

PRIVATE HOME: WORK FOR THE SCATTURIN/CAGNOLI BARCELLA HOUSE

SQUEEZING INTO A **CRACK**: A SMALL, BUT PROFOUND MARK

Venice, 14 July 2018

I hope I can make myself understood and that you won't misunderstand me: my intention certainly isn't that of asking you to repair a crack in the wall, but instead to continue with your contemporary contribution in the spirit that has animated this house, which is not just a Scarpa house but a place where Tancredi lived and probably painted, a place where a variety of intellectuals – painters, sculptors, writers, editors, sociologists, musicians, etc. – gathered and exchanged ideas. What I would like to do with you is to work on those walls and leave a sign that is not simply a repair, but which constitutes an artistic gesture in continuity with the great love that Scatturin had for that house. I don't think I am on the same level as the lawyer, who was a man of great vision, curiosity and generosity, but I would like to comprehend his testimony and leave a contribution in his home – a small sign of our passing that is also profound. (Maria Cagnoli Barcella)

Dear Maria C.,

I accept your invitation with gratitude and respect. I have decided to take as my starting point your words, intentions and desires, and also the place, the architecture. However, I also want to include the human relationships of the people who were there before me and which this space generated, conditioned and determined: the client (Luigi Scatturin), the architect (Carlo Scarpa) and the artist (Tancredi). I will adopt their words and thoughts in the act of painting.

How did Scarpa relate to painting? (...) He loved Tancredi, who fits in these spaces very well. He said that when he put a flower in front of a painting and it worked, this relationship between the flower and the painting meant that the painting was good. I think that this was a spot-on observation. These works are appreciated without narrative, without there being a narration. It's like when you see a rose and you say you like it. It is what it is. Emotion, the impression you have when looking at a rose. (Luigi Scatturin)

But somebody could say to me: "So do you see that the decoration is irrelevant?" Yet I tell you that there is a moment in which you can imagine the chromatism of the things – you can go ahead and add a floor, a ceiling, the walls: but do you want them all to be white? (Carlo Scarpa)

In response to those who think that ~~form~~ painting is of little use to revolutions, I say this: as long as painters exist, a possible form of freedom exists. (Tancredi)

To enter I look for a pretext that gives me a hand to approach with delicacy and which helps me to take a small mark of my expression inside this complex relationship between people, art and history. I approach the language that is closer to mine, the pictorial one. As Carlo Scarpa says, *"there is a moment in which you have to imagine the chromatism of things"*, and to do so I have entered into harmony with the mood of Tancredi's paintings. I proceed empathetically and start to form the colours by using Tancredi's palette as my starting point. I linger in particular on his painting "Composizione astratta. Soggiorno a Venezia" (oil on hardboard, 93.3 x 127.8 cm) housed in the Ca' Pesaro Museum in Venice, so that I can go and see it freely whenever I want to. Colour after colour, day after day, I keep track of each passage on a "Diary" (oil on wood, 10 x 100 cm) and at the same time I work on a "Stratification" (Plasticine on wood, 28 x 18 cm), which by osmosis absorbs Tancredi's palette. The paint thus solidifies and becomes a substance I can hold.

Here is the painting that, when sectioned, develops inside the wall. Here are the layers of paint which

squeeze into the crack which, as you said, will *leave a small sign of our passing* while looking after the injury provoked by time. It is the crack which I widen, dilate and transform until it opens up to gather my expression. This is how to expose the gesture. Here is the restoration determined by the pictorial act, which is an extension of the human act, the human thought. Here is the thread that creates the discourse, which sews, which holds together, which connects my story to your story and to those of Tancredi, Scatturin and Scarpa. Here is the *revolution* Tancredi was talking about.

Two points complete my work in the house: the first is the wooden support on which the Plasticine painting was painted. It's contained in a transparent box and will find its natural place somewhere in the room. It is an imprint left by the "Stratification" which was emptied in order to open up and take its place in the space on the wall.

The second is the "Diary" which will be kept hidden from everyday view, which is the nature of all diaries, inside a secret space designed by Carlo Scarpa in the adjacent room.

Dear Maria C., in the hope that – to use Scatturin's words "*it is like when you see a rose and you say you like it*" – everything is clear, I wish you all the best for the time you live in this space and I hope that your sensitive and open way of thinking can be felt by everyone else in the future so that the thread of discourse can continue.

With affection,
Maria M.