

Un posto come un altro dove appendere il cappello (*A place as good any place to hang your hat*)

A brief, scattered reflection on working with your family

By Enzo Di Marino

Describing family relationships is never easy. As a matter of fact, there are various catchphrases and old sayings referencing back to the issues created by being surrounded with one's family, particularly when they are introduced into a professional environment.

After all, it actually is like that; working in a family business is extremely complex, specifically in regards to that form of emotional and very personal involvement which can't be distanced off when the front door has "your name" on it.

The Galleria Umberto Di Marino can be defined as a business entirely run by its family, and the ones working are me, my father, my mother and my brother. We'd like to admit that even before this current moment the intention was always to welcome all the people that gravitate around the gallery into a sort of "extended family," it wasn't a coincidence that the first spaces the gallery was located in were in the same block where we had always lived.

The day to day of this work environment, and growing up immersed by these dynamics has provided, for me and my brother especially, an internal perspective into the structure of the gallery that before now had never been expressed, and it now can find a release in this exhibition and in this publication.

Un posto come un altro dove appendere il cappello isn't the first time we stop and reflect on our journey thus far. Conceptually, it is connected to a celebratory project of the 20 years of the foundation of the gallery, named *Ten more ten*, and to *Visto da qui*, which is an attempt to rediscover the value of the gallery's storage collection, which was then structured into a project with different stages that are still developing.

This "looking within" has never been intended as a desire to stop completely and reminisce on the work we've done until now, only for it to be then displayed in an anachronistic manner. On the contrary, this type of necessity to reflect on the mechanics within the gallery itself has always been an expression of dynamism, of a restless attitude dedicated to the research in defining processes within the work and studies of the artists.

From this we get the title - with a clear reference of the expression with which Bruce Chatwin described his London house in *Anatomy of Restlessness* -, as a place useful for relaxation, for feeding your friends, for reading, but at the end always a place to evade in order to avoid that static that could lead a person, according to the British writer, into total madness.

From what I remember the gallery was always dedicated to getting out of the physical borders of the perfectly adequate exhibition space with its neutral display of artworks. In the years of activity in Giugliano there have been many opportunities to collaborate with different public spaces, such as the ex Chiesa delle Concezioniste right in our own province as well as the Casina Pompeiana in Naples. The same happened after the transfer into the city, which was followed by various projects in collaboration with places like the Riot studio, the Complesso Museale di Santa Maria delle Anime del Purgatorio in Arco, Castel Sant'Elmo, the Chiesa delle Scalze, until arriving to the invasion of private spaces run by friends or collectors even outside the reach of Naples.

It seems fundamentally impossible to circumscribe the work of a gallery inside a single space, and this I believe is partly due to how the gallery has been thought out from its beginnings. I still hear in my mind the words of my father when answering a question at an interview where he defined the gallery as an extension of his own thoughts, his themes and his interests, all read through the outside perspective of the artists. This results in a necessity to put our perspective into constant discussion, searching for new opinions and points of view, without ever crystallizing around any type of rigid stance. This exercise of constant research into new territories of contrasts and change brought with it a type of nomadism that isn't only theoretical but also particularly physical.

Following a phase of forced closures and of limited movement, *Un posto come un altro dove appendere il cappello* represents a true and thorough breath of fresh air, the possibility of engaging again with new realities in the search of a relationship with otherness. In this way the story unfolds through a selection of works that somehow highlight the complexity of looking within, of everything that makes up a gallery and how it interacts with a "foreign" subject.

Invading the spaces of the Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea Osvaldo Licini, these artworks bring forward a piece of our history through the contrast of the figures painted by the *maestro ascolano*. In a dialogue with his mystical characters, surrounded by his landscapes, we tried to make the museum into a place to hang our hats on, a type of extension of our home and our work.

In this way the bookshelves and the table by Vedovamazzei that always decorated the spaces of our house; the photosensitive sheets of Runo Lagomarsino immersed alongside mom and dad in the sea of Marechiaro; the absurd representations by Eugenio Tibaldi of the suburbs where we live our daily routine; the never-ending late conversations with Luca Francesconi about all the possible and imaginable layers of the relationship of man/nature; the botanical drawings of continuous mutation in the film that Pedro Neves Marques donated to the family; the usual discussions spoken in strong terms with Santiago Cucullu that always finish with a huge declaration of love; the exposure to the sometimes alien sensibility and methodology of Satoshi Hirose; an analysis of the social systems that seems to transform from my father's words directly unto the drawings of Marco Raparelli; the bossa nova that we learned to listen from childhood and that now rings in the installations of Sergio Vega; the teachings of Vettor Pisani condensed in fine and sometimes eerie pencil drawings; the incredible tales of radical action in the seventies and eighties by Eugenio Espinoza, where the intervention of his partner Celia is constantly necessary to fill in the various gaps and imperfections of his memories; these experiences, just like all the artworks, put into play a portion of what the gallery was and what it could be in the future, of all the people that went through it and somehow contributed to developing a plural entity. The representation that results from this develops simultaneously in different levels, without ever leading to an exact definition, but instead tries to convey all the possible forms of an activity always in metamorphosis.

I don't think it is a coincidence that this need to try to reflect on ourselves comes exactly at the moment that the gallery is going through a big change. The idea is to literally transform the dimension of the gallery into a habitat, in the search of an environment that is less dispersed, more intimate and close. A true *home-gallery* where we can showcase what we have in our storage and our archives, making them available simultaneously as part of our temporary exhibitions and as part of the family collection. In a fusion that is the perfect middle ground between domestic and professional, the attempt is to bring all of that tension that up until now spilled out of the gallery and bring it back into this house/exhibition hybrid. Taking this into consideration, it will become necessary for everyone that will try to come into contact with the new reality at our gallery to make that first effort to enter into the private space of a stranger.

Furthermore, and as etiquette demands, when you enter someone's house it is always polite to hang your hat.