



GALLERIA
GIAMPAOLO
ABBONDIO

PETER BELYI

ROMANTIC APOCALYPSE

Dall'8 Maggio al 27 Agosto 2022
Inaugurazione | Sabato 7 Maggio, dalle ore 11 alle 19
L'artista sarà presente durante la serata.

From 8th May to 27th August 2022
Opening | Saturday 7th May, from 11am to 7pm
The artist will be present during the evening.

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Galleria Giampaolo Abbondio
piazza Giuseppe Garibaldi 7 - Todi (PG)

ROMANTIC APOCALYPSE - PRESS

Peter Belyi's exhibition ROMANTIC APOCALYPSE tells of the unmanifest. Prophecies and warnings, the irrational, fear and trepidation of the unknown, discolored idyllic mists on the one hand, and ominous pictures of the nuclear apocalypse on the other. The unreality of what is happening, the mesmerizing magnetism of the action of paint, which, like one of the entities released from Pandora's box, acts almost independently and irreversibly.

STATEMENT

I have been working with Giampaolo Abbondio Gallery for fifteen years. Over these years we have done a dozen large exhibition projects and many smaller ones. Today, the political situation in the world means that all artists who have something to do with Russia should be ashamed of their government for unleashing a fratricidal war in Ukraine. It takes a certain amount of courage from the gallery to continue cooperating with Russian authors. Some Russian artists have refused to show their works until the war is over. I think that now it is important to talk about these events in any way we can, in our own language, maybe not so directly linked to the news agenda, but it is essential to do so. The images in the exhibition do not seem at first glance to be warlike, but rather represent the apocalyptic nature of recent years: plague, war, famine and death. The threat of a nuclear strike, which was at one point talked about, the imperial rhetoric of the Russian authorities and the horror that engulfed all of humanity following those words, is the main motif of the works on view. I believe that art can improve the world and make people more reasonable and humane, so I hope that everything discussed in the exhibition will remain only on paper.

– Peter Belyj

Attack

Apocalyptic memories and premonitions are among the leitmotifs of Peter Belyi's art. Beginning with the installation 'Danger Zone' he has worked with images of a dark past that are ready to reproduce themselves in a murky future. The project 'Silence' was also about this where a silent explosion endlessly drew out the moment of catastrophe. But then this was about generalized images that had absorbed the echoes of many tragedies which the artist's hearing had distinguished through the temporal thickness (a practice which the artist himself called 'memorial model-making'). Now we are in the complete opposite situation – too little time has passed since the beginning of the new era and events continue to bloodily overheat. The lack of distance and truthful information constrain the accuracy of the artist's expression, the emotional load, the lack of resources, facts for reflection and understandable lack of trust in those around him. And does he in fact have the right to express himself? The system of ideas that define the role of the artist has been disrupted, culture is at a loss, everyone is frozen in poses of despair and horror.

In this situation. Peter Belyi has passed the word to his materials and first and foremost to black printing ink. Monotypes stand alone among printmaking techniques. They represent a contradiction to the main utilitarian idea of printmaking – multiplication – as there is only ever a single print. A deep link with the physical qualities of ink (its viscosity, for example, is like that of concrete) and a high proportion of spontaneity make the result unpredictable. The process of printing becomes a question. From the etching press mechanism emerges that which until recently could have been an aesthetic abstraction, and is now recognizable as reportage from the front line: landscape photography by a drone, a flash from a missile strike, smoke from burning houses, falling remnants of a downed aircraft, a nuclear reflection on the clouds – a kaleidoscope of violence. The texture of the objects presented in the exhibition also work in this way: broken brick, protruding rebar, concrete, all communicate at the tactile level what the eye is not able to distinguish. Fog, steam, smoke, shapeless heaps, a sunken horizon, a shaking camera that is not able to fix or convey that which is taking place – vision refuses to see, the mind to understand. But the veracity of this reportage cannot be doubted – as the Book of Revelation says: 'a faithful and true witness'.

The sense of anxiety, the proximity of the end of the world, the fragility and victimhood of human life, the inability of the mind to contain the unfolding abyss, the confrontation with the incommensurable, inexorable and cold world, is akin to the Baroque period, whose forms emerge from the concrete thickness in this exhibition. The rays pouring out of the clouds (indicating the emanation of the Deity) are mirrored in the images of exposed fixtures and radioactive radiation after a nuclear explosion. The fountain, an image of inexhaustible fertility and reproductive capacity turns into a pile of ruins with a broken water pipe.

Despite the crises and wars, of which the Baroque era was rich, this was the very time when European culture began to assert the value of the individual, the idea of the unique inner world of every person, regardless of age, gender, origin, social status or wealth. It is to be hoped that the period we are living through, having completed its bloody and apocalyptic circle, will revalorise this essential idea.

– *Alexandr Dashevskij*