

KUNSTforum

Q&A with Matteo Rosa

Av Hanne Cecilie Gulstad - 14.03.2013 - ENGLISH EDITION, Oslo, Q&A

March 9th, Matteo Rosa opened a solo exhibition at The Boiler Room, Oslo. KUNSTforum asked him some questions about his art and what inspires him.



Matteo Rosa. Photo: The Boiler Room, Oslo

What are you currently working on?

Lately I have focused on a series of works on paper, which is showing in my solo exhibition *The Leaving* at The Boiler Room, Oslo. My intention with these works has been to approach anew such simple and direct means of expression as a paintbrush, after a period of working mostly with site-specific and lens-based projects. As from the depths of consciousness, images rise to the surface and appear on paper. Sometimes they bear resemblance to

figures, like theatrical characters in a play of the imagination, other times to abstract patterns and the natural world. The title, *The Leaving*, refers to one of the works exhibited, which depicts a symbolic letting go of the past to find clarity in the present moment.



'Embody #8', 2011–2013. Watercolour on paper 21 x 28 cm each (29,5 x 37 cm framed). Photo: Matteo Rosa/The Boiler Room

Can you describe your work process from idea to work?

I work in a gradual manner and often map down my ideas in a notebook. Sometimes these ideas recur, after months or years. When an idea presents itself several times I may give it more attention. And then usually there comes an opportunity like an exhibition or a project where one of these concepts can be explored, or even without such opportunity, at some point an idea may suddenly feel more urgent or ripe. During the realization of the work, my initial concept may grow and change – it is as if I am looking for a specific note or resonance, or a certain feeling or state.



'Embody #12', 2011–2013. Watercolour on paper 21 x 28 cm each (29,5 x 37 cm framed). Photo: Matteo Rosa/The Boiler Room

What are your main influences when creating a work of art?

In recent years I have noticed that nature has been an important influence in my work, perhaps not so much because of nature itself but for the feeling that its contemplation brings. Practices that heighten bodily awareness and allow the mind to rest also interest me, especially since we are exposed to a growing amount of daily information and external stimuli.



'Embody #11', 2011–2013 Watercolour on paper 21 x 28 cm each (29,5 x 37 cm framed). Phot: Matteo Rosa/The Boiler Room

Can you name a writer or book, fiction or theory that has inspired your works?

There is a book I read some years ago that I found particularly inspiring and I can see its relevance even in connection to the works shown in this exhibition. It is a book by Gaston Bachelard titled *The Poetics of Space*, which examines the meaning of architecture and domestic spaces in relation to poetry and inspiration. I have been fascinated by his description of the poetic image as “a sudden salience on the surface of the psyche”, for which no project is necessary.



'Embody #16', 2011–2013. Watercolour on paper 21 x 28 cm each (29,5 x 37 cm framed). Photo: Matteo Rosa/The Boiler Room

Can you name an artist/artwork or exhibition that has inspired you?

This is actually from quite a few years ago, an installation by Ann Hamilton in the United States Pavilion at the Venice Biennale back in 1999. I loved the work because it left the rooms almost empty, subtly intervening in the space. Around the perimeter of the rooms, from the corners between the walls and the ceiling, some fuchsia coloured powder cascaded down like water or rain, momentarily marking some enlarged Braille dots present on the walls and accumulating on the floor. It was a complex installation with several layers, comprising also sound and objects, referencing both the neo-classical building and aspects of American social history. It had a very thorough conceptual depth and yet it also talked to the viewer without knowing anything about the work, purely on an experiential level. I liked that.



'Embody #17', 2011–2013. Watercolour on paper 21 x 28 cm each (29,5 x 37 cm framed). Photo: Matteo Rosa/The Boiler Room

Why is art important?

I think for me art is important because it allows us to connect to a deeper part of ourselves. We are so used to follow, seek and work towards something we want to achieve, and we are often in the process of getting somewhere and pursuing something. Art on the other hand can make us pause and become aware of aspects of ourselves we have long forgotten. In my experience art can function as little moments of awakening, allowing us to reconnect in many ways and access reality in a manner that somehow bypasses language.

Matteo Rosa *The Leaving* can be seen at The Boiler Room until 24th March.