

museoemblema

“ (A) via salvatore emblema 37 - 80040 terzigno - napoli -
ph = +39 081 827 4081 \ info-at-salvatoreemblema.it \ salvatoreemblema.it

[I belong to Light]

I was born on the 25th of April 1929. To be exact, I saw the light of day. And once I saw that light, I could never leave it. I belong to light.

I looked for light in my work, in painting, yet painting turned out to be a place like any other. Painters chase light, just as lovers do. Everyone chases light, but in different ways. Someone may be lucky enough to find it, consuming his own flesh, but that is called holiness.

Personally, I have always been interested in true, physical light. It allows us to see - and we learn to see every time we open our eyes - that wonderful thing that enters paintings and enhances their color. That thing that moves, changes, and is always true to itself. It plays with shadows and matter. Light is something that makes you grow and that moves you. Because in painting, as in life, this is what really matters: Emotion. Emotion and Light. Even better, Emotion is Light.

This is why my painting is just a pretext. A painting must not exist for its own sake. It is better if it is unfinished. Like a hypothesis, an opportunity. Painting is not a fixed thing; it is neither an image of something nor a concept. It is motion. A painting results when space makes love to time. And when you make love, it is impossible to stay still! At this point you could ask me, don't paintings have a meaning? Of course they do! But light itself is the meaning. It is the message. It is truth. And truth is mobile, just like light.

Five centuries ago Leonardo daVinci said, *"To get the essence of the things, you do not need to add, you need to subtract,"* and for the same five centuries we have thoughtlessly repeated this odd truth. We have added paint on paint, gesture on gesture, word on word. What opportunity do we give the painting if we submerge it beneath shapes, concepts, images, meanings? When I give something a meaning, a name, a reason, I just condemn it to limitation. My own limitation. For instance, if I see a beautiful woman, the only truth is, that woman is beautiful. That's it. This woman moves me, she makes me see heaven. At this point, is there still a valid reason to know her name? I don't care if this woman is figurative or conceptual. When I see a truth full and round like this woman, all these considerations become useless or secondary. I have already see beyond her clothes, beyond her very body, and I see the light (again the light) surrounding this woman.

What is Transparency, then, if not an attempt to overcome any opaque object standing between our eyes and the light? For centuries the space

behind -beyond - the painting has been a dead space. It was necessary to bring that space to light, to life, because truth is waiting there to be discovered again and again. Transparency is reaching that other space. That space is truth, is heaven, and it is just a wall. An ordinary wall that, thanks to Transparency, becomes a "place." A place that can be shared by man and life. That wall made of plaster and brick can, for the first time, witness the existence of light. As has always happened, our bodies, made of flesh and blood, witness the presence of a soul, behind - inside. This is important, I think.

Reaching other spaces, getting to the light, is a major issue for all painters (just like for lovers). But painting has always been a thing (the paint) that hid another thing (the wall). Think about the lovers' bodies! They never hide themselves, even when one covers the other.

All painters tell you, "But I can show you infinite and eternal space, what do you care if I take away a little of your real space?" What kind of statement is that? It is a sham. Infinity and eternity cannot accept removal, denial, or forgery. Mark Rothko, one of the greatest artists for me, understood this. He employed Transparency; but for him it was a metaphysical stance. He pushed color to its utmost, he made you feel it, he made you sense the canvas vibrating under it. You felt there was life behind the canvas. And the light shifted your gaze from the center to the edges, to the margins, outside the paint, as if to go around the painting. Rothko's light forced you to move towards its sources. This is extraordinary. And the more you approached the margins, the clearer the light became. Then, you came close to the painting. You touched it, and finally you realized that the light was not real, it was made by paint. That light was wonderful, yet it was a fraud, an untruth. It was a color that made you think it was light, but not a light that turned itself into a color. A tremendous thought.

Lucio Fontana, another giant of art, barely tolerated the painting as a representation. Like Rothko, he was certain that art had to go beyond the canvas surface, beyond the painting, too, to reach light. What did Fontana say then? "*Painting, I do not want to paint you, I want to cut you*". A sharp, intelligent protest, but once again it did not solve the problem: How to reach light? The cutting of Fontana was almost a theatrical matter. It was a brilliant, radical provocation, yet it did not fully belong to Painting. It needed gestures and a starting point as well. It waited for a "Go!" On the contrary, I learned that Painting exists before and after the act of painting.

After telling you all this, I have to confess something: There is no "intelligence" in Transparency. There is no metaphysics, no difficulty, no reason or will. Transparency is simply a matter of necessity.

“

I needed to pull a thread out of a canvas. Out of necessity, through that breach, light entered the painting. And the light reached the wall. And lit the wall. And in the end -out of the same necessity - the

light came back to the viewer. That's all.

But when light came back to the canvas, on the painting, the light already had it all. It had brought with it color, matter, emotion, motion, physics, metaphysics, mathematics, history and even geography: All the space in the world and all human time. Also, maybe, all the truth of God. This is how Transparency works, this is how the light can become meaning, a message to humanity. And this is the path I followed.

Could Transparency be a new word for painting? I really think so. And if it is true, then we should work hard, because one day we will conceive of a kind of painting without a body, made up only of light and emotion, without any canvases supporting them, without any lies justifying their existence.

Imagine a transparent wall that lives and changes according to your moods and your emotions. That protects you without isolating you from everything else. Imagine: An insight into heaven.



What is the sky made up of? Of nothing!
What color is the sky? No color!
The sky is empty and transparent.
And yet, with blue, it holds the clouds.