

ETTORE SPALLETTI

Opening Friday 24 April 2015 from 5.30pm to 9 pm

Palazzo Cini - Dorsoduro 864 - San Vio, Venice

We arrive by train. I see Ettore Spalletti's face register emotion; it must be a long time, I think, since he was last in this city that I know he loves so much. In these days at the beginning of January Venice seems wrapped in a grey mantle. A strange melancholy accompanies us on the boat to Dorsoduro. Luca Massimo Barbero and his collaborators are at the entrance to greet us. The director has an elegant figure and I note Spalletti's approving look. Later he was to say to me, "Knowing how to be seen means you know how to see". The rooms seem a building site: they are being renovated before the building is reopened. We sense the changes underway to make a home into a museum. On the second floor the great door frames, the wooden coffered ceiling, the fireplace retain their memories of domestic use and their intimate character.

Spalletti walks up and down and every so often stops, as though frozen. I don't go near him as I know he needs silence. He looks out of the large windows. The light is still grey, but the canal's water reflects back a vibration. He half smiles, and I realise he has probably had his idea for the show. I have to wait days before he lets me know. In the studio I watch him shift a small table and two chairs before he finds the perfect balance between the three, as though he is constructing an area in his mind: perhaps he is thinking of the room with the fireplace. For some time he places his sculptures on furniture he has designed in an attempt to eliminate the rigidity of bases. Days pass, and suddenly he tells me he wants to take to Venice the blue panels that he keeps in a room in his studio, a room measuring four metres by four. His wish, he explains, is to lay out the blue and gold pieces in order to occupy fully the space of this home that has now become a museum. I am amazed; the blue room is the first of three constructed successively in the studio, conceived but never exhibited together. A journey through intimate colour that Spalletti has never so far wanted to be without. He sees I am disoriented and he explains that he wants to try to "capture an new image from an old one". Perhaps this is how the show will be. He says to me, "Blue is an atmospheric colour; it never shows itself through its surface existence but is a colour in which we are continuously immersed. The sky is always around us, it envelops us, it is never repeated in the same way, and every day it offers you a different colour and light". I am reminded of Sandro Penna's poem I found transcribed on the back of one of his paintings: "Under a sky / all blue / what am I waiting for / what am I yearning for? / All is peace / but there is a veil / of sadness / I do not ask for".

Azzurra Ricci, assistant to Ettore Spalletti