

"Kinder than Solitude"

Matija Čop, SunJing

Curated by Domenico de Chirico

Andrea Festa Fine Art, Rome

The Andrea Festa Fine Art gallery is pleased to announce the two-person exhibition "Kinder than Solitude", exposing works by Matija Čop (born in Vinkovci, Croatia in 1987, currently living and working in London, UK) and SunJing (born 1986 in Wuhan, China, currently living and working in Beijing, China), curated by Domenico de Chirico.

"Kinder than Solitude" is intended to be a gentle praise of solitude, a now inevitable condition of every man within this macrocosm of ours, imbued, at the same time, with impetuous yet unstable feelings, ephemeral illusions, mutism and lividity. They alternate between the statuesque, glacial and penetrating sculptures by Matija Čop, stalactitic and stalagmitic strongly characterized by bold and bizarre shapes, yet evocative of millenary traditions, and between the vain protagonists, with their indolent and affected postures, who perform solipsistically through the generous fresco given to us by SunJing, "Kinder than Solitude" manages to delve into feelings, emotional clashes and human relationships within the current social and cultural context where all these dynamics, arduous but necessary, are hidden, forgotten or even erased.

Extreme aestheticism, formal refinement, obsession with color - sometimes famously maniacal compositions and skillful play of light and shadow make this exhibition seem like a behind-the-scenes look at the most sublime of Hong Kong director Wong's films. And so, it is how, juggling alienation, melancholy and lust, 'Kinder than Solitude' proceeds to plumb, drop by drop, this mood, so dear to the poets, throughout the ages. In the attempt to establish a clear boundary between the highly imaginative nature of the two artistic practices, compared here, and the real aspects which permeate the exhibition, we are soon catapulted into a new world, where everyday facts are accompanied by almost Kafkaesque events, exceptionally inserted within a temporal process - characterized by a perpetual flow of concatenation of the events themselves - slow and, only externally, imperturbable. Ultimately, considering its constructive aspect, this solitude offers us the possibility of detonating other forms of communication, which are gradually more and more surprising, also to be able to rethink ourselves. And so it is that, distancing ourselves from that demeaning idea of isolation - dedicated exclusively to the cult of unrepentant irrationality - and in an attempt to validate the innate intrinsic charge of this fertile and dynamogenic impulse, we soon realize that such visceral energy can find unusual expressive channels, considering that in the words of the German Romantic poet Novalis: 'life should not be a novel imposed on us, but a novel made by us'. There is therefore, on the one hand, the artistic practice of Matija Čop, who explores the transformative potential typical of the process of 'translating' ideas, structures and materials. His undeniably monolithic visual language consists of selected unitary elements that are repeatedly combined, reconfigured and dissolved according to self-invented logic. In an attempt to create ever new and surprising identities, his works invite us to reflect on the persistent tensions between order and disorder, overproduction and craftsmanship, unity and system. Appealing to the Latin locution enunciated by Juvenal, namely, *mens sana in corpore sano*, Matija Čop continues to trust in the uniquely human predispositions for change and adaptation, where these, once activated, are directed solely towards Improvement; on the other hand, SunJing who, with her pictorial creations, often finds herself haunted by the fear of impermanence, by the terror of mortality and loss, and even by the struggle to accept her own imperfections and weaknesses. Strongly believing in the power of self-redemption, she attempts to immortalize fleeting moments and

emotions in a unique attempt to reconcile with his inner self. Some of the works are based on her personal experience, while others are based on her imagination stimulated by the experiences of other people. Starting from traditional oriental paintings such as those celebratory Chinese court ladies and Japanese art prints, those typical of the so-called ukiyo-e genre, passing through literature, cinema and music, up to real life, SunJing often reconstructs everything in her mind - but only after having reinvented all those scenes that particularly affect her, presenting it concretely but not realistically. In this way, the time and space of the images are fictitious and instill subtle emotions that are destined to endure. Aware of the fact that there is still much to explore, she does not limit herself to traditional paradigms, thus trying to safeguard a style linked to the question of personal balance, often sabotaged by human contradictions. Ultimately, her work, aiming to represent the ego of a person wandering in the tension of nothingness and the uncertainty of existence, captures all those scenes in which emotions are hidden and fleeting, in a creative process which equally corresponds to the throb of transitory life. After all, as the Greek poet Konstantinos Kavafis states in his 'Notes on Poetics and Morals': 'solitary men see things that we do not see.

Solitary men see things that we do not see: they have visions of the supernatural world. They refine the soul through isolation, thought and continence. We make it dull it with contacts, lack of reflection, pleasures. That is why they see what we cannot see. Anyone who is alone in a quiet room clearly hears the ticking of the clock. However, if others enter and begin movement and conversation, they cease to hear it. But the beating does not cease to be accessible to the ear.