

THE LOFT AT LIZ'S

LOST IN COLORS

by Cynthia Penna

This exhibition is a tribute to two artists, who have stubbornly dedicated a substantial and fundamental part of their lives to art and painting: **Rhea Carmi and Yoella Razili**. Extremely disciplined artists have made color the basis for their aesthetic and inspiration, incorporating shapes, material, and geometry as a structured expression of color.

The lexicon chosen by the curator for this exhibition is based not only on the geometric element, or the coloristic elements as a pictorial expression of itself but on a vocabulary expressed by both artists that becomes an all-encompassing experience aiming straight at the emotional sphere of the subject: color.

The historical references of the works on display are very explicit and converse with the great artistic movements of the 20th century postwar: Arte Povera, Minimalism, Geometric Abstractionism, Hard Edge, Monochromatism, Color Field, all conjugated in works, that however, contain a peculiar sense of poetry that are specific to these two artists – that of resilience and the emotional expression of their feelings.

The art of Carmi and Razili speaks directly with our senses: the works not only aim at a perception that has an immediacy with color, and therefore a visual perception, but also contain an intrinsic, suffused and diffused sensuality; a feminine accent that arises as something powerful, strong and at the same time very reassuring and protective.

Carmi's relationship with the works is made up of observation and investigation. The artist has an eclectic personality who, in her incessant production, ranges from geometry to the recycling of waste materials found in the environment. Carmi expresses her multifaceted personality sometimes through a rigorous/rational/scientific approach, deriving from her biology studies. But Carmi also investigates through an exasperated fantasy that leads her to "invent" works built impetuously under the influence of contingent events.

These two approaches create the rationality of her clean and linear geometric structures, made of well-subdivided and admirably balanced colorfields. On the other hand, are Carmi's instincts that lead her to the "assemblage" of objects and materials such as paper, iron, wood, plastic and everything that can be found by chance in the environment.

Carmi is divided between being a worker who punctually and skillfully carries out a precise and complex process and an alchemist who invents, challenges, and ventures on experimentation. Her color palette is vast, as is the application of color on the canvas which is made up of overlapping layers, sometimes alternating with thin layers of paper which leads us to look inside the canvas discovering what lies behind the surface. The color contains the life of the work itself, but other "stories and events" also take place within it and lead to questions, doubts, investigations and research that is the expression of incessant energy of feelings and emotions that Carmi pours out daily on her canvases in an immediate and total "need" to paint.

The "tactile" sense that **Razili's** works inspire, emerges from the application of the color on the surface which appears as a pure "smeared" pigment similar to when you spread a frosting to cover

the surface of a cake. The sense of touch and taste are immediately alerted by the first approach to the works; the reference to European Arte Povera is given by the rough base made of old woods that are found and collected in the surrounding nature, conveys the roughness of experience, and at the same time that idea of warmth that can only be old found things. As in the works of the Belgian artist Marc Angeli, the side of the work is left "uncovered"; the old wood is left free to breathe, acquires a new life, a rediscovered life, a "rediscovered time" of Proustian memory, but its front, its largest surface, is covered with paint, as if to underline a desire to protect it from the external events. A three-dimensional work that on the one hand relates to the surrounding space and dialogues with it, on the other, it attracts the viewer through the immersion that pure color offers to multiple and individual readings that are dreamlike glimpses of imaginary worlds that are inviting us in, if only we could allow ourselves to be transported "inside" the color. It is a concentration in color as purity of vision and an absolute experiential relationship with it.

The vocabulary common to the two artists is essentially the all-encompassing sensorial experience that color can induce in the viewer. In our society which is pervaded by color, we use it as an immediate and direct means of communication – color to heal the mind, color to relax, color as an identity of race, of political affiliation, of social condemnation, of marginalization, of struggle and identification, but also color to celebrate, to rejoice, to express sadness.

The artistic vocabulary of Carmi and Razili made of bright colors, sometimes extreme, never banal, transports us into a sensorial universe that is borrowed from nature. This immense reservoir of different shades and nuances, creates a subtlety that at times, the human eye cannot perceive. Nature is the primary source and also the final point of their vocabulary; an inexhaustible source of inspiration to draw on with both hands. Carmi and Razili work precisely in this sense – they sink their hands, brushes, and tools in those cans of color and mix it, overlap it, modulate it, mold it to obtain a language, a way of communication, a connection with the world. The profound meaning of both artist's works lies not only in the ability to manage and dominate color as a direct and immediate expression of their lexicon, but rather, in that invitation to abandon oneself, to be carried away in an all-encompassing and imaginary sensorial experience, freeing our mind to go where it intuitively wants to go.