decided to show the images of four great intellectuals: Adam Smith, Seymour Cray, Noam Chomsky and Le Corbusier, four figures who symbolised the four great fields of economics, information technology, language and architecture.

pc Everything has to do with the ego. All my work is an attempt to boost the ego in order to try and destroy it. It is only by becoming immense that it can at the same time be minuscule. Nietzsche taught us that the downfall of the concept of the individual is only possible if we enter ourselves in order to surpass ourselves – and surpassing ourselves means becoming shareable. This sharing takes place on the symbolic level, where it is no longer significance that predominates (as in the case of information, which as chance would have it is always comprehensible), but it is significance that generates energy and language. Symbols are an incredible vessel in which the world is met and can be identified.

What is subjective is the ability to find one's way in and draw significance out of signifiers. The theme that my work revolves around is thus that of the signifier – the enigma of the image, and of its being outside of time, because it is in all time, or, as my professor used to say, “outside of history because it is replete with all history”.

The pretexts are diverse: at MACRO we start out from immense personalities who have reflected on the economy, linguistics, town planning and information technology, exerting themselves to the point where they destroy themselves on a chequered floor.

de Also in linguistic terms, your research seems to adopt an oblique approach when compared with the most frequent forms of experimentation used by young artists. This can be seen not only in the choice of sculpture but also in the video alphabet you use, and in the extreme contamination between different grammatical aspects that lead you to overlap video and performance, sculpture and installation. On the sculptural level, for example, you have no fear of taking on the obsolete field of monumentalism – on the contrary, you make use of this rhetoric of epic narrative to confront the everyday aspects of our complex reality. This creates a short-circuit in the heroic aspect of a complex narrative with a more aggressive and direct language. On the one hand, there is the classic form of compositionally balanced modelling and, on the other, the fragmentary nature of a video narrative based on contaminations with music, poetry, and the cinema.

pc Childhood

I was in Bologna but, from the second day, my family moved to Castiglione dei Pepoli in the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines. I remained there until elementary school, and then returned with my family to Bologna. Castiglione dei Pepoli is high up on the border between the two regions and its remoteness is that of a village where the lurking dragon is the earthquake, for Castiglione is in well-known seismic zone. In the local cafés you could still hear stories about bandits from the old folk, and possibly I used to listen and snatch impressions – unconscious flashes, telluric sediments in my heart. It's true: I'm a sentimental person in that approach to the world is mediated only by my capacity for amazement and fear. It's rather like the fear of earthquakes or of bandits in the woods

long ago. I remember one winter when a great snowfall created a sort of obelisk around a tree. A ragged wall in the courtyard of the apartment block where I lived. I was allowed to go out into the courtyard alone, so I opened a door in that wall of snow.

And that wall has come back in my work – that impossible construction, which was incredibly high for me, born during the night and visible in the morning. I remember my astonishment and the fear that it would come crashing to the ground the next day if it didn't snow again. A fragile construction, in other words.

Youth

Bologna is Morandi's home town. I didn't know him and when I came across him, through one of my professors who was a follower of his, I couldn't put a date on him. As far as I was concerned, he could have been from any age. He was a fact, a plaque, a city wall like the porticos around Bologna. So I grew up at high school basically thinking that the time of the world existed only in absolute terms: just a time of thought that inhabits or can inhabit everything. In my imagination, it wasn't apparently a matter of trusting logic, intelligence, or processes, but rather the possibility of taking refuge – a bit like the village I came from. It's true the world exists, but you can only contemplate its image from on high. Distance slows time down and there's no point bothering with the laws of relativity to understand that. In my sentimental education of imagery, information – the here and now – never became a category of the spirit.

It's true: in my work I possibly find some explanations in these memories.

de Your work is often linked to the idea of a particular project, which lets you modulate your language over a vast range, starting out from the sphere of the project and then expressing it in a host of formal results. Like this, the conceptual framework within which you place the narrative structure is an essential starting point that dominates the work and influences its entire appearance. This brings us back to the idea of a "powerful" thought that comes out in various ways, but that always maintains an intellectual parallel one can constantly refer to. It's almost like delving into the philosophy of art, as a thought that takes concrete form in the materials of an artistic language which, in this case, does not feel itself to be inadequate. It's a study that is capable of measuring up to the great issues of contemporary thought. An apparently dry and rugged poetic vision that in actual fact is sophisticated and elegant.

pc Nothing exists outside of the concept. Technique is like a good retriever dog – it makes sure you bring the end result home. It's not technique that astonishes, but language. Amazement always remains what it is because the image, as Aby Warburg teaches us and as Georges Didi Hubermann has recently written, always has a longer memory than the observer.

The conceptual aspect is thus the only form of knowledge we have when faced with an artistic result, even though we are aware that, in this case, we can only talk of amazement in absolute terms when we are conscious that all the rest is in the hands of time, with its wavering of meaning and with the fragility of a culture that builds up castles only to knock them down and build them up again.

It is true that something remains: the will-power of the artist who has produced the work, but this can do very little on its own. And, after all, it may not matter that much next to the real depth of the work.

de In the large installation being shown at MACRO, your studies seem to come out in all their complexity: there is the intricate intellectual horizon with its social, political and economic nuances, an allusion to classic formalism, subtly veined by a slight monumental atmosphere and, lastly, there is the frenetic aggressiveness of a modern language like that of video. Conscious of these complexities of vision, it seems that you introduce the theme of obsession as a sort of binding agent – a manic, insistent and repetitive process that appears in both the construction and destruction of

the work. In one case, the first close-up of the hands that model the clay, mixing together the earth and water, and in the other case, the sequence shot of the sculpture as it is shattered as though in a whirlwind. Even so, the excessively repeated gesture that creeps into the idea, drilling deep within it, exasperates the significance and subjects the eyes to a painful and disturbing rhythm.

pc When I was very young, I tried to commit suicide by lying down like a chipped classical statue on the provincial railway line of Bologna. A certain point, though, I didn't have the courage to go through with my suicide, so I got up and went back home for dinner.

I was frightened by the conceptual power of my subconscious and decided I needed treatment, so I went to the mental health centre in my district for about three years and it was there that I intellectually reprocessed the event.

The awareness of these limits remained in my thoughts as the culmination of expressed and cognizant emotionality. Even now I still think that behind the green hill there might be some "controllable" precipice. Since I'm not afraid of death, I can associate with it in my work because I know that, in the end, I'll be back home for dinner. Having said that, the sense of abandonment, drifting, and disorientation never leaves you and it comes back obsessively even though you can never give it a role. In actual fact, it's reality, because if you've experienced it for an instant, you can let everything else wallow in abandonment.