

NOVO

Curatorial Text

by Pier Paolo Pancotto

The Dualism of Tillman Kaiser

A continuous dualism seems to govern the creative process of Tillman Kaiser (Graz, 1972; he lives and works in Vienna): order and disorder, rigor and approximation, ideation and fantasy; both from a methodological and linguistic point of view. From the very beginning, after completing his training at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna in the 90s. His works, in fact, are the result of the fusion of various techniques - painting, photography, drawing, typographical systems - each time elaborated with different procedures that give each creation a particular uniqueness and make it, in its own way, unrepeatable while being part of a cycle or series. In this process, great space is left to the case on which the artist relies so that the very nature of the materials takes its course and reacts freely to endogenous and exogenous agents that can intervene in them. So "errors" such as the unplanned incidence of light in photographic experiments, the unexpected response of a color compared to the worktop - canvas, paper, wood - which is intended, the contrast generated by the encounter between refined and humble materials - especially in the plastic field -, the surprises resulting from a fortuitous pictorial gesture are a proof of the continuous hazard that feeds the path of Kaiser; and it becomes a distinctive character, despite the apparent regularity that dominates its production generated by the marked geometrism that occurs in it as well as by the reduced color gamut that accompanies it. This orientation reflects the deep sense of freedom with which the artist confronts the world around him, a world of which, in the same way, he highlights the absolute articulation and heterogeneity; and, driven by his reflective nature (not surprisingly he is very fond of Surrealism, Magritte and de Chirico), even the deepest contradictions.

It is no coincidence that many of his creations can be assimilated, physically and conceptually, to kaleidoscopes, once very popular tools that, turned towards a light source, give a dynamic and constantly evolving vision of reality: regular and at the same time distorted, perspective but also two-dimensional. Echoes of the historical avant-gardes, from Futurism to Constructivism to the post-World War II abstract expressionism through Cercle et Carré, emerge in his works confirming the continuous syntactic shift that is accompanied by the technical. The reference to the Modernism of the early twentieth century is reinforced above all by the choice of materials used: consistent and ephemeral at the same time, for example, paper or cardboard that, associated with elements belonging to everyday life, give his works a primordial character, almost prototype.

All the visual and stylistic components just mentioned are confirmed in the exhibition in Milan. It is presented in the form of a single, large installation without any form of generic and hierarchical distinction between the selected works, all dated between 2020 and 2022, some of which were made for the occasion. In fact, painting, sculpture, drawing, photography are placed in dialogue with each other seamlessly, in line with the artist's thought: "*A fundamental feature of my work is this: to connect things and images that do not have a natural or logical connection thus opening new spaces to the imagination*". As on other previous occasions, the solo exhibition at the Pietro Canonica Museum in Rome (2016) or at the Vienna Secession (2019) or the intervention at the Belvedere (2010), in both cases in the Austrian capital, also on this occasion Kaiser mixes paintings and sculptures, large and small, on canvas and paper, tempera and oil, with photographic print and printing, in white/black or a few other colors, the blue above all, developed now in timbre solution, now tonal. Altogether, according to a cyclical attitude in the artist's path and that is renewed once again.

Pier Paolo Pancotto

Bio

Tillman Kaiser (Graz, 1972; lives and works in Vienna). **Solo show** (selection): Secession, Vienna (2019); Museo Pietro Canonica, Roma (2016); Kunsthalle Krems Factory, Krems (2013); Museum Belvedere, Vienna (2010); Österreichisches Kulturinstitut, Roma (2006). **Group show** (selection): *Kaleidoscope*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2019); *Specular Windows*, 21er Haus, Vienna (2017); *Über die Unmöglichkeit des Seins*, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna (2016); *Franz Graf, Siehe was Dich sieht*, 21er Haus, Vienna (2014); *Megarave-Metarave*, WallRiss Kunstraum and Kunsthaus Langenthal, Fribourg (2014); *Utopie Gesamtkunstwerk*, 21er Haus, Vienna (2012); *Lebt und arbeitet in Wien III*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2010); *Artists Insight: Tillman Kaiser*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2009); *Unreal: Altered Perspectives in Painting*, The Saatchi Gallery, London (2008).

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