

*Falegnameria Messori*

21.05.2021 – 21.06.2021

Via Mario Sironi, 1, Reggio Emilia

Visits by appointment

Text by Eleonora Savorelli

“Falegnameria Messori” is a forge, a space for conversation.

The exhibition project was born from the will to portray a space – the carpentry, studio of Matteo Messori (1993, Reggio Emilia). It is strictly linked to the contemporary art environment, being an artist studio; and, at the same time, it strong of a long history, being deeply-rooted in the Reggiano context, since it was the workplace of the artisan Vincenzo Messori, grandfather of the artist.

The carpentry's chaotic and fruitful working environment, despite keeping its harshness, becomes an exhibition space, and hosts the artworks of the eleven artists involved in the project. The present works activate a dialogue with the carpentry, a personal communication between each artist and the space around. These silent conversations focus on specific aspects, own of the peculiar exhibition environment. The considerations on the pause of Nazzarena Poli Maramotti (Montecchio Emilia, 1987), the desire to restore the nobility of simple details of Mirko Frignani (1985, Montecchio Emilia), the thoughts of Matteo Messori on the memories that the space keeps, like all the others interventions, constitute a kaleidoscopic image of this workplace. Thus, the artworks interact with the carpentry, highlighting several aspects, that from personal become collective.

Federico Aprile's (1989, Suzzara) work questions the seemingly precarious and personal balance of the carpentry, introducing his own interpretation of it. The upper part of the space hosts objects and tools, placed in the ceiling's beams in a hazardous way, by the first owner of the space. The objects' stability is questioned by their uncertain arrangement, which, however, lasts. For his installation, the artist took inspiration from these tools, creating copies of them: what changes are the colours with which Aprile painted his creations, which are neon-like and eye-catching. The new-born objects are placed next to the original ones, so as to create a sense of doubling: if on one side the artist recreates real objects, through painting he inserts them in another dimension, that echoes, imitates, the reality of the carpentry.

Esmeraldo Baha (1991, Elbasan) focuses on the invisible, and he brings to our attention the microscopic organisms that undisturbed get in and out from the carpentry. The artist, who already dedicated his practice to the representation of these subjects, considers the exhibition space an appropriate area to further develop his research. Among the carpentry's tools, what inspired him was a pair of plastic boots: apparently harmless, when they are worn, they become a kind of vehicle that accidentally brings in and out organisms and dust, sealing the imperceptible connection between outdoor and indoor. Baha chose to show his subjects through canvases: irregular shapes and unexpected colours symbolizes the organisms that inspired him.

Riccardo Bellelli (1999, Carpi) disarms the most dangerous and sharpened details of the space. The carpentry, despite being a place dedicated to creativity and creation, is undoubtedly dangerous for those unfamiliar with its tools. Bellelli inserts in this context his personal research on control, acting on saws and angle grinders. These objects have been collected and made harmless, after the artist covered them with soft pastel-coloured edge protectors; eventually, they have been placed again in their space. The repositioning of the blades creates a feeling of estrangement: the saws are in their place, but they became innocuous and almost playful, because of the delicate hue. They are now items of furniture, since they cannot fulfil anymore their main function.

Sabrina Casadei (1985, Roma) finds in the carpentry a material that is very dear to her, already present in her practice, which she makes the base of her intervention: the bituminous sheath. In this case, the material is the custodian of the memory of the actions, of the work, which took place in the carpentry. The cuts, the fractures, the ripples that the sheath has treasured during time are transferred into paper by the artist. After having secured these silent proofs, Casadei

conceals them among the present tools and personal items. The paper sheets are collected in decks, to emulate the small collections of wood samples, usually found in carpentries.

The intervention of Isora Degola (1997, Reggio Emilia) is linked to a particular object of the carpentry, which, with its movements, underlines the processual aspect own of the artist's artwork. The piece was created starting from an origami: at the same time, the inner and outer parts are visible, and they have different function. The inner part is revealed through a casting of cement and resin: the shape that originated accompanies the machine thanks to the piece's severe colours and pointy aspect; however, it is opposed to the familiar and energetic environment of the carpentry. The origami's outer part was reproduced with a white thread. The thread that composes the object is linked to the machine on which it is leaned on, a circular section of the vertical drill, which can be manually turned by visitors. Once the circular part is activated, the artwork will be slowly unmade, and eventually it will disappear. Through the undoing of the thread is possible to understand the interweaving of the yarn: thus, the processual aspect of the piece becomes clearly visible.

