

DAVID TREMLETT

2019 2020 2021 LAVORI SU CARTA

with a critical text by Marinella Paderni

Opening Friday 23 September 6pm - 8pm  
24.09-27.12.2022

*David Tremlett. Architectures of the gaze.*

What happened to the imagination when we were confined at home, enclosed in limited perimeters, carrying out essential actions? What happened to the creativity of the artists, unable – like all of us – to travel, to live the world according to wide and vast scales and proportions?

We still have to discover it thoroughly, since we are frantically focused on finding normality in the existential imbalance of the last three years. Yet, despite our powerlessness, a different geography of being emerged, moved by the ingenuity of the body and the creativity of the mind, a type of intelligence more capable of freeing us from the anxiety and leading us to new sources of thought.

While the confinement due to the pandemic has changed our traditional mental landscape, it has also opened up new paths to other spatial and temporal configurations arising from habits, movements, processes never experienced in our everyday life, such as living a long period of time in the same place or traveling a lot with our gaze through the stasis of space. It is about a relationship of metrics, proportions, physical and psychic paths to be reinvented every day which represented a challenge for the artists, and also a resource providing incredible results. The images created during this period have singular, unique and unrepeatable qualities, because they express the expansion of the inner time on the physical one and a *relative* sense of space.

This new exhibition by David Tremlett stems from the particular experience of the confinement, an unnatural condition for the artist, whose work has always focused on the dimension of travel as an artistic exploration and direct awareness of the *genius* of places, getting in touch with the elements of the environment, with their history and their visual characteristics. An extremely poetic *modus operandi*, where the physical encounter with the matter of the world is followed by a conceptual and aesthetic development of the spaces crossed, making use of the languages of geometry, abstraction, architecture, able of representing the unfolding of thought and gaze in relation to the soul of the places.

At the beginning, with the impossibility to travel, Tremlett had to rethink about the meaning of travelling within his work, and to design alternative ways of wandering while remaining in his studio.

He focused on the archive of his works, a slower, more intimate journey made of movements and perceptions different from before, experienced only through his art. In that new time capsule, the artist deeply devoted himself to drawing, letting the hand express the feelings of the present through the construction of spaces elsewhere, imagined or suggested by the memories of travels and the main features of the places encountered. The emergence of a new architecture of the image echoed a different architecture of the mind, the result of an unrepeatable moment and experience.

In addition to those drawings, others were added during these three years, as an expression of an unprecedented visual effects and spatial textures which are enriched with different patterns, where the presence of the word is particularly relevant. The vast drawings of the series *My Places* are extraordinary constructions which move between the two elements defining our being in the world - the image and the word - in search of a dynamic synthesis telling the story of the culture of human beings, of their becoming. Words appoint, images represent, together they explore the territories of knowledge.

Ripped pages, yellowed by time, freely overlaid to draw mobile mappings that meet and intertwine with the geometries dear to Tremlett; fragments of scientific speeches and old essays printed with handwriting which takes us back to a time where the word had an autograph identity, an original stylistic code. The illusory space of geometries is put in a dialogue with these works with the illusion of handwriting, which suggests how the truthfulness of words is more real if the writing translates the action of thought via the skill of the hand instead of relying on the stereotypy of a computer. The handwritten paper has the fragranciness of life, the depth of uniqueness, while the digital word expresses a lack of identity, conformity, rhetoric.

By creating lines, curves, volumes with unusual trajectories, David Tremlett's works portray a mathematics of the gaze able to express the search for a broader space. The limits and boundaries of reality, which has imprisoned us in this period, are overcome by the free movement of words, by their seeming disorder that suggests musicality, reverb sound, and trespassing. Here the warm colours of the geometries interact with the black and white of vintage books, the colour of the past and of history; modernity has other shades, the sweetened ones of the digital world, which do not represent the real features of time, of memory.

The geometric architectures drawn in pastel appear both to contain the flow of speeches moving on the sheet of paper and their spreading out from the edges, evoking the idea of an expansion of the imagined space beyond the paper. The peculiar use of pastel by Tremlett, who works it by hand, gives the shapes a plastic thickness and a soft, nuanced materiality. Just like in those baroque ceiling frescoes, which represented the illusion of a breaking through of the sky and an opening towards the cosmos, the artist's drawings and wall paintings express the poetic value of space in shaping the forms of our wandering in the world.

The collages of the series *My Places* (2019) and the abstract architectures of the second group of works present in the exhibition, the works *Drawing for a High Wall* and *Drawing for a Long Wall* (2020), describe rapidly progressing spaces that transform two-dimensionality into a third and fourth dimension, evoking the experimental horizons of the historical avant-gardes. These new figurative syntaxes are recalled in the compositions of Russian Constructivism and De Stijl, both expression of geometry as a representative language of social change and a form of knowledge together with collage, an image of the fragmentation of the present.

Like a thin fabric, Tremlett's wall drawings are a surprising warp of spaces and times that reveal the possibility of *something else* in a place, in an architecture: what is far away becomes close, and vice versa, transforming the image (the significance of the shapes, the strength of the colours) into a possibility for us to move thanks to the extraordinary power of the gaze to imagine beyond the illusion of the world. His abstract geometries are presences that evoke a secret to be found in the game of appearance-disappearance of the shapes the ones into the others: "*I believe that in every building, in every street, there is something that causes a feeling and a feeling that is unintelligible.*"<sup>1</sup> It is a structural and material process of metamorphosis of the things that inhabit the world in order to bring out what every place - like every person - has in its being, in its power, and that the artist is able to grasp like few others. "*I am an abstract artist, and I've always been an abstract artist, and I feel that abstraction forces you to think, and look, and decide in a completely different way, because there are no small hints that you really catch onto quickly; and therefore, for the public, it's about looking hard and try to make sense of what you are looking at. So the thinking element of this particular work, or the idea of the freedom of thinking, is really about a work that allows you to try and think about.*"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Baudrillard in *The Singular Object of Architecture*, di J. Baudrillard and J. Nouvel, University of Minnesota Press, 2005

<sup>2</sup> David Tremlett in *In Space/Nello Spazio. Progetti/Projects 2010-2020*, catalogue, Palazzo Butera Foundation, Palermo 2021, p. 14.