

THE RUST OF FEELINGS

By James Nicolella Maschietti

"I called my failures bad luck.

Damn bad luck."

From the 17th century, by Jacopo Lietti of FBYC

I have a sharp but also quite indefinite memory of the spring of 2012, in which on my first divorce I often found myself on the highway at night, in my black Beetle at a dangerously high speed, listening to the shrieking words of this song by *Fine Before You Came*, a historic indie band from Milan. I used to pair it with packages of red Gauloises cigarettes, and I now believe I paid for the owner's children's college education.

It was my own personal moment of intimacy, almost ecclesiastical, where those six inches dwelling between my ears didn't sit well with me. It was one of those moments when I was not well with myself or my life. Counting failures, we often like to disguise it as bad luck.

It was ultimately a painful, weak, and failed moment. One of the numerous times that we all have, and which, thankfully, are not always common in our lives, but which return to visit us on a regular basis, not so much as a *'memento mori'* (Latin meaning "remember that you must function"), but as a reminder that happiness may be a passing fad.

Bergonzoni suggests tending toward contentment, because in the root con-tense lies a more affordable and less fleeting possibility. This is a wise wish.

Well, before writing this text on *Marcello Silvestre's* work I had the usual reticence that always grips me when I must curate an exhibition. I can't stand curatorial treatises peppered with quotations from *Baudrillard* and *Debord* that coin useless neologisms to alienate the viewer. Instead, I think it is very good when a text is simple when everything is simple.

I don't mean banal, I mean better. As immediate as a Beatles song. Like a liberating cry, a peaceful embrace, one hand clasping another.

Did you know that otters sleep by letting themselves be transported by river currents while holding hands? They won't get lost that way. I recently noticed this when reading a book about animals to my five-year-old kid.

Back to us, in short, it should be the work of a competent artist. An instantaneous goal that manages to share a strong communion of purpose with the viewer of the artwork.

Marcello is a sensitive man. You can read it in his deep green eyes, of a soul raised in the south of Italy (he was born in 1977 in Naples), which despite a persistent layer of tranquility, hides the sincere smile that can open at any moment.

We met in a small bar in Porta Romana in Milan, for him to tell me about the exhibition, about the works he would like to bring. In the end it was just a meeting where we told each other about our lives, and our failures. By the time we had two coffees and an hour passed we still had so much to tell each other.

He has endured difficult times, just like me and perhaps everyone else... His cure is creating sculptures. Which he practices in his works called "in the folds of life" (that's Deleuze, do you recognize Sprint?), in the times of complete intimacy where he lets go of himself as an architect and just reverts to being Marcello. A man. the person.

His anthropomorphic, geometric sculptures, faceless and without surface detail, are the photographs, the narrative, of a wide range of pains and restarts. In the end, we agreed, human emotions are always the same. Every ten years perhaps they change perspective, adjust to the age of the individual going through them, but they are certainly historical ebbs and flows that we can find throughout history. It is Nietzsche's eternal return.

Here then, in front of these works, if one does not pass over them with the usual eagerness and carelessness with which we live daily life, it is possible to find moments of peace, of reflection, of communion. Not only with Marcello's soul, but with that of all people who are exactly experiencing the same pain. The same separation from something or someone. The same painful inner excavation. From which one glimpses a heart, covered by a hand, protecting it so that it will never be hurt again.

Mohammed Ali said, "A person's personality. His mannerisms, thoughts, deeds, actions, everything is based on the heart. Because what is a man? A man is his heart."

I am convinced that Marcello Silvestre, with all his inner complexities and frailties, has a big heart. I believe that the heart is the only thing that allows us to crawl out of the disasters of life, everyday life, illness, and pain.

The works in the exhibition all have a name, a title. The old fashion of calling everything "Untitled" is certainly precautionary for an artist, because it entrusts the work and the viewer with the task of researching, understanding, deciphering. It is a shortcut, however. Instead, Marcello Silvestre wanted to point the way, the road, with some very evocative titles such as "Everyone has an armor," or even "Misunderstanding," or finally "Are we really free?"

The answer is clearly no. One is never free. Not in this life. We may be free from some things, partially or temporarily, but we will always have tasks and responsibilities to live. To those we love, or within ourselves.

Another aspect I found intriguing and reassuring about this work is its conception. Marcello is first and foremost a great architect who works for major brands around the world. His creativity always starts with digital design. He primarily draws with 3D modelers and then he brings his work to life, in the foundry, or through a 3D printer. In the end, he tries to customize them by hand, he reconnects with the material, with the world. He finds a way to make real what before seemed fake. But virtual does not mean fake at all, money on a credit card is no less authentic than paper money. Digital is simply the new dimension of our lives, a dimension where anything is possible, where in the future we will tell as always about who we are, our emotions, and our sorrows.

Because pain will never leave us.

Now, if you are a person who has a heart, do yourself the courtesy of reading these extraordinary lyrics from a song by Roberto Vecchioni, who better than I, and so many others, knew how to converse with pain.

*“Hai fatto di tutto
Per disarmarmi la vita
E non sai, non puoi sapere
Che mi passi come un'ombra sottile sfiorante,
Appena-appena toccante,
E non hai vie d'uscita
Perché, nel cuore appreso,
In questo attendere
Anche in un solo attimo,
L'emozione di amici che partono,
Figli che nascono,
Sogni che corrono nel mio presente,
Io sono vivo
E tu, mio dolore,
Non conti un cazzo di niente”*