

Enzo Cucchi

(Morro d'Alba, Ancona, 1949)

According to Enzo Cucchi, in a world dominated by weakness and crisis, the image is humanity's ultimate hope and sole certainty. An artist capable of mastering a wide range of techniques, from painting to sculpture, including ceramics and mosaic, Cucchi attributes great importance to drawing, the primary sign of the energy with which he approaches work. Since the end of the seventies, with Chia, Clemente, De Maria, and Paladino, Cucchi has been one of the exponents of the Transavanguardia movement, according to the definition of the renewal of the artistic language given by Achille Bonito Oliva.

An almost physical necessity, derived from an insatiable obsession, Cucchi's art is rooted in his native region, the Marche, in the encounter between land and sea that characterizes that area's morphology and in the blend of history and legend that defines its spirit. *Cani con la lingua a spasso (Dogs with Wagging Tongues)*, 1980, seems to refer to a country scene, where one can make out the shape of a man leaning toward a group of four dogs. The playful vitality of the encounter between the human and animal worlds depicted at the center of the painting radiates out through the entire surface, swirling pictorial matter into a vortex, dominated by green tones and ignited by bursts of intense yellow. The heroic dimension is an intrinsic quality of Cucchi's painting. The memory of ancient epics surfaces consistently in his works. In *Eroe senza testa (Headless Hero)*, 1981, the figure of an anonymous hero stands out at the center of the canvas. Assuming a resolute stance, the man seems to use his own body to block a violent wave. A possible image of a duel between the will of the individual and the advance of a destiny of apocalyptic force, the work is dominated by dense pictorial material, exacerbated by the contrast between the black, yellow, and red that accentuate the volumes.

The dialogue with classicism and memories of the sea are further investigated in *La deriva del vaso (The Drift of the Vase)*, 1984-1985. With scorching colors, the artist delineates the shape of a boat carrying some amphorae. Whether ready to travel or abandoned in the recesses of history, the boat evokes the thirst for knowledge that has always pushed humanity to seek new boundaries to explore. (MB)