Irene Ferri's (1991, Reggio Emilia) photographs remind the omnipresent deprivation of contacts during the past closure due to the pandemic, and the consequent spread of the inaction that has characterized so many months. The unexpected obsession for the food-delivery of the artist, conceived as the only moment of connection with the outer world, inspired her to create these photographs. Thus, they gather, on the one hand, a flash of freedom and vivacity; and, on the other, complete fixity. The images show industrial kinds of food, hastily consigned with home delivery. The photographs, while blending with the surrounding environment thanks to their dark tones, they contrast with it: the energetic and "pop" but impersonal layers of the industrial food are clearly opposed to that of the carpentry, a place of careful and dedicated production of unique objects, characterized by creative exuberance.

The ennoblement of details is the hearth of Mirko Frignani's intervention. Before creating his artwork, the artist collected small objects present in the carpentry: the elements, which only seemed useless, were knobs and small pedestals. In order to return these objects their relevance, Frignani hides them, covering them with thread, mummifying them. Therefore, the artist masks the appearance of these details to highlight their physical presence and,

consequently, their importance. Through Frignani's intervention, details become subjects, their outlook becomes iconic. The threads used are of different shades of pink, this choice finds its meaning in the carpenter's *modus operandi*: pink is the favourite colour to mark the wood – to take notes and measures, since it is the colour that best blends with the material. From a colour that disappears and which is easily erased, to signal of dignity.

Giacomo Giannantonio (1998, Montecchio Emilia) presents his consideration on the house: unlike the carpentry, which is welcoming and reassuring, the artist's work portrays the private space as a cold and harsh. Only the icy colours of the artist's igloo, built with glass pieces and wrecks, would be enough to remind the coldness of the kind of relationships evoked by the artist. This freezing miniature hosts, in its inner walls, dreamy images of incredible and imaginative castles: the juxtaposition of such different elements point out, on one hand, the grief born from the difficult private environment; and, on the other, the efforts to mitigate this situation turning to misleading images, which symbolizes ambition, will for emancipation, and estrangement. However, the artwork expresses a note of hope, through the plant inside the work, that is meant to grow, with care. The artist frankly meditates on his present difficult condition: however, he's working for a change, to be achieved with dedication, the same that he will use to take care of the plant in his work.

Matteo Messori, who is deeply tied to the carpentry, reflects on the space through the lens of personal memory. Working in this space is for the artist a constant *déjà-vu*: his gestures are not the only ones that are fulfilled in the carpentry, they overlap with the ones of his grandfather. In particular, the artist found in the nail, which is the main subject of his work, memories that sees him in the carpentry, together with the former owner of the space, his grandfather. The artwork proposed by Messori is developed on several levels: the walnut shelf, base of the work, reminds the wood, heart and nourishment of the carpentry. A series of nails have been hammered into it. The repetitive gesture, almost reassuring, of driving nails reminds the time the artist spent with his grandfather, learning the series of gestures and notions that supported him in his approach to an artistic career.

In the laborious and energetic context of the carpentry, Nazzarena Poli Maramotti evokes the time of pause and leisure: a deck of Piacentine playing cards, revisited by the artist with her rarefied and sinuous style, cuts out a space among the tools. Suddenly, the Coins turn into pale and tired solar disks; Spades become blunted, almost domesticated. The Cups, shapeless blocks of clay, crossed by coloured veins. This work was developed within the artist's wider research about Emilian everyday life, and in particular about leisure.

Giulio Zanet (1984, Colletterto Castelnuovo) confronts himself with the most typical material present in the carpentry, proposing a picto-sculpture, made with second-hand wood. The artist's dialogue with this material is not unprecedented, given his proximity to this medium, which accompanied him throughout most of his artistic and human journey. This connection is natural, almost familiar, and results in a sculpture, conquered by a lively layer of paint, and completed by the addition of cloth of various colours. Painting is the protagonist, colour is essential. The wooden support, which makes the artwork possible, is covered, hidden, but indispensable. The piece, with its loud and unnatural colours, and the broken shape, clashes with the traditional space and its dark hue. The artwork powerfully conquered a space for itself.

The text is accompanied by an interview with Virginia Anceschi, Matteo Messori's grandmother, who is an essential figure for the development of the carpentry's history.

The questions retrace the story of the space: from the passion that created it, up to the "Falegnameria Messori" exhibition. In the words of Mrs. Anceschi, it is possible to feel all her genuine emotion for a place that always accompanied her family.