

The Power of the Center

Sara Fontana

An artistic journey that seemed to have crystallized around painting is expanding into an exploration of other media. Painting, drawing, embroidery, installations, prints, papier collé collages, and artist's books, traversed by writing and nourished by readings and heterogeneous visual sources, model a harmonious setting, hovering between the physical and the immaterial. It is a space in which Kikki Ghezzi hones her reflections on identity, strengthened by a new freedom and awareness. Pink is the predominant color, pink the experiences, images and objects that fill it, starting from a bewitching "femme-maison". The series of prints is an accentuation of that continuous reticular line refined in the latest drawings with "portraits" of roots, to which is added a study of color perception. Dialoguing with previous research is the new series of oil paintings —from *Celestial Roots* to *I am That I Am* to *Power of the Center I* and *II* —where memory traces have now been transfigured, arranged along a crest between naturalism and mysticism, and where the gesture and the action unleash centripetal forces, without ever slackening control over the composition. The artist then turns to the motif of the case, of a Duchamp-like memory and model, and develops two installations from it brought to life by the intervention of the visitor. Here we discover that the root has not in fact been dissolved into the image on the canvas. Present and tangible, it is merely waiting to be revealed. Into this dialectic of internal/external, visible/invisible, dream/reality are slotted the artistic figures who, according to Ghezzi, inspired this work of hers more than any others: in addition to the already-mentioned Marcel Duchamp —an almost obligatory evocation —are Georgia O'Keeffe and Louise Bourgeois, masters, in different ways, of letting the organic and the abstract rub shoulders, and of superimposing the female body on the forms and forces of the Earth and Nature.