

Gian Maria Tosatti

Il mio cuore è vuoto come uno specchio (episodio di Catania)
curated by Adele Ghirri, Ludovico Pratesi, Pietro Scammacca
16.07 – 18.08 2018 – Opening: 15.07 2018 10:00 – 19:00

The exhibition is included in the official program of
Manifesta12 (Palermo)

For the first time in its history, Palazzo Biscari, one of the most magnificent Baroque palaces in Sicily, opens its doors to a contemporary artist. From the 16th of July to the 18th of August 2018, the palace hosted a site specific environmental installation by Gian Maria Tosatti entitled *Il mio cuore è vuoto come uno specchio – episodio di Catania* (My heart is a void. The void is a mirror – episode of Catania), curated by Adele Ghirri, Ludovico Pratesi, and Pietro Scammacca.

Il mio cuore è vuoto come uno specchio – episodio di Catania marks the first chapter of a pilgrimage that will take the artist across Europe in search of Modernity's ruinous remains, which project their shadow onto the present, and the gems of a new time—perhaps a 'New History.' Tosatti positions himself as a testimony to one of the most profound historical passages that the West has ever registered, a moment stretched between a future in total transformation—professed by authors such as Pier Paolo Pasolini—and the oppositionality of old structures, such as the nation-state, capitalism, and colonialism, which in reactionary revolt reveal their most sinister faces.

The work, which takes its shape from the eighteenth-century palace, is thus a sort of prologue, a visionary and cruel space that will occupy the central stairway, the first three chambers of the salons, and the monumental ballroom. Tosatti's work presents itself as a journey that the visitor will venture individually: a solitary path as a visual novel that begins from the very first step of the central stairway.

Through a narrative structured by the architecture of the edifice, but rich with references to Visconti, Céline and his personal diaries, the artist orchestrates an immersive experience and transforms the palace into a contemporary ruin deprived of its *genius loci*. With the creation of this spectral atmosphere, halfway between presence and absence, past and future, Tosatti generates a temporal paradox

that situates the visitor in what could be defined as the afterlife of modernity, a point of passage between two radically different epochs.

The contrast that takes shape between these themes and the baroque frescoes gracing the palace's walls recalls the notion of allegory as conceptualized by Walter Benjamin in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1925). For Benjamin, the baroque allegory is a form of expression that manifests itself in the eschatological passages of History, when the decline and precariousness of a civilization become perceptible. *My heart is a void. The void is a Mirror – Episode of Catania* – which borrows its title from Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, is an allegorical and entropic space, where time seems to be finished, or to continue in a separate direction.



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