

## *David Schnell's dualism*

The work by David Schnell (1971, Bergisch Gladbach; lives and works in Leipzig) is infused with a constant dualism. He studied at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst in Leipzig (1995-2000) and then completed his studies (2000-02) following the master classes of Arno Rink, a central figure of the second generation of the so-called "Leipziger Schule" art movement which was later followed by the third generation of the movement, the "Neue Leipziger Schule" promoted, among the others, by Neo Rauch during the post-reunification of Germany. The creative path of Schnell has taken shape in this context. Since the beginning, both in his artistic and professional choices, the artist has been exploring tradition and modernity, classical and contemporary, with such a coherence that he has transformed this only apparent vagueness into a distinctive style. Indeed, his language blends continuities and contrasts between figuration and non-figuration, academia and technology, turning the ghosts of socialist realism into refined references to the history of art, from ancient movements to historical avant-gardes. The result is a hybrid as well as original style. Through a skilful conception of space, rich in classical and Renaissance suggestions, natural or urban landscapes materialise on the canvas, where the protagonist is not the human figure - hardly present at all - but lighting that, rendered by tonal progressions, brings depth and plasticity to the painting. This constant hybridization also permeates his work path where, the dynamics of an author of the new Millennium alternate to those of an artist of tradition. Thus, he perfected his studies living in Italy (Deutsche Akademie Rom, Villa Massimo, Rome, 2013; Wilhelm Kempff Akademie, Positano, 2016; Istituto Centrale per la Grafica / Villa Massimo, Rome, 2017) and he was commissioned to design glass windows for various churches (*Friedensfenster*, Thomaskirche, Leipzig, 2009; *Kirchenfenster*, Johanneskapelle, Naumburg, 2014; *Rosettenfenster*, Christuskirche, Stadtgarten, Cologne, 2016-18) and the decorations for the Infiorata di Genzano flower festival (2013), which have highlighted a strong spiritual component in his painterly research.

Milan's exhibition, his first solo show in Italy, conveys all these messages. It features a series of large and medium-scale oil on canvas paintings dated between 2013 and 2022 through which we can appreciate the stylistic and compositional coherence that has always characterized Schnell's art. He depicts landscapes where nature and urban agglomerations are reduced to pure geometrical elements, either juxtaposed or overlapped, as if drained of their original physical element to assume a new entirely intellectual substance given by the perspective structure that supports them. A sapient and sage structure, result of the long and attested familiarity of Schnell with the art of the

past, particularly with Renaissance and Baroque art, mostly learned during his long and frequent journeys through Italy. The exhibition also features a collection of carefully selected works on paper that show his remarkable interest in the engraving techniques, here represented in different typologies to illustrate the variety of procedures he likes to measure himself.

## Pier Paolo Pancotto

**David Schnell** (Bergisch Gladbach, 1971; lives and works in Leipzig)

**Solo show** (selection): Drents Museum, Assen (2020); Kunstsammlungen, Chemnitz (2019); Goethe Institut, Hong Kong (2018); Museum Küppersmühle, Duisburg (2017); Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen (2011); Kunstverein Hannover/ Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (2010); Mönchehaus Museum für moderne Kunst Goslar (2007); Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico (2007); Parasol Unit Foundation, London (2006). **Group show** (selection): *Bilderkosmos Leipzig*, Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig (2022); *Minerva meets Leipzig*, Drents Museum, Assen (2021); *Collection Reloaded*, G2 Kunsthalle, Leipzig (2019); *MEISTERSTÜCK*, Zitadelle Spandau, Berlin (2019); *MDBK MEETS G2*, Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig (2018); *Made in Germany*, The McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas (2016); *Große Formate*, Museum, Wiesbaden (2015); *Jetzt und Hier*, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (2013); *The collection*, Museum Boijmans, Rotterdam (2012); *CAFAM Biennale 2011*, China Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Beijing (2011); *German Contemporary Painting*, Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo (2010); *Germania contemporanea*, MART, Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea of Trento and Rovereto (2008); *Northern Light: Leipzig in Miami*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2004).