

art critical essay:
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La Colonna Infame

testo in Italiano



Perhaps there are only two ways to measure oneself with History. Either to sublimate it, channeling it to the grotesque; or by destroying it and restructuring the phases by taking possession of its motifs to begin to have personal access to the mystery of its labyrinths.

The latter coincides with how artists Ariel Soulé and Simon Toparovsky have conceived the arresting and epic installation La Colonna Infame. In it, conceptualization remains sovereign; abstraction is explored, but latent in a seductive ambiguity. The ability by which the artists relate to a significant moment in the world experience is a reflection of the world we each know, not an alternative reality. The installation lives with laws of its own. It has its own alphabet. The resonance of this artwork, as Walter Benjamin wrote about History, is the indispensable dialog with Memory.

The artists involve more than an intelligent reflection of the effects of the past on the present involving the values of justice, dignity and human rights. Their work should not be understood as nostalgic longing, but rather can be explained as a demonstration of belonging to our time. They re-establish, through reference and

staging, an invitation to see the balance of ourselves and the past, more in a philosophical than in an historical sense.

In the hands of Ariel Soulé and Simon Toparovsky painting and sculpture create an evocative instrument through which the original context of the artwork and its universal significance arouse personal reflection. Their "palette" is a poetic association of painting and sculpture and found objects used as a single whole to describe the complexity of the "chiaroscuro of existence". Ariel Soulé and Simon Toparovsky reveal to us that each time History repeats its dynamics, it moves by combining the next set of articulated similarities. On the broader critical plane it is clear that the artistic intuition that unfolds in the installations tells us that they are conscious of the repeated whims. We are lured into our own inevitable rhythm, a cyclical returning, not least by the vibrancy of what is portrayed-- both what is hard and what is beautiful. The whole installation is, for this reason, an imposing and solemn mirror.

La Colonna Infame of Ariel Soulé and Simon Toparovsky establishes the meeting point for the intersection of a number of considerations, including the relevance of the psychological but also the political in art. The work of these two artists comprises a map with which to navigate some of the next aesthetic and cultural issues of our time.