

In the last two years, I wrote for Nina Carini on several occasions. Talking about her thread drawings, I referred to them as mental circuits, sacred fences. In her latest works I see an opening to other dimensions. The square and the rectangle are starting to get too tight, despite still being there. The artist needs to follow other directions. The show is in the spirit of a path to spatial freedom. The circle and the spiral, in which one feels a sense of protection, enter her work. A significant difference between these works from the Munich exhibition and the ones from just a year ago is that the thread is no longer pulled, but it is left to spin in the air, to be later stopped by the artist. The thread is free, the shape is open. This is a work in which the timescale is essential. In all that she added the pigment, that she spreads on cotton paper with a strainer: nothing is totally predictable, it's the lightness of dust.

As soon as I saw the new works, a situation that struck me some years ago came to my mind, the show *Uroboro* at Rucellai Sepulchre in the church of San Pancrazio in Florence.<sup>1</sup> The architectural object by Leon Battista Alberti, with all its artistic and intellectual background, was compared to James Lee Bryars, one of the most enigmatic and fascinating american artist of the second half of the 20th century. What is the reference? The concept of the Ouroboros itself, a very ancient symbol consisting of a snake biting its tail, creating a circle with no beginning and no end. This circularity, this space-time uncertainty that is in men's thoughts since the beginning of time, brings me back to Carini's recent works, to the formats and the drawings of the big round papers.

The Infinite, of which the artist often talks about, is ubiquitous, as in the video work *Constellations* (3', 2019), which opens with a total black background where at first a circle appears, and then others add, becoming bigger and bigger. They look like planets revolving around themselves.<sup>2</sup> Actually it is a dancer, filmed from above, wearing a skirt made with a metal structure to make it rigid. On the skirt a thread of light is placed so as to create a spiral. The dancer is intent on a pirouette, a very difficult movement which makes the body movement very stiff. It is a *continuum* which finds in the spiral, a line which wraps on itself, a form that makes it manifest and endlessly prolongs the circular movement developing from the starting point. That's the number sequence of the medieval mathematician Fibonacci, who Mario Merz used in many of his works. «For thousands of years in the West - as John Barrow explains, scholar and author of an unforgettable *pièce*<sup>3</sup> directed by Luca Ronconi — there wasn't a more subversive idea than that of infinite. The thought that things could go on forever, that they didn't necessarily have a beginning or

an end, neither a center nor a contour, was opposite to the Western acquired knowledge.»<sup>4</sup>.

I think I can say, without fear of denial, that in all the works presented here there is a strong existential matrix, we are placed before different types of flux, in which the flowing of time is the work's defining moment. An investigation into transcendence is made clear to overcome the strictly phenomenal dimension.

The 16th century scientist Blaise Pascal wrote that he felt awe in front of infinite spaces, in a sort of eternal silence, that here is broken by the musical composition of hypnotic value. The latter has been designed together with the composer Andrea Ferrario<sup>5</sup>. Part of the sounds are recordings that the artist obtained with a research of sounds from the abyss. The matter comes from the question the artist poses herself after the realisation: «How is it possible to write a vocal score like the ones of the infinite sentence in *The Boundaries of Babel*?»<sup>7</sup>.

The concept of sound samples can also be found in the recent work by the German artist Hito Steyerl, in *The City of Broken Windows*<sup>8</sup>. It's about documenting the learning process of an artificial intelligence who's taught how to recognize the sound of windows breaking. Here the dimension is more poetic. However, both in Steyerl's and in Nina Carini's works, a reflection on the contemporary imagination related to sound, and so to music, can be understood. *Zeitgeist? Why not?* This is certainly not the place and, what's more, the writer doesn't have the appropriate skills to talk about music. It is however interesting to notice a certain closeness between Carini's recent works and some musical scores, maybe the ones John Cage brilliantly collected in his *Notations* in 1969.

That of Carini is a tension to universality, precisely the infinite. She is fascinated by this aspect of life, by emotion, strictly connected to sound, which in *Constellations* plays an essential role.

If before there already was a linguistic tension in essence, in these works such tension is made clear. So is in the big white net, called *Cielo e Acqua (Sky and Water)*. The net slightly fluctuates in space, and its fringes recall sea waves. Sea and sky are infinite, immeasurable, imponderable.

The exhibition title is a play on words, a rhetoric question that the artist poses herself and to the viewer: *Are my eyes distracting my hearing?*

All this in a time of liquid modernity, as in Zygmunt Bauman. Sea and sky are the infinite in its simpler expression, even for those who didn't undertake mathematical studies: on the front part of the net there are small signs which recall stars.

*Je t'aime* is a work made of 110 sheets, hand printed with ink and *trasparina*<sup>9</sup>. To every printed sheet a very small dose of this curious material has been added, sheet after sheet, so as the sentence *Je t'aime* disappears in the last one. The 110 sheets are put on a sheet of glass on which the exact same sentence has been carved into in transparency, and they are conceived to be sold separately at a symbolic price, so that in time only the sheet of glass should remain. It is a performative work.

The choice of the sentence is not casual. «I chose it because it is one of the most complex words in the human language»<sup>10</sup> The type of procedure recalls Roman Opalka's 1965 ∞ pictorial research, in which paint fades as time passes, and at the beginning it isn't possible to know where it is going to end.

*Ad infinitum*

Angela Madesani