

Exhibition: **GIANLUIGI COLIN. Mitografías**

Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM)
23 November 2011 – 22 January 2012

Organised by: Institut Valencia d'Art Modern (IVAM)

Curated by: Vincenzo Trione

With this exhibition proposal of the work of Gianluigi Colin, which comprises 26 drawings divided into four groups, Venus, Mars, Saturn and Mercury, and a large installation, *The Wall*, made up of 300 oil paintings on canvas, the IVAM addresses an analysis of the role of myths in today's society.

The themes chosen by Colin are taken from everyday life and reflect the realities of a time in which the trivial has become the main object of interest. Colin interprets myths not as aesthetic forms but as elements immersed in a social, cultural or historic ensemble, possessing a sense, a meaning or a representative value of this reality, as we can see in the exhibition.

A catalogue has been published for the show containing the works displayed and texts by Vincenzo Trione, Gianluigi Colin, Humberto Galimberti, Arturo Pérez Reverte and Consuelo Císcar.

Gianluigi Colin bases his *Mitografías* (Mythographies) on a question: what have Mercury, Mars, Saturn and Venus become for us? His answer does not consist in taking a walk down nostalgia road. He attempts to track down distant survivals. He scrutinises the often overlooked outbreaks of classicism scattered in the cracks of our present. He uses the myth as a privileged instrument, not for abandoning "this" world but for running through it in a different way, by going down untrodden paths. When he hears "talking oracles", he composes postmodern frescoes where he breaks away from centrality. Committed to go beyond the usual rules of the tale, he lingers on happily found details.

To endow his impressive “tableaux” with life, Colin resorts to a complex technique. In the first place, he browses through newspapers; then he chooses pages where he finds “revealing” images; then he crumples these pages in a gesture of moral intolerance; next he photographs these wrinkled sheets of paper; afterwards he prints the file on newspaper paper, which he sticks onto a layer made of fragments of newspaper cuttings (a kind of “rewriting” of the classical printing technique); finally, he intervenes impetuously with his hands on this material, forming new creases.

The Italian artist focuses his artistic discourse on resolving how society reinterprets classical myths. His works are little semiotic tableaux with which he investigates and translates signs and myths on the basis of the model of the present-day society. They are a token of how social human reality seems to be based nowadays on communication and of how this term, with an apparently simple semantic structure, has been introduced as a model and a general cultural metaphor, capable of oscillating between and exchange of information and seduction, between dialogue and manipulation, between the absolute control of the communicator and the equally absolute freedom of the recipient.

Gianluigi Colin takes as his referent outstanding members, icons or myths of the current information society to ask himself what they really mean. The mass media give a limited vision full of stereotypes that prevent one from knowing the original myth, since it has been deprived of substantial elements and ritualised, humanised and popularised. Colin gives a good account of this in his creative images. His artistic expression dully coincides in an interactive manner with today’s crisis of values and the disorder they are in that does little to help the social actors to move about the stage of life with their “truth” and resort to their more basic, more mythological, less artificial and less fictional principles,

Colin’s aesthetics pays tribute to the most influential semiologist of the 20th century, Roland Barthes. The artist takes Barthesian mythology and channels it along an itinerary that includes images from different sources: comics, graffiti, the press, television, the novel, the cinema or photography.

Born in Pordenone in 1956, Gianluigi Colin has been carrying out artistic research into the dialogue between images and words for many years. His work starts as an investigation into the past, into the sense of representation and the stratification of the gaze. It is a poetics packed with evocations of the history of art and chronicles, which tends to put memory and current affairs on the same level, blurring the frontiers between periods. A poetics of great civil and ethical commitment, which strives to restore important militant valences to the artistic experience.

An eclectic personality – Colin is the art director of *Corriere della Sera* – he has delivered talks, seminars and courses at universities. He has also written essays and articles about photography and visual communication.

He has held numerous solo exhibitions in many cities in Italy and abroad (among these, it is worth mentioning especially the one held at the Palazzo dell’Arengario in Milan in 1998; at the Centro Cultural Recoleta in Buenos Aires,

in 2002; at the Manege Exhibition Hall in Saint Petersburg in 2003; and at the Museo MADRE in Naples and the *Bienal del Fin del Mundo* in Ushuaia in 2011).

He has organised performances in different parts of the world – he was invited to *Valencia09* (at the IVAM in 2009) and selected for the Italian Pavilion in *54 Esposizione d'Arte Internazionale della Biennale di Venezia*. His works are present in private collections, museums and public institutions in Italy and abroad. He lives and works between Milan and Rome.