

## Nicola De Maria

(Foglianise, Benevento, 1954)

After early experiments with photography, between 1976 and 1977 Nicola De Maria identified painting as his chosen language. From that point on, his work, ranging from small-scale pastels on paper to large-scale frescoes, has revealed both a capacity for concentration and an all-encompassing pictorial embrace.

His canvases are immersed in creative thought. They appear to us as if through a telescope painted at the sky, in contemplation of parallel and future universes, utterly happy realms, *without bombs*, where the soul, closed off from the din of the disorderly world, works toward an art that is consolation.

His chromatic matrix seems to descend from the union of two different traditions, one derived from the tones of Giotto, and the other from the early twentieth century, recalling the courage and freedom of the Fauves. Together, these chromatic ranges create an explosion of clear emotions and geometries, sometimes as limpid as crystals, sometimes shaded by a more elusive lyrical feeling.

Within De Maria's cosmic pulsation, a subtle white space intermittently emerges, between one ground and another, where the encounter of primary colors unleashes pure light and the memory of drawing persists in the form of profiles and outlines, to delineate cells of color suspended in a space without gravity, without planes and without a horizon.

In 2004, writing about his exhibition *Astri fatati (Enchanted Stars)*, at the Persano gallery in Turin, the artist stated: "Why do we think about art? Because it is a fleeting mystery that helps us live and allows us, with the beauty of form, with the consolation that it offers us, to tolerate all the rest." (De Maria, N., text written for the press release for *Astri fatati*, solo exhibition, Turin: Galleria Giorgio Persano, 2004).

With all the cynicism and disenchantment into which the investigations of contemporary art seem to have descended, De Maria is one of the rare voices where the certainty of poetry echoes, its presence in the world and in ideas, its flight that is capable of joyfully traversing the infinite spaces of the universe, as well as those equally infinite ones of the 'head of the cosmic painter' and its mirror, found in "the cheerful head of a beautiful angel." (EV)