

Giuseppe Maraniello

(Naples, Italy, 1945)

Going through the numerous interpretations that have been given to Giuseppe Maraniello's work, what clearly emerges is that many have been convinced that the nature of his research is marked by a dialogue between various tensions, first of all between painting and sculpture. It is as if the artist has taken on the task of comparing two languages that already reached their limits in postwar artistic research. But there is ambivalence, not only in looking at one formal language or another, but also in the way they balance each other out in certain works, what is left over of one in the other, and then the encounter of harmony or collision.

In Maraniello's work a macroscopic glance sees the two greatest traditions of art in competition, but an analysis of individual works reveals that its nature conveys the signs of contrast in every aspect of its formation. Materials speak of different, sometimes opposing expressive temperatures. There are both natural and shrill colors that spread over different traditions, on the same plane in the work, and there are forms that are partially rough and partially meticulously anecdotal, not to mention the elegant balances between masters of art history, now and then called upon by various portions of the work, such as the mythical and literary traditions that converge in what more than one interpreter has not been able to resist calling the crucible of his work.

Untitled, 1979–1980, contemplates nearly the entire range of expressive tensions enumerated thus far, but it also shows how individual works do not become abstract geographies dictated by distant cardinal points.

The composition reposes on a horizon line, an axis of wood painted with a blue pigment, not very different from the absolute quality of Klein blue. It seems to promise complete amplitude, luminous immateriality and the spatial breath possessed by an image of the encounter between sea and sky. However, at one end of the axis a few touches of orange color, with the self-assurance of an encounter of complementaries, restore an albeit provisional sense of the finite and the concrete. Highlighted by that chromatic spark, one notes a small figure, one of those little dwarves that populate Maraniello's work, seated pensively on the horizon line, its back resting against another shaft, this one left with its natural color, with the air of a relic collected on the beach. Two other tensions unfold in the work. One is traced by a curved line moving upward to support a second little figure, worthy overall of one of Licini's *Amalassunta* figures. The other tension is a vertical line that descends from the horizon to the ground, where three little colored glasses are arranged. It is like a linguistic anchor, a formal probing of the depths, which finds a new balance in a synthesis of the conceptual manner of Jasper Johns and the poetic flights of Licini. (EV)