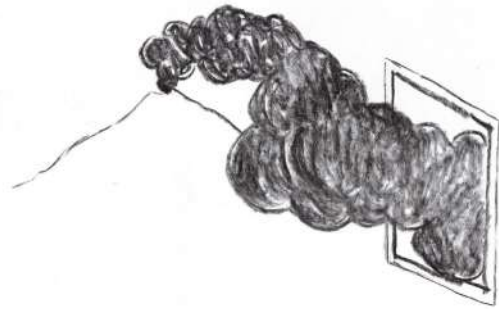


Renato Leotta

*Vittoria sul Sole*

29 January – 28 March, 2024

Preview: 26 January 6–8 p.m.



We are delighted to present *Vittoria sul Sole*, Renato Leotta's second solo exhibition at the Gallery, coinciding with the hundredth exhibition at Sprovieri.

A pyroclastic eruption of a volcano ejects ash and lapilli into the sky, forming colossal black clouds composed of tiny particles of rocks and minerals. These exploded tens of kilometres above the crater, obscuring the sun. The prospect of this "alien" matter just created by nature, which has not yet found a purpose in our reality, is to proceed, moved by the winds like the hands of a clock, aerial, until it falls, adhering to the surfaces, erasing them but also nourishing them. Creating a completely black and lightless landscape.

The matter, instead of touching the ground, adheres to the pictorial surfaces or rests on plinths, becoming poetic matter.

This action of zeroing invokes a libertarian and anarchic aesthetic, an uncontrolled production of nature in which the volcano brings its own creations, determining objective conditions that can generate a new and fighting thought. The assassination of Caesar and the end of the Roman Republic can, for example, be considered events of such magnitude as to make it justifiable that they were announced by extraordinary natural events, like the eruption of a volcano.

According to Virgil: The sun itself would have commiserated with Rome for the loss of Caesar by covering its shining face with a dark haze. The people of the time feared an eternal night for having fomented wars and wanted the assassination of Caesar. These verses refer to the mysterious disappearance of the sun following the eruption of Etna in Sicily and subsequently the eruption of the Okmok volcano in Alaska.

The assassination of Caesar is therefore seen as an archetypal struggle of terrestrial creatures to destroy the forces of Olympus and, in this case, Jupiter, exactly as in the staging of the heliomachy by K. Malevich's theatrical play *Victory over the Sun*, where the Black Square appears for the first time.

This interpretation therefore proposes a relationship between the worsening of environmental conditions - the darkening of the sky and its emotional impact - and revolutionary or resetting historical events. Darkening the sky led to one of the coldest summers in the history of the Mediterranean, contributing to famine and other critical situations. The Guardian titled in 2010: "How an Icelandic volcano helped spark the French revolution", referring to the 8-month eruption of the Lakagigar volcano in 1783.

We could say that the uncertainty of current times and the depressive sadness of our actions - and inability to act, have consequences. For example, on the quality of the air we breathe, the water and the food we ingest. Would a change in the environment therefore lead to a change in human traits?

About the Artist:

Renato Leotta, born in 1982 in Turin, currently lives and works between Acireale and Turin, and was the Italian Fellow at the American Academy in Rome in 2019.

Renato Leotta is drawn to the natural phenomena, the moon, the stars, the ocean, tides, and plants, all of which are the most prevalent components of Romantic poetry, regularly deployed to metaphorical, allegorical, and 'objective correlative' effects. Leotta's works are acts of observation, due to the use of the landscape as a subject. As an archaeologist of the Real, Leotta tries, through his process of observation, to identify and circumscribe a series of images, visualised through different media, that although being related to a specific time and space, contain a universal character. Moreover, by presenting the viewer with images that do not centre on narration, he works around and resists the limitations of cliché.

Leotta's solo exhibitions include: CONCERTINO per il mare, Castello di Rivoli, Italy (2023); Sensibilità, Le Quai, Monaco, France (2023); MACTE, Termoli, Italy (2022); Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin (2020); Galleria Fonti, Naples (2019 & 2015); Magazzino Italian Art and Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò, NY (2019); Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen (2018); Madragoa, Lisbon (2017 & 2016), among others.

Group exhibitions include Mattatoio, Roma, Italy (2023) MAXXI, Rome (2021); Fundación Santander, Madrid (2019); Gropius Bau, Berlin (2019); Palazzo Fortuny, Venezia (2018); MASP, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2018); Manifesta 12, Palermo (2018); Madre, Naples (2017) Le Galerie Centre d'Art Contemporain, Noisy-le-Sec, France (2016); BOZAR, Bruxelles (2015), among others. Leotta is a co-founder of CRIPTA747 and Istituto Sicilia.

In 2022 Renato Leotta participated in the 17th Istanbul Biennial and at Luci D'Artista, with an installation for a project with the city of Turin.