

Critical text

## **Patrick Bayly**

### **Cave**

*by Lucia Longhi*

C+N Canepaneri is pleased to present *Cave*, Patrick Bayly's first solo show at the gallery. The American artist brings to Italy the result of his most recent pictorial research, of which the exhibited works represent both the point of departure and arrival.

The exhibition presents a group of paintings whose formal characteristics seem to prelude a story, or a somewhat narrative sequence: there are human figures, domestic settings and still lifes, with visual references that seem to connect the paintings to each other. The truth is, these compositions are not meant to tell a story, describe a situation or express a critical position. Ironically, as indicated by the didactic titles, these images are none other than themselves.

The object of Bayly's concern is not what we find represented in the paintings: the artist will not tell us about candlelight dinners, everyday life in his studio, a group of friends or any personal or collective discourse that could be prompted by these images. Yet, almost paradoxically, it is only by exploring every formal detail that the artist's conceptual proposition is revealed.

Bayly's paintings are open to multiple interpretations. This is an observation that could be valid for any painting. However, the subject of his work are precisely the mechanisms underlying the plurality of meanings referable to a sign. Recalling the fundamentals of visual semiotics, Bayly sets out from the premise that subjects are relationships requiring the projection of meaning into a sign in order to function. He therefore analyzes this relationship through precise formal strategies: the iteration of subjects, the duplication of images - and even of the paintings themselves - and projection, both physical and conceptual. The author's process is based on the evisceration of the act of interpretation, and therefore what constituted the foundation of painting in the history of art: the signifier-signified relationship. The subject of this exhibition is not the representation given by the images, but representation itself.

Bayly provides an extremely contemporary contribution to figurative semiotics. His process goes in the direction of unlocking the formal constraints of painting, by isolating representation as a system of unlimited transformations taking place within an apparently limited medium. By discerning a kaleidoscopic combination of relationships within the representational function, Bayly presents painting as a medium that has no limits both in its formal ductility and conceptual expansion.

Observing painting as a form of agency capable of reflecting the multifaceted quality of experience and interpretative practice, Bayly's art shows proximity to contemporary post-media culture, in which identities are multiplied, the real and the virtual overlap and the fragmentation of perspectives translates into the fragmentation of the ways in which we project ourselves onto reality in order to understand it.

Bayly manages to show us painting, all painting, under a new perspective: the most traditional of artistic practices is in the most contemporary after all.

**Patrick Bayly** is a young American figurative painter. Born in Charleston, West Virginia (USA), he currently lives and works in New York. In April 2021 he completed his Master of Fine Arts in painting at the School of the Arts, Columbia University. In 2018 he graduated in painting from West Virginia University and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (Madison, Maine, USA). During a time spent in Morgantown, West Virginia, Bayly founded an art collective and in 2019 he took part in CRUSH, an independent curatorial project based in New York and Amagansett (NY). Among his recent solo exhibitions: "like a lion, my hands and my feet", Steve Turner gallery (Los Angeles, USA) 2020; "Open Studio", The Diamond Shop, Morgantown (West Virginia, USA) 2018; "New American Paintings", West Virginia University Libraries, Morgantown (West Virginia, USA) 2017; "Icons", Monongalia Arts Center, Morgantown (West Virginia, USA) 2014. Among the group shows: "Our World Two", Steve Turner, LA-online 2021; "Alone Together", Steve Turner, LA-online 2020; "Still Life", Drawer, NY - online 2020; "9999," Fireplace Projects, East Hampton, NY, 2019; "Figurative Approaches," East End Culture Club, South Hampton, NY 2019; "Aesthetically Functional Only," 1675 Broadway, NY, 2019; "Whams of Summer," Ki Smith Gallery, NY; "Who Are We Now? New Figurative Painting", The Diamond Shop, Morgantown, WV, 2017; "For Lease: Paintings, Sculpture, and Poetry by West Virginia Artists", Bushwick Open Studios, Brooklyn, NY, 2017; "Juried Student Show", Paul Mesaros Gallery, Morgantown, WV 2017; "Tamarack Best of West Virginia Juried Show", David L. Dickirson Fine Arts Gallery, Beckley, WV 2017.