



**MARONCELLI 12**

## Maria Callegaro and Alessandro Santoro Margins of the sky

Opening: May 23, 2019 – 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm

On view: May 24 – September 27, 2019

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Maroncelli 12 continues its research to discover visionary artists. The “Margins of the sky” exhibition, dedicated to the painting of Maria Callegaro and Alessandro Santoro, kicks off Thursday, May 23, 2019. It is about twenty works created by two artists far from age and origin but united by a boundless imagination that from the "evils" of the earth looks up to a sky where everything can still happen.

She never touched a brush until she was 76 years old. Maria Callegaro (1919-2013) comes from a humble and numerous family (eight children plus her grandmother), she studies until the fourth grade and at 12 she reaches a diploma in cutting and sewing. She spends her adolescence among household chores, caring for younger brothers and working as a seamstress. At 16 she meets Mario who would become her husband and with whom she moves from the Euganean Hills (in the province of Padua) to Bolzano where he works as a barber. Then the birth of the two children, the fear of bombing, the consequent transfer to Padua. When the war ends they move back to Bolzano and in 1967 they go to Milan to stay close to their son. Mario and Maria, inseparable, lose their first daughter at a mature age. Everything rushes when her husband gets Alzheimer and she constantly assists him. The specialist in charge of Mario introduces her to painting so that she can share her visions. Thus began an intense pictorial activity that led her to produce over four hundred works in just over ten years.

Hers is not an introspective journey, not the rhetoric of emotion and intimacy: the artist represents the constant contrast in human life between good and evil, matter and spirit. The art historian Bianca Tosatti identifies her as a mediumistic visionary: "Unforgettable the blues pierced by gold splinters, as well as those spiraling vortices that are sometimes found in the cosmological iconographies of hell, paradises or however all that is beyond. Inside this blue sails a boundless visionary" she writes in the catalog of the exhibition “Longevi Visionari” (Museo Ala Ponzzone, Cremona, 2006). Her pictorial production is preceded and accompanied by a rich dreamlike work. Maria draws her inspiration from the sky. According to the artist, our world is horrible but God (the sun, therefore life, love, energy, present in most of the canvases) helps us to reflect and choose what our destiny will be. But breaking the laws of the sky brings pain and destruction. And then the stars instead of dew make the "rust", poisonous



and infectious substances, fall on the earth. Painting and word proceed parallel. The depositary artist of an ancient knowledge feels that she must transmit it to future generations. "My task is to make humanity understand that it is on the wrong path".

The painting of Alessandro Santoro (1969-2007) too, represents a cosmogony where circular shapes like spheres, wheels and spirals alternate against a sky-background, in this case, not blue but midnight blue. To illuminate them not the sun but the moon, in the form of disk or sickle but also of word. Since he was a child, Alessandro has shown himself to be rather intolerant of authority and with adolescence he increasingly isolates himself from the external environment. After graduating as a surveyor (in Novara), he enrolls in the Faculty of Architecture of the Polytechnic of Milan, which he attends for three years. In 1991, with the heightening of psychic distress, his impulse to paint grows, he realizes even more than one painting a day, he wakes up at night to fill the canvas, often front and back, so much that in a decade he would make a thousand drawings and about 400 paintings. Meanwhile, the disturbances become more frequent and profound, including shelters, Tso, he returns home less and less, he lives a lot on the street while his impatience with the city grows.

In his works the urban space appears to be crossed by contrasting, threatening forces: cables and technological machinery suffocate it, snakes or insects loom from above as presages of an imminent disaster. And then there are the Eviotals, the creatures with one eye, the fruit of his imagination that androgynous and threadlike float "in a place devoid of original sin - Santoro writes - ... or just let themselves be surrounded by water, skies, plants, fruits and earth". The eviotals that recall the stylized mannequins of Enzo Cucchi and Mimmo Paladino possess "moons, trajectories and trails ... they possess the vanity of truth" and for this "they would like to instruct to live". These large figures that dominate the canvases gradually lose stability, the circular and deep brushstrokes fade the outlines. And the atmosphere becomes darker as evidenced by some titles he gives to his operas: *The fatigue of life*, *The guilt*, *Deadly strait*. Until suddenly the artist decides to stop painting.

Catalog in the gallery with texts by Federica Timeto and Augusto Iossa Fasano

Tuesday to Friday, 12 pm – 7:30 pm. By appointment +39 335 8403484