

EDUARDO SECCI

A similar attitude
Daniel Crews-Chubb & Kevin Francis Gray

Curatorial text by
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Kevin Francis Gray, (Armagh, 1972) is a sculptor who studied at the National College Of Art and Design in Dublin (1995), the School of Art Institute in Chicago (1996), and Goldsmiths University in London (1999). He lives and works between London, England and Pietrasanta, Italy. Daniel Crews-Chubb (Northampton, 1984) is a painter whom studied at Chelsea College of Arts (2009) and Turps Art School (2013) in London, England. He lives and works in London.

The two artists are diverse in all aspects including realms of individuality, professional background, anagraphic, cultural, and social. However, a similar attitude unites them and puts them, surprisingly, in dialogue. It is the common tendency to turn their chosen language - painting for the former, sculpture for the latter - towards alternative spheres to those of origin and to turn it into the domain of the opposite one. That is to say: the former, with his sculptures, achieves pictorial results; the latter, with his paintings, plastic ones, both from a technical and semantic point of view. This continuous trespassing is the leitmotiv of their researches, placing them virtually in the same operative dimension, even if in the marked linguistic and technical heterogeneity that distinguishes their basic structure.

The exhibition in Milan focuses its attention on these elective affinities and highlights them through some works that, arranged together as if to compose a single, large installation, testify to the iconographic, iconological and methodological divergences and convergences that fuel the dialogue between the two artists.

For the occasion, Kevin Francis Gray offers marble sculptures from 2021-22 and some bronzes from 2017; Daniel Crews-Chubb a series of paintings from 2022. Both authors adopt a syntax that constantly slips between figuration and abstraction and that takes its cue from the reality (whether represented by an individual or by an animal or vegetable entity) to reflect, more generally, on the role that painting and sculpture can have today, reconsidering their function and boundaries, characteristics and aims in the context of contemporary creativity. This is a procedure where linguistic investigation almost always prevails over the representation of the subject, sometimes reduced to a

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mere pretext for the creative act, which has always been central to the work of the two artists. The repetition of images, often similar to each other and lacking a specific identification code, constitutes, in fact, a vehicle through which to conduct their exploration of artistic disciplines and the meaning that the very act of painting and sculpting can assume today, both on an ethical and intellectual level. In the course of these investigations, Kevin Francis Gray exalts above all the tactile dimension of marble, shaping it with a soft progression, made of fluid passages and veils that induce him to ideally trespass into the territory of painting, in particular, the tonal one where every color is declined in all its possible chromatic gradations. In the same way, it is as if he were shading the surface of stone (but also of bronze or other metal alloys) giving rise to minimal variations, sometimes millimetric, of the material, both in relief and in recess.

Daniel Crews-Chubb, on the other hand, sublimates the material component of his colors - oil, acrylic, spray, sand, charcoal, pastel - applying them in layers on the canvas and letting them emerge on the surface with a strong, sometimes brutal, evidence, thus echoing atmospheres close to those of Expressionism, especially in the guise of Die Brücke, or Art Brut. In this way, he reaches an almost plastic dimension and, moving between superimposed planes and three-dimensional extensions, he emblematically offers his own, original reinterpretation of sculpture making.

To unite the two artists and further articulate their dialogue, there is also the special bond that each of them has established and continues to cultivate with Italian history and culture, matured in the course of repeated experiences in the territory, both individual and professional. A bond that emerges above all in the singular ability to deal with traditional artistic techniques as well as with the visual imagery and semantic classic, while remaining firmly witnesses of their time.

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