

## TIMELESS LAND

*How the warm soft sand flows  
for within the hollow of the idle hand,  
the heartfelt that the day was shortest.*

*And a sudden anxiety attacked my heart  
for the approach of the humid equinox  
that obscures the gold of the salty beaches.*

*To the sand of time the hand was an urn, an hourglass my palpitating heart,  
the growing shadow of each vain stem  
almost a shadow of a needle in a silent quadrant.*

Gabriele D'Annunzio, "The Sands of Time", from *Halcyon*, 1903

There is no hourglass, metronome, or clock, no element that can measure, cadence, or spatialize the inexorable flow of time, that which is ordinarily marked by the passing of existence, a heartbeat, by the nostalgia for times long gone as well as by the dogmatic circularity of the relationship that has always existed between the antithetical, yet firmly interdependent, concepts of life and death. "Timeless Land" is an attempt to subvert temporality by appealing to the dualistic discourse between spirit and matter about the imperishable concept of temporality. Countering that oppressive theory of irreversibility—taking French philosopher Henri Bergson's 1922 text "Duration and Simultaneity" as a reference model—"Timeless Land" conceives and draws true time as a non-spatializable flow of states of consciousness, a vital momentum in which there is no distinction either between a priori and a posteriori or between staticity and change. And yet, since it is a joint and indivisible time, the rhythmicity of which is given solely and exclusively by its duration, the artists Benedetta Giampaoli, Silvia Giordani, and Fabiano Vicentini explore it pictorially in an attempt to capture all those authentic moments that are indistinguishable since they are not spatialized and which, nevertheless, harmoniously entwine and then congregate with each other to constitute a unitary whole. Here, where each instant is presented as an extraordinary moment and together with all the others preserves its uniqueness, that immense baggage that we all recognize as memory is generated. Therefore, in support of the Bergsonian thesis that: "outside of me, in space, there is only one position of the hand and the pendulum, because of past positions nothing remains. Inside me, a process of organization and mutual interpenetration of facts of consciousness takes place, which constitutes true duration."\* Giving as plausible that there must exist a unique time and yet willing to accommodate within it immeasurable other times, the works in the exhibition place emphasis on all those unique instants, never corresponding to the same duration, purely qualified by an inner time, itself ineffable and unrepeatably anything but arithmetical. And so, the absolute thirst for life of "Timeless Land," vociferating about a suspended time, the floating elements of which lap the soil of a land, kissed by that "invincible sun," so dear to the French writer Albert Camus, that leaves no room for any "shadow of thought," thus composes itself. In an attempt to get in touch with her imaginative world, **Benedetta Giampaoli** centers the leitmotiv of her research on the need to retrace personal suggestions

through painting with the intent of developing a fluid figuration free from specific temporal constraints. The images need to be safeguarded from the inexorable passage of time. Each of these images is never resolved within the limits of the pictorial surface but must continue into the next canvas to be better understood. Between the quotidian and the fantastic, dusky skies and lights, oscillating between dim and fiery, sinister figures and a shower of graceful flowers, Giampaoli unleashes the portentous and abysmal inner labyrinth, accompanied by humoral projections, as a leap into the unknown inhabited by our deepest thoughts. The landscape is positioned at the center of **Silvia Giordani**'s current research, becoming unquestionably the proscenium of her pictorial investigation. Considering that human activity has significantly reshaped the surface of our world, wherever we lay our eyes we soon realize that everything has been transformed and that there is almost nothing completely natural anymore. Her painting acts similarly: it constructs, deconstructs, and alters. The landscape takes on an objective autonomy of its own, thus becoming an occasion for experimentation and manipulation. The places created through her painting draw on a variety of references, ranging from geological sections to past landscape illustrations and from satellite images of other planets to purely digital settings. Further, the fascination with the ancient is mixed with that of science fiction, tying in with the debated question of the concept of reality, an issue so dear to science fiction literature, thus leading us to question what the true nature of human experience is. In this new body of work, Giordani is interested in investigating "first sight," that disorienting moment of revelation of an uncharted land, in which the nature of what jerks before our eyes is not yet totally defined. What ensues is the presence of polymorphous monoliths, perfectly set in aseptic environments free from spatiotemporal coordinates, caressed by luminous openings given to us by a clear sky or by digital environments, whose boundary line turns out to be quite impalpable. Finally, the artistic research of **Fabiano Vicentini**, situated between drawing and painting, creates personal abstract imagery. Thematically, the concept of play recurs, which spontaneously manifests itself as a source of iconographic inspiration throughout the creative process. Through drawing, he composes an image that is never limited to a single entity but is configured as an interlocking of different information. Play is thus delineated as a need to construct a narrative that is not part of reality. Further, painting also merges withdrawing, providing the latter with a spatial dimension with which to interact. Within the canvas, different pictorial approaches coexist, from flat backgrounds to suspended glazes, from delicate pastel interventions to textural experiments with sand and papier mâché. Similar to geometry, which simplifies an organic form through lines and dots, Vicentini seeks to capture the essence of what he intends to represent. Subjects repeat, intertwine, and merge following autonomous rhythms and structures, thus giving rise to a suspended space, oscillating between figuration and abstraction. Such a space does not aim to be binding but rather is open to a variety of interpretations, as if it were a language not yet deciphered, in which the signifier becomes more important than the meaning itself.

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\* Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness, cited in Introduction to Bergson, edited by A. Pessina, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1995