

Luciano Longo. Memory, Artifice and Nature

The still life is set up as an independent genre in the late Renaissance, but only later it was the subject of a definition that, if in the Protestant northern Europe becomes *still life*, or *nature immobile*, in the Catholic Mediterranean area is transformed into *dead life*: even in its name, the fate of a genre that had always been counter prejudice and a classification of *minor*. But from the 17th century its fortune increases and there are many great artists who engage with the genre, e.g. Caravaggio; masterpieces are born that become milestones in the history of art.

Luciano Longo devoted all his poetry to *still lives*, which manifests itself in a love for the detail, a wise and old expression of a way of painting, and while changing and evolving over the years, it remains intact in its sophistication and in its complexity. There is in his artworks a performing care typical of a *slowness* of painting, imposed not only by the same technique of oil painting, but also and, above all, by a love for details that sets this artist in the wake of the great masters who preceded him. A slowness, which is also expected by the spectator, who needs a rather careful reading of the artwork. It originates a reflection on the passage of time, its slow and inexorable act on matter and, therefore, the meaning of life as testified by the *vanitas*, including the artist's favorite subjects, but also on the value and reclaiming the memory as in the *archaeologies*, a clear tribute to the history of ancient and prestigious of his native land, the Lucania (Basilicata). The nature, inexhaustible source of inspiration to express the sense of becoming, is transformed into the perfect metaphor. The flowers are cut in the heyday of their beauty, ready to be arranged in a vase: but are, now, without life; the fruits are caught up in the sweet part of their maturation, but an insect, often, corrupts their splendor; next to them, other symbols, signs, subjects, challenging the interpretation of the viewer in the best tradition of the Renaissance. The lyrical sentiment, typical of the Longo painting, has remained constant over the years of his career; has it changed the artist's research, which he left the elegant scenes and almost baroque of the early works, to arrive at a compositional synthesis typical of contemporaneity. In this research, the desire to create a meditated art remains intact, a result of a careful analysis of the effects of light on objects and optical principles of perspective: both characteristics at the base of a painting complex, rich of nuances and intensity.

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