

Emblema's writing: about myself

Scattered notes for a family portrait

The following texts are literary reworkings of interviews, memoirs, and suggestions made by the artist's heirs. They are drawn from audiovisual materials, documents, and recordings kept in the archives of the Emblema Museum. They are also the result of recent family conversations accompanied by wine, to be fair, and therefore not always of the highest quality.

*While all the fish were learning to swim
within the darkness of their own bodies, I was
teaching the sea of shadow to navigate - on
the advice of small lights - the transparent
belly of the sky deceived by the most oblique
hours. But it was only the land in my eyes and
a rough sun of yellow stone that still
tyrannized me every other day.*

The Painter's Craft

I must confess something to you. Exhibiting paintings frightens me. For these paintings here, my paintings, are paintings that ask. Like lovers and the most capricious individuals. They ask the light to be completed. Space to be welcomed. They even ask the walls. And not just to be supported. They beg them to change their nature: to transform themselves into imaginary doors, skies, horizons, lands, or boundaries for the gaze. Do you see my point, Pidgey? That then the point is: what do we - me and my paintings - give in return for all these requests? Transparency. Yes, that certainly. But would that be enough for you? We offer ourselves as bare flesh to your eyes, which are always judging. But doing so creates almost extremes for outrage against modesty. I always wonder: what do we give in return? What is a painting after all? I don't know if painting is still a current thing or if it is worthwhile today to still make a painting. I only know that a successful painting resembles a thinskin house, built in the space that runs between your eyes and this imperceptible movement of the sun. Right now, here, Pidgey, as I'm talking to you."

Painting smoothes your Eyes but sharpens your Horizon.

To understand what a painting is one should first ask what it is related to. I have always believed that after the hearth, painting is the most domestic of human things. There is no painting without a home. Just as there is no house without walls. In songs, perhaps. The wall, I must tell you, has always seduced me. Almost as if it were a living body. It is the border, the margin, between the space where you rule and the space where something else rules. It belongs to the geography of existence more than to construction. It protects you from the doubts of the open horizon. Think about it for a moment: walls live in time. Whether of sun, rain, or years. And this time marks them, scratches them, torments them. But it all happens outside. And inside? What happens inside? Maybe painting is simply that tool we invented to be able to torment the walls from the inside. Good torment, you understand. Like when we consume to the point of exhaustion the things we love by holding them too tightly in our hands.

In the Sky there are no Walls But there are paintings, from everywhere.

Ideology of the traitor?

At one point I wanted to take the painting away from the wall. I wanted to see if one could create an environment that was both pictorial and inhabitable at the same time. Let me move past the platitude:

Architectures to look at with the whole body. At the time, something like that was, let's say, a kind of conceptual fitness test. You didn't know if you would pass it, but you had to attempt it. And can I tell you something? I loved it. Because it was like cheating on your wife with the mistress for whom you could most likely make up for cheating with – My wife, Pidgey – But keep in mind that the painter's wife in this case is the painting. In matters of antecedents, you know better than I do, the best thing is always to keep quiet about it or deny it: deny it to the point of evidence. Here, I set out to betray the form of the painting, but to succeed at the same time, to preserve all the elements that defined it. Materials, light, color, image, and so on. Let's put it this way, even if unfaithful I wanted to remain a good husband: A painter.

what is the Sky made of? It seems like nothing and yet it sustains you with blue clouds.

In and out of the studio I began to work with dyed canvases, with wire mesh and colored branches. I always started with the idea of a hedge that filtered light. But I wanted to be able to shape the space without dividing it. I was trying to modify perspective and distances, shorten or dilate them, avoiding, if possible, falling into the trap of cheating the eyes. Each material I used had its own transparency, its own lift in the air. And this slowed or sped up the ability of the eye to pass through or across each element I used.

The only Architecture that I understand Belongs to the Breath, or perhaps to the Wind.

I often reasoned by single modules, which I then multiplied and unfolded in length, height, and depth. It was an architecture that I felt was monumental yet lacking stiffness. It was a path I felt was all my own, and I was intrigued by the idea of an environment of variable geometry. However, I soon realized that the further I moved away from the wall, the more the painting took over those transparent walls that I was raising here and there. Everything for me became image, form, shadow of color. Everything became painting. But it was a new painting, and it excited me. Maybe because I was not doing it. The space disguised and painted itself almost by itself. A space that seemed alive, with a necessity all its own. And I must say that I enjoyed it. I felt like I was really playing with the space. What can I say? Maybe it was a wife's subtle revenge. What was left for me to do? I ran away from home, returning all the way home.

the Sky near my home I walked it all, in small steps.

Dreaming of Naples, without knowing how to swim

Where I live, the skies when painted, Are so beautiful that they seem real. And the real ones, on the other hand, are blue just like the ones that we painters chase in paintings. Where I live there are these skies here. And then there is the Sea that is never still. And an Earth that can turn strong black, light yellow, or timid red. Everything is said here with us, and you will see it with your own eyes that as it is in Above so it is also on Earth.

For many years, we have maintained a curious habit in my house. Go and find out why. We used to have lunch at the kitchen table. It was a big table, I made it. Wooden with three black bands running lengthwise. It was a normal table, one to put in the kitchen. Each person his own chair. Me at the head of the table, and we ate. But in the evening, go figure why, we would change tables. Always in the kitchen it was, at most using a cabinet as a division. But dinner had to be eaten at a tiny little table. Once again, my creation, low, Japanese style. Made of iron and burnt wood, like the things I used to do in Rome in my Cinecittà days. There was no particular reason to change from morning to night. Yet that's the way we did it. We almost always ate together, sitting this time on couches. Myself, my daughter Elena, and the two boys, Giuseppe and Francesco. We were tightly squished, I must say. And at the head of the table, in the evening, my wife always sat.