

Comunicato Stampa

Marco Demis

rag dolls

Glenda Cinquegrana: The Studio
via F. Sforza, 49 I- 20122 Milan

From Tuesday to Saturday from 2.30 PM to 7.30 PM
By appointment

For Further informations please contact:
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Opening: Thursday 18th of September 2008, h 7,00 PM.
from Friday 19th to October 24 2008.

Rag dolls is the first exhibition by **Marco Demis** at the gallery **Glenda Cinquegrana: The Studio**.

Marco Demis is a young Milanese artist from the class of 1982, making his debut exhibition. The show, produced by the gallery **Glenda Cinquegrana: The Studio**, illustrates the artist's work both through his canvases and through an audacious, full-wall installation of designs.

The show's title, *rag dolls*, is an allusion to a painting whose main subject is childhood: the dolls – girls in Demis' painting are made of rags, understood to be a primary substance. The girls constitute archetypical images of childhood itself, seen as the primordial condition of every individual, or rather as a pure, unconditioned dimension: in Latin, the word *ingenuous* means 'original', 'natural'.

The girl-dolls are portrayed at a particular moment, one of suspension both in space and in time. They are in a state of being born, still being nourished by the placenta: imagined as essential forms, they are conceived so as to remain fixed for just a second more in the uncorrupted room that is the painting.

The other day, in a café, a young boy came in alone, glanced around the room, and occasionally his eyes rested on me; I then had the certainty that he was looking at me without however being sure that he was seeing me. An inconceivable distortion: how can we look without seeing? (Roland Barthes)

The childlike figures portrayed by Demis are beings humanly imprisoned in themselves, captured in a state of solitude, practically as if they were closed units, lacking any chinks of communication with the outside world. The gaze with which they look upon their world appears unfathomable, neutral. Solitude, for Demis, is a moment of historical suspension: the doll-girls, hermetic and mysterious in their immobility, as in the atmosphere of a Sironi or De

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Chirico painting, reveal no emotion to the person who observes them.

He is not, in fact, looking at anything; he holds back within himself his love and fear: yes, this is what the gaze is (Roland Barthes).

The empty expressivity of the rag dolls, in Demis' painting, is a paradigm of the difference that exists between *looking without* and *seeing within*. The communication these creatures establish with the world can be interpreted as *surface depth* (Deleuze): the gaze is an incomplete act, one that manifests itself by not looking at anything. The gaze is nothing more than a retreat back within one's self, a holding back and preserving of the emotion within.

Surface depth is a condition recreated through a refined investigation of color. Not white, whose obtuse expressivity is so deliberately sought for, but rather a color that only rarely attains the soft pastel tonality of yellow and ancient pink. Its materialness, acquired through the superimposition of primary substance casts, aims directly at evocation.

This sophisticated pictorial poetic has its roots in a line of descent unique to Italian painting, which runs from Botticelli up through Modigliani.

As regards the designs, on one hand the pictorial script becomes brighter and livelier, and on the other it stumbles willingly over the uncertainty of handling the childlike designs. The licentious irony of this work opens itself willingly to more diverse content, which from time to time approaches the direct and sensually ironic spirit of the Japanese *manga*.